The Tribal Dimension in the Division of the Kingdom of Israel: A Contextual Study of 1 Kings 12:1-24 from the Perspective of the Struggle for National Unity in Rwanda

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

Eraste Nyirimana

Supervisor

DEDICATION

To the memory of

Uzabakiriho Madeleine;

Fidèle and Glorioza Karege and your children Ikirezi, Claudine, and Pacifique;

Daniel and Frieda Rwandanga and your children Grace and David;

Alphonsine and Gasarabwe;

And many more sisters and brothers in the faith who, like you, were direct or indirect

victims of the senseless tragedy of the genocide,

Your example of love, faith and endurance will continue to inspire my own struggle.

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God bless you all!

ABSTRACT

This study aims to undertake a contextual analysis of the event of the division of the kingdom of Israel narrated in1 Kings 12:1-24. This text and its context are analysed in the light of the context of tribal conflicts in Rwanda, using the inculturation hermeneutical approach that makes the contemporary context of the reader the subject of interpretation. The interactive engagement between the two contexts is conducted in a way that allows insights from each context to enrich the understanding of the other.

The socio-historical analysis of the Rwandan context showed that the 1994 genocide resulted from a long period of social conflict opposing the main social groups in Rwanda namely the Hutu and the Tutsi. Conflicts arose from the determination of elites from each social group to monopolize political power and to control resources, to the exclusion of members of the other social group. It was noted that the failure of the church to discharge its prophetic responsibility reinforced the perception that God was absent during the genocide.

The literary analysis of the text narrating the division of the kingdom of Israel noted the theological interpretation that explained that event as a result of Yahweh's punitive intervention against an apostate king, Solomon. However, literary analysis showed that the conflict involved socio-economic aspects and had much to do with the struggle for access and for the sharing of resources. Socio-historical analysis of the context of the division then revealed that, from the rise of the monarchy in Israel, the issue of the control and distribution of resources had been a challenge to unity among the tribes of Israel, generating conflicts that culminated in the division of the kingdom.

Interaction between the two contexts of conflict, in Rwanda and in Israel, allowed for the identification of categories of players who had a share of responsibility in the conflicts. First, political leaders instituted patrimonial regimes that practised inequitable distribution of resources and privileges and antagonised social groups in both contexts. Second, the people, faced with the discriminative policies of their leaders, grouped themselves according to their shared interests or common challenges. Diverging or

opposing interests among different groups exacerbated divisions, alienation and conflicts. Third, neighbouring countries and external powers had strategic or economic interests that led them to intervene in support of the warring social groups, thus aggravating the situation. Lastly, God's servants, who were supposed to play a unifying role, failed in their prophetic responsibility, not only by doing nothing to denounce social injustices, but by openly supporting them and actively taking part in them.

This study has reasoned that social conflicts result from diverging interests. They are a human responsibility, not imposed by God. Diverse social identities are not intrinsic obstacles to social unity. They jeopardize unity when they give expression to conflicting interests. Change for lasting peace and unity in Rwanda requires a change of attitude from the four categories of players identified as the key protagonists.

RESUME

Ce travail a entrepris de faire une analyse contextuelle de l'événement de la division du royaume d'Israël raconté dans 2 Rois 12 :1-24. Ce passage, ainsi que son contexte, a été analysé dans la lumière du contexte de conflit tribal au Rwanda suivant l'approche de l'inculturation herméneutique qui se sert du contexte du lecteur comme sujet d'interprétation. L'engagement interactif entre les deux contextes est conçu de manière à permettre une compréhension et un enrichissement mutuels des deux contextes.

L'analyse socio-historique du contexte du Rwanda a montré que le Génocide de 1994 était le produit d'une longue période de conflits sociaux opposant les principaux groupes sociaux de la société Rwandaise, à savoir, les Hutu et les Tutsi. Ces conflits provinrent de la détermination des élites de chacun de ces groupes de s'arroger le monopole du pouvoir politique et le contrôle des ressources en excluant les membres de l'autre groupe. On a aussi observé que l'église du Rwanda a failli d'assumer ses responsabilités prophétiques ce qui a renforcé l'impression que Dieu était absent pendant le Génocide.

L'analyse littéraire du passage qui raconte l'événement de la division du royaume d'Israël a permis de noter l'interprétation théologique expliquant l'événement comme un fait de l'intervention punitive de Yahweh contre le roi Salomon qui s'était adonné a l'apostasie. Cette analyse a montré que, en fait, ce conflit comprenait un aspect socio-économique ayant beaucoup à faire avec la lutte pour l'accès et le partage des ressources. L'analyse socio-historique du contexte de la division du royaume a révélé que depuis l'avènement de la monarchie en Israël, le problème du contrôle et de la distribution des ressources a toujours été un défi pour l'unité entre les tribus d'Israël. Ce problème a été la source des conflits qui ont abouti à la division du royaume.

L'interaction entre les deux contextes de conflits au Rwanda et en Israël a permis l'identification des catégories des gens qui, par leurs rôles respectifs, partagent la responsabilité dans chacun des conflits. Premièrement, les dirigeants politiques instituèrent des régimes patrimoniaux pratiquant une distribution inéquitable des

ressources et des privilèges créant ainsi un climat d'antagonisme entre les groupes sociaux dans les deux contextes. Ensuite, les peuples soumis aux mesures discriminatoires de leurs dirigeants se divisèrent en groupes sociaux ayant des intérêts ou des défis communs. Le conflit d'intérêts entre différents groupes aggrava les divisions, la rupture et les conflits. Puis, les pays voisins ainsi que les puissances étrangères ayant des intérêts économiques et stratégiques intervinrent en faveur de l'un ou de l'autre groupe en conflit. Ces interventions aggravèrent les situations de conflits. Enfin, les serviteurs de Dieu qui étaient supposés jouer un rôle unificateur on failli dans leurs responsabilités prophétiques, soit par leur silence devant les injustices sociales de leur temps, soit par leur rôle actif dans la perpétration de ces injustices.

Ce travail a soutenu que les conflits sociaux sont le résultat des conflits d'intérêts. Ces conflits ne sont pas imposés par Dieu, les humains en sont totalement responsables. La diversité des identités sociales n'est pas un intrinsèque obstacle à l'unité sociale. La diversité sociale devient néfaste lorsqu'elle devient l'expression des intérêts incompatibles. Le changement qui apportera une paix durable au Rwanda requiert un changement d'attitude des personnes de toutes les quatre catégories identifiées ci haut.

ABREVIATIONS

APROSOMA:	Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse
B.C.E:	Before Christ Era
CDR:	Coalition pour la Défense de la République
CISF:	Christian International Scholarship Foundation
CMS:	Church Missionary Society
DH:	Deuteronomistic History
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAR:	Forces Armées Rwandaises
FRODEBU :	Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi
FRONASA:	Front for National Salvation
GP :	Garde Présidentielle
JDR :	Jeunesse Démocratique Rwandais
JPL :	Jeunesse du Parti Libéral
MDR:	Mouvement Démocratique Républicain
Mgr:	Monsignor
MRND :	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement
MSM:	Mouvement Social Muhutu
MT :	Masoretic Text
OCAM :	Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
PARMEHUTU :	Parti du Mouvement Pour l'Emancipation des Hutu
PDC :	Parti Démocrate Chrétien
PL :	Parti Libéral
PSD :	Parti Social Démocrate
RADER :	Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais
RANU:	Rwandese Alliance for National Unity
RPA:	Rwandese Patriotic Army
RPF:	Rwandese Patriotic Front
U N:	United Nations

UNAMIR:	United Nations Mission for Rwanda
UNAR:	Union Nationale Rwandaise
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNISA:	University of South Africa
UPC:	Ugandan People's Congress
SBMPC:	Société Belge pour la Mission Protestante au Congo
WATS:	West Africa Theological Seminary

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to and motivation for the research

Among the events that marked the history of Rwanda at the dawn of the twentieth century was the advent of Christianity in the early 1900s. The impact of the Christian gospel promised to be positive when, under the influence of what was called the "East African Revival", lives of people were positively affected, resulting in the restoration of broken relationships and the building of unity among neighbours. Nobody would guess that the same century would close in darkness.

The year 1994 was indeed a dark year in Rwanda, the year of the Genocide, a tragedy resulting from the ethnic conflict that affected every Rwandan, within and outside the country. This was a time during which the spirit of death seemed to have taken over the control of the affairs of the whole nation. Many of those who still believed in God felt that God was "absent" during the Genocide.[1] The Genocide in Rwanda was a sad case, illustrating the worst that can result from ethnic conflicts.

The problem of ethnic conflicts is not peculiar to Rwanda. Newspaper headlines and television screens bring to our attention many of the places around the world where hatreds and conflicting claims by different ethnic groups have led to overt conflict or to actual civil war.[2] The African Great Lakes Region and the Asian Middle East are among the most notorious places where ethnic-related conflicts carried over from last century into this one, still claiming many lives. Currently, the people of Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sudanese Darfour are among many who are still mourning the victims of ethnic-related conflicts.

While the issue of ethnic differences is a worldwide phenomenon, ethnic-related problems have been approached in different places in different ways. Some societies were

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[1] Guillebaud, M. *Rwanda: The Land God Forgot?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Monarch Books. 2002, p 308. (The question "Where were you God?" became a recurring theme in the songs of Rwandan artists after the Genocide).
[2] Patchen, M. *Diversity and Unity: Relation Between Racial and Ethnic Groups*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. 1999, p 1.

able to deal with their ethnic diversity and reach relative harmony. Unfortunately, as the case of Rwanda proves, there are still too many places where ethnic conflicts result in tragedy. The question is, why should Rwanda be on the side of failure?

The question is made even more pertinent by the claim that Rwanda is a country where the majority of the population is believed to be Christian. According to the 1991 national census, 90% of the Rwandan population called themselves Christians. These included 63% Roman Catholics, 19% Protestants and 8% Seventh Day Adventists.[3] Since Christian ethics and teachings are clearly against such things as the pogrom perpetrated in Rwanda, the presence of Christians was expected to be a factor contributing to the prevention of the Genocide. Therefore, since the predominance of Christians in Rwanda did not make any difference in preventing or stopping the Genocide, it is often concluded that the church in Rwanda has failed in its work.[4] Most of the time, this conclusion reflects the opinions of people speaking from their personal observations and understanding and not necessarily basing their claims on findings from any serious research.

In an attempt to understand the cause of the tragic events in Rwanda, another question that arises concerns God's attitude to the Rwandan conflict. If God is all-powerful, why did he[5] allow the Genocide to happen? In an essay titled "The divided kingdom, a culmination of tribal jealousies: what the church can learn",[6] I used the passage reporting the division of the kingdom in Israel (1 Kings 12:1-24) to address the problem of divisions and conflicts arising in the church, sometimes giving birth to new

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[3] Guillebaud, M. *Rwanda: The land God forgot?* p 284.

[4] McCullum hints at this conclusion and he attributes the failure of the church to the ethnic tensions existing within the church, on one hand, and the deliberate strategy by the extremists to destroy any alternatives to their ideology by wiping out those who were advocates of moderation, on the other hand. See McCullum, H. *The Angels Have Left Us*. Geneva, Switzerland: Risk Books Series. 1995. While we may agree with McCullum that these reasons contributed to weakening the position of the leaders of the church in Rwanda, the inability to prevent or stop the Genocide resulted from more complex factors which will be discussed in this study.

[5] The biblical texts and a number of quotations in this work use masculine pronouns with reference to God. For the sake of consistency and in order to avoid confusion, we shall maintain the masculine pronouns throughout the thesis, without in any way implying that we are talking about a male God.

[6] Nyirimana, E. *The Divided Kingdom, A Culmination of Tribal Jealousies: What the Church Can Learn*. Unpublished paper presented at the West Africa Theological Seminary's Academic Exchange in Lagos. 2003.

denominations accepted as new ministries fitting into God's plan and blessed by him. The point of the essay was that God may be very present in human-generated conflicts; he may even use conflicts to accomplish his plans, but his involvement does not exonerate selfish ambitions of the instigators and perpetrators of divisive conflicts. In my reading of books on the Rwandan Genocide, I once again came across a number of reactions from people implicating God in an attempt to understand or explain the cause of conflict among people.[7]

The Bible does not rule out the possibility of God's involvement in conflicts of this kind. The division of the kingdom of Israel is presented in the first book of Kings as an event that was ordained by God when he resolved to punish King Solomon for his apostasy. A closer reading of the history of Israel reveals that the nation of Israel underwent a series of tribal conflicts that resulted in the secession that produced two separate kingdoms: the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel.

The present research intends to pursue the discussion of the issue of the divine and the human share of responsibility in conflicts that divide people. The research uses the situation of conflict that opposed the tribe of Judah and the northern tribes. This is viewed as a case of human conflict that resulted in the division of the Kingdom of Israel, yet an event said to have occurred with God's direct intervention. This case is now approached from the perspective of the Rwandan context in a bid to understand God's attitude to the Rwandan tragedy and human responsibility in the conflict. The human side includes the roles of the Rwandan people and their leaders, the church, as well as people from outside Rwanda.

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[7] In a number of books the authors report expressions of confusion from people who, having witnessed the massacre, are now asking questions about God's attitude. The statement "I shall no longer come to this church… the angels have left us" (MacCullum, *The Angels Have Left Us*), the question: Where was God when the machetes rose and fell? (Guillebaud, *Rwanda: The Land God Forgot?*) or "Where was God when a million innocent people were being butchered?" Rucyahana, J. *The Bishop of Rwanda*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson. 2007, p xv., are expressions of complaints from those who were affected by the Rwandan Genocide who did not see the providential help of God the way they expected.

1.2 Research problem

The question "Where was God…?" raised by many frustrated and disappointed Rwandans may seem to question the omnipresence of God. The question seems to imply that God was absent and unaware of, or indifferent to, what was happening in Rwanda during the Genocide. The question "Where was God…?" is a question expecting an answer with reasons not with location.[8] The meaning of the question is "Why didn't God do anything to prevent or stop the tragedy?" This question reveals the people's expectation to see the good, merciful and powerful God use his great power to contain the folly of human belligerents and prevent them from pouring their wrath on one another and on innocent people. An aspect of the question was fairly answered by Rucyahana who suggested that God was alongside the victims lying on the cold stone floor of the cathedral. He was comforting a dying child. He was crying at the altar. But he was also saving lives. Many were saved by miracles. God does not flee when evil takes over a nation.[9] However, Rucyahana's answer may not satisfy many of those who still find it hard to understand how the good God could allow such an unjust tragedy to befall innocent and helpless people.

Coupled with the issue concerning God's attitude there is another question asked about the church of Rwanda. If the majority of the Rwandan people are Christians known to preach love, how could they kill one another the way they did? This question reveals the dissatisfaction with the impact of the church on the social life in Rwanda and with the role and attitude of religious leaders during the conflict.

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[8] In fact, the popular saying: *"Imana yirirwa ahandi igataha i Rwanda"* (God may spend the day in any other place but he has his home in Rwanda where he always returns) could be wrongly understood as suggesting a belief in a God that is busy during the day, moving from one place to the other, remembering to come to Rwanda only for the night. In this case Rwanda would be a home of a wayward God always absent and only present in the night when he is weary and exhausted. But the saying means the opposite. The emphasis is on the privilege Rwanda has to enjoy God's special attention. Whatever blessing God may give to any other people that will be just occasional, his attention is permanently on Rwanda. Among other corollaries of God's chosen domicile in Rwanda were expected to be peace and prosperity in the country. The absence of these privileges meant that God was no longer caring. At the heat of the massacre, the saying was revisited so that you could hear people lament in a bitter joke: "God has forgotten his way home!"

[9] Rucyahana, J. *The Bishop of Rwanda*, p xv.

In the midst of their suffering the Rwandan people affected by ethnic conflicts have asked questions about God's attitude toward their suffering and have lamented the inability of the church to prevent the tragedy. The question is, what kind of help were the people entitled to expect from the church and from God and what were the perils of their expectation?

The questions raised above that relate to the theological aspect of the conflict in Rwanda can fit into the larger debate on God's sovereignty and human free will. However, the present study does not focus on such theological discussions. It attempts to find answers to the questions by the use of a dialogue between two concrete cases, an interaction between the case of Rwanda and a biblical case that involves the intervention of God in a human ethnic conflict. The conflict between the tribes in Israel that resulted in the division of the monarchy in Israel, as recorded in 1 Kings 12:1-24, is a case of a tribal conflict that can shed some light on God's attitude and role in human conflict. Conversely, biblical data concerning this conflict approached from the perspective of a contemporary social crisis, such as the case of Rwanda, provide useful information about the human origin of this conflict as well as the rationale behind God's intervention in the conflict.

The main questions raised are divided into sub-questions designed to guide the discussion of the two conflicts in their respective contexts and to establish the responsibilities involved, both divine and human. The sub-questions are formulated as follows:

- What are the root-causes of the conflict that led to the Genocide in Rwanda and how do they compare to the causes of the conflict that led to the division of the monarchy in Israel?
- How does the attitude of the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda compare to that of the competing tribes in Israel?
- How do we evaluate the role and attitude of religious leaders in the two conflicts in the light of their responsibility to the people and their prophetic role toward the political leaders?

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- What was the external contribution to conflicts that led to the division of the kingdom in Israel and to the conflicts that culminated in the Genocide in Rwanda?

- God is said to have not only allowed the division of the Kingdom but even to have ordained it as a reaction against the failure of political leaders to keep his statutes and judgments (חֻקַּי וּמִשְׁפָּטַי). What is the possible socio-political element involved in the sin attributed to the leaders of the people?

- How does God's involvement in the conflict affect the human character of the conflict, which had an obvious tribal element? How does this apply to the tribal conflict in Rwanda?

1.3 Hypothesis

The hypothesis that this work seeks to substantiate is that a dialogue between two contexts, namely the context of conflict in a theocratic society described in the biblical text, on one hand, and the contemporary context of conflict in Rwanda, on the other hand, can shed necessary light on the understanding of both. Through this dialogue, the affirmation of God's sovereignty, over-emphasized in the theological interpretation of the events narrated in the biblical text, is mitigated by the human responsibility emphasized in the case of the Rwandan conflict. The dialogue leads to the understanding that in neither of the contexts is God perceived as imposing tragedies on people. Tragedies result from conflicts initiated by people who are free and responsible. God is not responsible for conflicts among humans, people are! Any conflict can be avoided or resolved; even God-given social diversity is not necessarily an irremediable obstacle to social harmony.

1.4 Research methodology

This study is designed as an interaction between two contexts, the contemporary context of social conflicts in Rwanda and the ancient context of conflicts in Israel that occurs in the biblical passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24. The interactive engagement between the two contexts is conducted in a way that allows insights from each context to enrich the understanding of the other. The contextual approach adopted for this study is inspired by

inculturation hermeneutics, as promoted by Ukpong.[10] This approach emphasizes the use of the contemporary context of the reader as the subject of interpretation of the biblical text. Accordingly, the issue of ethnicity and tribal conflict that remain the focus of this study is provided by the contemporary context of Rwanda, which also guided the selection of the biblical text relevant to the issue at stake. The assumption is that the conflict that produced the Genocide in Rwanda has some dynamic correspondences with the conflict that resulted in the division of the kingdom of Israel and that each of these conflicts has a contribution to elucidate a particular aspect of ethnic conflict. For example, God's involvement is made explicit in the case of Israel, while the ethnic character of this conflict is less emphasized. The Rwandan conflict is obviously ethnic, while the extent of God's involvement in this conflict is not straightforward. More details concerning the inculturation hermeneutic approach are provided in the second chapter of this study.

The present study starts with an analysis of the Rwandan context, with special attention on the issue of ethnicity and tribal conflicts, identified as the meeting point for the analysis of the two contexts. The first part of the work concentrates on a historical review of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda. This is a socio-historical analysis of Rwandan ethnicity which aims at identifying the possible root causes of the tribal conflicts that culminated in the Genocide in 1994 in Rwanda. This analysis pays attention to the worldview of the Rwandan people and the way they perceive the issue of ethnicity. It seeks to investigate the issues in relation to history, in order to understand how the Rwandan people have experienced ethnic conflicts throughout history. This analysis looks at ethnic conflicts in Rwanda with respect to the cultural, economic, political and religious implications to the lives of the people. The data used for this part of the research came from a variety of secondary sources produced by historians, anthropologists, missionaries, human rights activists and a variety of works produced after, and about, the Rwandan Genocide.

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[10] Ukpong, J.S. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa". In *Missionalia* 27(3) (November 1999) 313-329.

The next stage of the research focuses on the analysis of the biblical text. It involves a twofold approach. The first task is that of analysing the biblical passage of 1 Kings 12: 1-24, reporting the event of the division of the kingdom of Israel. This ancient event is perceived to have some commonalities with the Rwandan Genocide, both events appearing to be the results of tribal conflict. The selected text is subjected to a literary analysis inspired by the distantiation phase of the tri-polar exegetical model developed by Draper who describes the distantiation phase as follows:

> This stage of exegesis requires that the readers or reading community allow the text to speak for itself by creating space or critical distance between themselves and the text. It must be allowed to be other, different, over against ourselves and our concerns and questions.[11]

The literary analysis of the text selected for the present work is in the form of narrative criticism. It pays attention to elements characteristic of a narrative such as setting, plot, characters, time and place. This literary approach aims at pointing out issues involved in the narrative concerning the division of the kingdom of Israel, around which a dialogue with the Rwandan context can be carried out. It is this exegetical part that reveals the tribal aspect involved in the division of the kingdom.

The crisis recorded in 1 Kings 12:1-24 resulted from a socio-political situation of a nation, the people of Israel, in a particular period of history. This event cannot be fully understood, therefore, without considering the socio-political environment surrounding its immediate causes. The relevant biblical text under study needs first to be located in its historical context before it can be interpreted against the concrete situation of Rwanda. To this end, the literary analysis of the text is followed by a socio-historical discussion of the events that prepared and culminated in the division. The socio-historical discussion starts from the time of the emergence of Israel in Canaan. The focus is on the impact of different leadership styles and different political regimes on social relations among the tribes of Israel, from the tribal period, through the period of the united monarchy, to the

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[11] Draper, J.A. "Old Score and New Notes: Where and What Is Contextual Exegesis in the New South Africa?" in Speckman, M.T. and Larry T. Kaufman. eds. *Toward an Agenda for Contextual Theology*. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publication. 2001, pp 153, 154 (emphasis in the original). Draper was describing the stage he calls 'distantiation' in his Tri-Polar Exegetical Model.

event of the division. This overview aims at pointing out the possible link between the event of the division of the kingdom reported in 1Kings 12:1-24 and the recurrent conflicts that opposed the tribes of Israel from the early history of Israel, in order to establish the ethnic aspects of this conflict.

In the last part of this research the two contexts are brought together in dialogue. At this stage the work takes inspiration from the appropriation phase of the tri-polar exegetical model. The horizon of the text and its community, and the horizon of the interpreter and his community, are brought together to mediate a new consciousness, leading to a new praxis.[12] The dialogue revolves around the possible causes of conflict in both contexts and the role and responsibility of each of the protagonists. Beside the discussion of the responsibility of each of the conflicting tribes, God's position on the issue of ethnicity, his attitude towards human tribal conflicts and his involvement in human government are examined. Insights gathered at this stage help to find answers to some theological questions about the Rwandan conflict, such as God's role in the conflict.

1.6 Limitations

The issue of ethnicity is a very sensitive one, especially in a country like Rwanda, which is still dressing the wounds of the past atrocities and is yet to heal totally from the psychological trauma subsequent to the Genocide. Acknowledgement of the objectivity of any Rwandan who undertakes to discuss issues related to ethnicity risks too often, to be marred by his/her own ethnic identity.

In the discussion of the causes and the nature of the conflict in Rwanda, an attempt to avoid as much as possible judgmental comments on any particular tribe may result in the exclusion of some information that would otherwise be relevant to the clarity of the matter under discussion. To overcome these limitations, this study endeavours to consider different views on controversial issues and to point out their strengths and their weaknesses, without taking sides.

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[12] Draper, J.A. "Old Score and New Notes" in Speckman, M.T. and Larry T. Kaufman. eds. *Toward an Agenda for Contextual Theology*, p 158.

As a result of the war, the massacre of some, and the subsequent exile of others, has removed, or rendered inaccessible, some resourceful persons who were knowledgeable concerning the contours of ethnic issues in Rwanda and who could have provided important information relevant to this work.

1.5 Thesis structure

The present thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter provides a general introduction to the research. It explains its background and motivation, the issues researched and the methodological approach followed. The structure of the thesis is briefly described, as well as the limitations of this study.

The second chapter describes the contextual approach used by the study. It presents a survey of the historical development of inculturation theology and inculturation hermeneutics. The focus is on inculturation hermeneutics as developed by Ukpong, especially his emphasis on the context of the interpreter, used as the subject of interpretation.[13] An attempt is made to locate the inculturation approach in African interpretation and then follows a brief evaluation of the potential and the limits of this interpretive approach. The chapter ends with an examination of the applicability of the approach to the text of 1 Kings 12:1-24, selected for the present study. It explains some aspects of the tri-polar interpretive model which are useful for this study.

The inculturation hermeneutic approach followed by this study advocates the use of the context of the interpretor as the subject of interpretation. In this study the context of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda is the subject of interpretation. Chapters Three and Four describe this context. These chapters describe the peculiar characteristics of ethnicity in Rwanda and present a historical survey of ethnic relations, from the pre-colonial period to the time of the Genocide. Chapter Three provides a multidimensional analysis of the tribal conflicts in Rwanda, including the cultural, economic, political and religious

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[13] See Ukpong, J. S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes". in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 91 (1995), p 3-14.

implications of these conflicts to the lives of Rwandan people. Chapter Four discusses the relations of the Rwandan churches with political authorities in different regimes that governed the country. The focus is on the evaluation of the prophetic ministry of the Rwandan churches throughout Rwandan history, especially in the context of social conflicts.

After the analysis of the Rwandan context, the study moves to the analysis of the biblical text. Chapter Five focuses on the text in its immediate literary context, while Chapter Six analyses the larger socio-historical context of the event of the division narrated in the selected text. The study of the text begins with a literary analysis of 1 Kings 12:1-24 in Chapter Five. The exegetical study of this narrative examines the way the event of the division of the kingdom is described, in order to discover its potential dynamic correspondence within the Rwandan context of social conflicts. While the analysis of the text involves some historical-critical aspects, the focus remains on its literary examination, which considers its narrative form. The exegesis of the text pays attention to elements characteristic of a narrative such as setting, plot, characters, time and place. This literary approach aims at pointing out issues involved in the narrative about the division of the kingdom of Israel, concerning which a dialogue with the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda can be carried out. These issues become even clearer with the examination, in Chapter Six, of the larger socio-historical context of the event of the division. Chapter Six presents a socio-historical background of the events recorded in 1 Kings 12:1-24. The focus is on the conflict among Israel's tribes, from the early history of the tribes of Israel through to the monarchical period.

The analysis of the contexts of conflicts in Israel and in Rwanda in the previous chapters allows for a dialogue between the two in Chapter Seven. In an interactive discussion of the two contexts, Chapter Seven attempts to sum up some major socio-economic and political issues involved in both conflicts, as discussed in the previous chapters, and to examine the extent to which tribal diversity contributed to the conflicts. Issues covered include the leaders' resolve to monopolize the privileges of power in dynastic Israel, as in Rwandan tribal politics, and the people's reaction to such tendencies. The chapter

examines the contribution of external powers to internal conflicts in both contexts, as well as the attitude of God's servants in times of social conflicts in Israel and in Rwanda. This discussion is oriented towards the examination of the prospects of reconciliation and reconstruction of the Rwandan nation.

The last chapter concludes the thesis. Chapter Eight is a general conclusion reviewing the objectives of the study and indicating the extent to which they have been reached. This chapter recapitulates various issues pertaining to tribal conflicts covered in the study. It summarizes the findings of the study, assessing to what extent the research has answered the questions asked at the beginning of the study. The chapter ends with recommendations that some areas not sufficiently covered by this study could be the object of further research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The present study involves an interactive engagement between a biblical text, the passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24, which belongs to the ancient world, and a contemporary socio-political issue, the issue of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Rwanda. The contemporary Rwandan case will enrich the understanding of this ancient text and the message of the text will contribute toward the understanding of the contemporary Rwandan problem. In an attempt to bridge the gap between the two worlds - the ancient world that shapes the biblical text and the contemporary world that conditions the way I understand it - the contextual approach adopted in this study will follow the Inculturation Hermeneutic Framework.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the historical development of inculturation theology, with special focus on inculturation hermeneutics, as developed by Ukpong.[14] An attempt is made to locate the inculturation approach in African interpretation, followed by a brief evaluation of the potential and the limits of this approach. The chapter ends with an examination of the applicability of the approach to the text of 1 Kings 12:1-24. However, before all this, there is a need to understand the concept of inculturation.

2.1 Definition

Inculturation is a term now used in biblical hermeneutics and closely related to – and often associated with - "acculturation" and "enculturation", two well-known concepts in sociology and anthropology. The three terms are sometimes confused as if they are equivalent in meaning. However, although each concept connotes a kind of cultural change, they remain different in meaning.

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[14] See Ukpong, J. S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", pp 3-14.

"Acculturation" refers to the contact between different cultures, resulting in unavoidable cultural changes[15]. The phenomenon of acculturation may refer to a situation whereby one culture overwhelms and dominates another. This domination implies the unwelcome transference of foreign cultural traits: symbols, meanings, values and beheaviour, from one culture to the other.[16] But "acculturation" may also refer to a communication between cultures on a footing of mutual respect and tolerance. This contact implies an encounter between two different sets of symbols and conceptions, two different interpretations of experience, and two different social identities. The consequences of this encounter can be discerned *post factum* at the conscious level, but many of the conflicts it engenders are worked out at the subconscious level.[17]

Although "inculturation" is about an encounter between cultures and presupposes "acculturation", the two concepts are not identical. Inculturation has been defined as a deliberate and conscious effort of a society, touched by the phenomenon of cultural encounter, to develop a satisfactory and appropriate culture which takes into account the contingent event of the cultural encounter and considers this event as a fundamental to, and the foundation of, its future history.[18] From the perspective of Christianity, inculturation is the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures.[19] Inculturation goes beyond a simple contact between cultures to involve the insertion of the Christian faith and practices into a given culture.[20]

Inculturation is also different from enculturation. The term "enculturation" refers to the process of cultural learning. This is a process by which a person progressively learns and grows into a new culture. This process may include formal teachings and learning, but it is mainly an informal and even an unconscious experience by which a person teaches himself, through a process of adaptive learning, the rules which are given by the

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[15] Osei-Bonsu, Joseph. *The Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang. 2005, p 19.

[16] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*: London: Geoffrey Chapman. 1988, p 8.

[17] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p 7.

[18] Nkeramihigo, T. "Inculturation and the Specificity of Christian Faith" in Walligo, J.M. *et al*. *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*. Nairobi, Kenya: St Paul Publications-Africa. 1986, p 68.

[19] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation,* p 11.

[20] Osei-Bonsu, Joseph. *The Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, p 19.

society.[21] While acculturation presupposes an encounter between cultures with elements of the new cultures modifying and enriching the initial culture, enculturation focuses on the new culture into which socialization takes place. Both acculturation and enculturation refer to a one-way process by which elements of a new culture modify the initial culture of a person. Inculturation refers to a two-ways process through which Christian faith embodied in one culture encounters another culture with which it fuses and becomes part of. With inculturation, the faith fuses with the new culture and simultaneously transforms it into a new religious-cultural reality in a process that involves the interaction of mutual critique and affirmation.[22] The new reality results from mutual influence between faith and local culture.

Inculturation is an approach that cuts across different theological disciplines. In ecclesiological terms, the inculturation of the church has been defined as

> …the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes the force that animates, orients and motivates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.[23]

Applied to mission/evangelism, inculturation involves evangelising a culture from within, that is to say, proclaiming the good news to people from within the perspective of their culture.[24] Inculturation is not about the superimposition of Christian faith and way of life on a culture, it is rather about the integration of Christian teachings and practices into the given culture, while at the same time the local culture and practices are also integrated into the Christian message. The process of incultuation is therefore a two-way process by which mutual dialogue, influence and integration between the Christian message and the culture of the people occur. The influence of the Christian life and message concerning

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[21] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation,* p 5.
[22] Magesa, L. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books. 2004, p 5.
[23] Crollius, A. R. Inculturation : "Newness and Ongoing Process" in Walligo, J.M. *et al*. *Inculturation : Its Meaning and Urgency*. Nairobi, Kenya: St Paul Publications-Africa. 1986. p 43.
[24] Ukpong, J. S. "Christology and Inculturation: A New Testament Perspective" in Gibellini, R. ed. *Paths of African Theology*. London: SCM Press. 1994. p 40.

the cultural context of a particular people is sometimes referred to as inculturation *ad extra*, as opposed to what is called inculturation *ad intra,* referring to the influence of a given culture on the way the Christian life and message are articulated, lived and passed on.[25]

Inculturation is a programmatic endeavour, necessitated by the meeting of (cultural) realities in time and space. Applied to Africa, it refers to the encounter between missionary Christianity and African culture. This encounter must be an ongoing process of correlating and integrating the two sources.[26] Inculturation implies integrating Christian doctrines with "useful" African traditional cultural values and modern way of life.[27] Grounded on the conviction that Christ and his good news are dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people, inculturation aims at making Christianity permanent in Africa by making it a people's religion and a way of life.[28] The process should lead to a point where African Christians can – as is now common to say – live their faith as "truly African and truly Christian," without a split personality from divided loyalty.[29]

In the domain of biblical interpretation, the concern to correlate and integrate Christianity and African culture is expressed through a contextual interpretive approach called inculturation hermeneutics. This is a theological hermeneutics that lays much emphasis on African culture and worldview.[30] This approach seeks to make any community of ordinary people and their social-cultural context the *subject* of interpretation of the Bible through the use of the conceptual frame of reference of the people and the involvement of ordinary people in the interpretation process.[31] As an expression of African theological

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[25] Osei-Bonsu, Joseph. *The Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, p 21.
[26] Magesa, Laurenti. *Anatomy of Inculturation*, p 10.
[27] Magesa, Laurenti. *Anatomy of Inculturation*, p 10.
[28] Walligo, J.M. *et al*. *Inculturation : Its Meaning and Urgency,* p 12,13.
[29] Magesa, Laurenti. *Anatomy of Inculturation*, p 143.
[30] Martey, E. *African Theology*: *Inculturation and Liberation*. MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books. 1993, p 5.
[31] Ukpong, J.S. *et al*. *Reading the Bible in a Global Village*. Cape Town, South Africa: Society of Biblical Literature. 2002, p12. (emphasis in the original).

concerns, inculturation hermeneutics is a by-product of African Theology, as the historical development of this approach shows.

2.2 Brief overview of the development of inculturation hermeneutics

Inculturation hermeneutics is an approach to biblical interpretation inspired by the concerns of African theologians to promote an African interpretation of the Christian faith. The roots of the inculturation approach in theology are to be traced back to the early stages of African theology, a current which arose from the need to resist the domination and the oppression of colonialism. African theology went through different stages of development that resulted in subsequent development in biblical interpretation.

2.2.1 Development of African theology

From its inception, African theology was a theological counterpart of the political movement of liberation and it focused on the cultural-religious dimension of African revolution. African theology intended to take account of its African location, its culture, its religion and its problems of civilization.[32] Initially, African theology aimed at the Africanisation of the church, understood as the transfer of leadership and management of the church from European hands to the hands of Africans. Later the concept of Africanisation was expanded to include a reassessment of the traditional systems of theology from a new perspective, in order to come up with an "indigenised" theology.[33]

The Africanisation process was expressed through different idioms such as adaptation, accommodation, indigenisation, translation, incarnation, localisation, inculturation, interculturation contextualisation and so forth. These terms do not necessarily refer to different approaches of Africanisation, rather, sometimes one term was preferred in Francophone Africa, while Anglophone Africa was using a different term to refer to the same theory, or Roman Catholic theologians were using a term different from the one used by their Protestant colleagues, to express the same process. However, new terms

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[32] Gibellini, R. ed. *Paths of African Theology*, p16.
[33] Martey, E. *African Theology*: *Inculturation and Liberation,* p 65.

were usually adopted at different stages of the process to express a shift in emphasis with respect to what should be the object or the extent of the church's Africanisation policy.

In its early stages, the Africanisation trend promoted the transfer of church leadership and management to Africans and the identification of conceptual tools within the African culture, referred to as "stepping stones", which could be useful in communicating the Gospel message to Africans effectively.[34] African theologians noted that:

> An uncritical acceptance of the theology developed in the West, and an equally uncritical rejection of anything different from it, are both signs of theological immaturity and intellectual irresponsibility in Christian obedience – obedience to the Gospel within the context of a given, concrete, social situation. [35]

In its later development, Africanisation required a critical African theology that would operate on the basis of the cultural and religious experience of the African people, a theology responding to the questions posed by African society in its contemporary evolution;[36] in a nutshell, a theology that could promote an authentic African interpretation of the Christian faith.[37]

The term "adaptation" was prevalently used by African Catholic theologians, while "indigenisation" was used in Protestant circles. Both terms, originating from Western missionaries, shared the weakness of referring to the Africanization of some external and superficial aspects of the church such as liturgical adaptation or involvement of black priests in the management of the church. These terms were judged inadequate by African theologians, who supported a deeper level of Africanisation. They wanted the re-interpretation programme to include Christian doctrine, cult, pastoral practices and art, basing them on African culture and religious tradition.[38] It was the attempt to express better the content and the kind of Africanisation that resulted in the introduction of the

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[34] Martey, E. *African Theology*: *Inculturation and Liberation,* p 65.
[35] All Africa Churches Conference, *Africa in Transition: The Challenge and African Response* (Geneva: WCC, 1962, P. 89, cited in Martey, E. *African Theology,* p 64.
[36] Mushete, N. *"An Overview of African Theology "* in Gibellini, R. ed. *Paths of African Theology*, following Tshibangu,T. *Les propos d'une theologie Africaine*. Kinshasa : Presse Universitaire, 1974, p 5.
[37] Martey, E. *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* p 65.
[38] Martey, E. *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* p 65.

term "incarnation". Incarnation was preferred for its Christological metaphor that facilitated its understanding. Incarnation involved "immersing Christianity in African Culture [so that] just as Jesus became man, so must Christianity become African".[39] The purpose of inculturation was compared to the Son of God taking human flesh and adopting a human culture as a necessary concomitant of his human nature. In other words, the model was one of Christ's own enculturation, his cultural education as a first-century Jew from Galilee.[40]

Despite the advantages presented by the term incarnation, which had the merit of being christologically oriented and deeply rooted in Scripture, the incarnation analogy had certain inadequacies that rendered it inappropriate to express the process of Africanisation. Shorter has outlined at least three weaknesses of the incarnation analogy. Firstly, the analogy of the cultural education of the earthly Jesus could create the impression that the focus of Africanisation is on the first insertion of the Gospel into culture, with the risk of overlooking the on-going dialogue between Gospel and culture. Secondly, the idea of a pre-existent divine being, the Eternal Logos, taking human flesh encourages, in practice, a one-way view of inculturation. Lastly, the incarnation model may encourage people to succumb to the temptation of culturalism.[41] This risk is described by Shorter,

> In concentrating upon the inculturation of Jesus, upon how he accepted and identified with a specific culture, we may forget to ask how he himself challenged the culture of his adoption. We are so absorbed by the notion of the Son of God learning a human way of life that we overlook the fact that he clashed with that human tradition and that he proposed a radical change of the way his contemporaries understood it.[42]

The above-mentioned inadequacies may explain the fact that the term "incarnation" was not retained and the sociological term "inculturation" was preferred instead to express the process of Africanisation. However, if the term was abandoned, the economy of its

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[39] Martey, E. *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* p 66, (brackets in the original).
[40] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p 80.
[41] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p 82.
[42] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p 82.

content was preserved and later expressed through the new concept- Inculturation- a term which was accepted by most Roman Catholics and Protestants and Francophone and Anglophone theologians.

The term "inculturation" was derived from sociology and anthropology, but was given a theological definition that borrowed from the metaphor of incarnation. It was understood as "the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation".[43]

Although the inculturation model has been widely accepted among African theologians of various backgrounds to express and pursue the process of Africanisation, the term inculturation was not found broad enough to cover all aspects of contemporary African theology. The need to emphasize some specific African realities has led to different trends in African theology. African liberation theology and African feminist theology are trends in African theology that focus, respectively, on African political and socio-economic realities and on gender issues, while Africa's religio-cultural matters remain the domain of inculturation.

The development of African theology corresponded with a development in the domain of biblical interpretation. The development of African biblical hermeneutics that occurred in parallel with that of African theology is surveyed below.

2.2.2 Development of African biblical interpretation

Ukpong[44] has identified three main phases in the development of African biblical hermeneutics. He summarized the process in the following phases.

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[43] Martey, E. *African Theology* p 88, commenting on Arrupe, P. "Letter to the Whole Society of Inculturation" in *Studies in the International Apostolate of Jesuits* 7 (June 1978) p.9; cited in Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, p 6.
[44] Ukpong, J.S. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa", pp 313-329.

2.2.2.1 The reactive and apologetic phase (1930s-70s)

In this first phase, Ukpong states, the African biblical interpretation was characterised by its reactive and apologetic tone in response to the condemnation of African culture and religion by the missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries.[45] This was the inception of the comparative paradigm. Ukpong observes a reactive trend expressed through efforts to legitimise African religion and culture. The initiative of some Westerners who were sympathetic to the African cause was later joined by that of a number of African theologians who undertook studies that aimed at pointing out similarities between the African religion and culture and the religion and culture of the Old Testament. Ukpong mentions Williams' work, *Hebrewism of West Africa,* published in 1930. In this publication, Williams endeavours to point out similarities in languages and in worship between the Hebrew and the Ashanti of Ghana. He concludes that there is a possibility that the Ashanti of Ghana descended from the Jewish race or that there was a very early contact between the Ashanti and the Jews.[46]

Improving on Williams' methodology, as Ukpong continues to observe, more comparative studies were conducted around the 1960s. Going beyond extrinsic resemblances, which had been the focus of Williams' work, these later studies concentrated on religious themes and practices in both cultures. Among studies of this kind, Ukpong includes works such as Kibicho's article, "The interaction of the traditional Kikuyu concept of God with the biblical concepts"[47], Mbiti's "New Testament Eschatology in an African background: A study of the encounter between the New Testament Theology and Africa traditional concept[48], Dickson's article, "The Old

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[45] Ukpong, J.S. Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa, p 314.

[46] Williams, J.J. *Hebrewism in West Africa, From Nile to Niger With the Jews*. London: Allen &Unwin; New York: Lincoln Mac Veach/Dial Press. 1930, p35 referred to in Ukpong, J. *Developments in biblical interpretation in Africa*, p 315.

[47] Kibicho, S. The Interaction of the Traditional Kikuyu Concept of God with the Biblical Concept. *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* 2(4), 1968.

[48] Mbiti, J. *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A Study of the Encounter between the New Testament Theology and Africa Traditional Concepts*. London: London University Press. 1971.

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Testament and African Theology"[49] and Ukpong's own work, "Sacrifice, African and Biblical: A comparative study of Ibibio and Levitical sacrifices".[50]

These comparative studies resulted in the presentation of African Traditional Religion as the Africa's Old Testament and African culture and religion as a fertile ground for the gospel, a *praeparatio evangelica.*[51] Ukpong concedes that this was already an important step toward the valorisation of African culture and religion, but notes some important limitations for which the approach was criticised. According to him, the approach does not involve drawing hermeneutical conclusions and does not show concern for secular issues which have become important today in theological discussion in Africa. What is more, these studies are generally apologetic and sometime polemical. Their value, therefore, is mainly heuristic.[52] African theologians were determined to push further the process of Africanisation.

2.2.2.2 The proactive phase (1970s-90s)

In this second phase, Ukpong notes a more proactive approach that gradually takes over from the reactive approach that characterized the first phase. He notes more emphasis put on the use of African context as a resource in biblical interpretation; inculturation and liberation methods were expressions of this concern.[53] He observes that the concern of inculturation theology to make Christianity relevant to the African religio-cultural context was expressed, in biblical studies, through the Africa-in-the-Bible studies and evaluative studies. His appraisal of this phase is summarized below.

2.2.2.2.1 Africa-in-the-Bible studies

A tendency was noted in Western scholarship to read some biblical texts in a way that support a negative and offensive portrayal of Africa and African people. It was contended, for instance, that Africans were the cursed descendants of Ham, according to

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[49] Dickson, K.A. "The Old Testament and African Theology". *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 4(4): 141-184.
[50] Ukpong, J. *Sacrifice, African and Biblical: A comparative study of Ibibio and Levitical sacrifices.* Rome. Urbaniana University Press. 1987.
[51] Ukpong, J. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation", p 316.
[52] Ukpong, J. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation", p 316. (Quoting Dickson, K.A. *Theology in Africa.* London. Darton, Longman and Todd; Maryknoll: Oribis. 1984. p 181.).
[53] Ukpong, J. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation", p 316.

the list found in the Noah narrative in Genesis 10:1-14 and in Chronicles. 1:8-16.[54] References were made to such readings by those who used them for ideological purpose, as was the case in the Apartheid South Africa, or the oppression of aborigines in Latin America. Part of the purpose of Africa-in-the-Bible studies was to rectify the negative image about Africa embedded in these readings. On this subject, Ukpong includes works such as "The Table of Nations Reconsidered in African Perspective,"[55] "The Bible and Colonialism"[56] and "Stony is the Road that We Trod."[57]

In addition to this reaction to the negative portrayal of Africa, Ukpong noted that the Africa-in-the-Bible trend was concerned with examining the contribution of Africa and its people in biblical history. This contribution was undermined by Western scholarship who would even consider Egypt, a cradle of biblical scholarship, as belonging not to Africa but to the Ancient Near East. Ukpong names African scholars such as Mveng,[58] Mafico[59] and Adamo,[60] who produced works that sought to confirm the presence of Africa in the Bible and the contribution of Africans to biblical history.[61] According to Ukpong, the achievements of the Africa-in-the-Bible approach were more in terms of awareness created with respect to the contribution of Africa to biblical history.[62] In the phase that followed, studies concentrated on the encounter between the Bible and African religion and culture. This was the phase that Ukpong called the "evaluation studies phase".

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[54] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 317.

[55] Adamo, D.T. "The Table of the Nations Reconsidered in African Perspective (Gen 10)". *Journal of African Religion and Philosophy* 2 (1993):128-143.

[56] Prior, M. *The Bible and Colonialism*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

[57] Felder, C.H. ed. *Stony is the Road that We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress. 1991.

[58] Mveng, E. La Bible et l'Afrique Noire, in *The Jerusalem Congress on Black Africa and the Bible*, edited by Mveng & R.J.Z. Werblowski. Jerusalem. Jerusalem Interfaith Committee (1972):23-39.

[59] Mafico, T.L.J. Evidence for African Influence on the Religious Customs of the Patriarchs, in Abstracts: *American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature* 1989, edited by J.B. Wiggins & D.J. Lull. Atlanta: Scholars Press; p.100.

[60] Adamo, D.T. The Black Prophet in the Old Testament. *Journal of Arabic and Religious Studies* (1987) 4:1-8.
Adamo, D.T. Ethiopia in the Bible. *African Christian Studies* (1992) 8:51-64.

[61] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 318.

[62] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 318.

2.2.2.2.2 Evaluative studies

This model refers to studies that went beyond studying similarities and contrasts between the Bible and African religion and culture. Using these similarities and differences as a basis for interpretation, these studies aim at developing a new understanding of Christianity that is both biblical and African.[63] Ukpong refers to studies analysing biblical texts and uses their interpretation to point out values and disvalues of African culture, belief and practice against the background of biblical teaching.[64] He mentions the approach adopted in Kalilombe's work, "*Salvific value of African religion*"[65] and in Mac Fall's "*Approaching the Nuer through the Old Testament*".[66] Sometimes the contextual realities are considered to be disvalues, challenged with the message drawn from the biblical text. This is what he finds in the works of Manus, on ethnicity[67], Abe's work on the concept of covenant[68] and Onwu's study of the parable of the unmerciful servant.[69]

Another way is to interpret biblical themes against the background of African culture and practice. The understanding of the text thus reached, informed by the African situation, is both African and Christian.[70] Here Ukpong gives examples from Wambudta's Savannah theology[71] and Abijole's interpretation of the concept of principalities and powers in African context.[72] There is also an approach that aims at communicating the biblical message through the use of concepts, from the Bible or from the culture, that show continuity between African culture and Christianity. These concepts, with which Africans

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[63] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 318.

[64] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 319.

[65] Kalilombe, P. Salvific Value of African Religions: A Contextualized Bible Reading for Africa. In *Christianisme et l'Identité Africaine: Point de Vue Exegetique – Actes du Premier Congres des Biblises Africaines*, edited by A. Sa Agang *et al*. Kinshasa: Facultes Catholiques: (1980) 205-220.

[66] MacFall, E. A. *Approaching the Nuer through the Old Testament*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1970.

[67] Manus, C. Galatians 3:28- "A Study on Paul's Attitude Towards Ethnicity: Its Relevance to the Contemporary Nigeria". *Ife Journal of Religion* (1982) 2:18-26.

[68] Abe, G.O. "Berith: Its Impact on Israel and its Relevance to the Nigerian Society". *African Journal of Biblical Studies* (1986) 1:66-73.

[69] Onwu, N. "The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant" (Mt 18:21-35), in *Gospel Parables in African Context*, edited by Justin Ukpong. Port Harcourt: CIWA Publications, 1988, p 43-51.

[70] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 318.

[71] Wambutda, D.N. "Savannah Theology: A Reconsideration of the Biblical Concept of Salvation in the African Context". *Bulletin of African Theology* (1981) 3 (6): 137-153.

[72] Abijole, B. "St Paul's Concept of Principalities and Powers in African Context". *Africa Theological Journal* (1988) 17 (2): 118-129.

can easily identify, are used as bridgeheads.[73] To illustrate this approach, Ukpong refers to Pobee's use of the concept of ancestor to describe Christ[74] and Mbiti's description of Jesus as the conqueror of evil spirits.[75] In yet another approach, insights from the Bible provide a theological foundation for a contemporary practice.[76] In this category, Ukpong fits Buetubela's model of relationship between mother churches and mission churches in early Christianity to support the autonomy of the young African churches,[77] Ukpong's own work pointing out the biblical foundation for the inculturation of Christianity[78] and Osei-Bonsu's focus on the biblical foundations for contextualization of Christianity in Africa.[79] While the evaluative studies were concerned with the development of a new understanding of Christianity that would be both biblical and African, a growing concern to address secular issues was giving rise to African liberation theology.

Liberation theology used the Bible to address the issues of oppression, poverty and discrimination. It is a theology used as a weapon in the hands of the oppressed and marginalised to reclaim the liberating heritage of the Gospel.[80] Ukpong described the liberation approach and its corollaries, liberation hermeneutics that addressed the issues of economic exploitation, black theology that dealt with race discrimination and feminist theology, which concentrated on gender oppression.

2.2.2.2.2.1 Liberation hermeneutics

Liberation hermeneutics developed as the expression of liberation theology in biblical interpretation. Liberation hermeneutics were based on biblical witness maintaining that God condemns oppression, stands with the oppressed and liberates. For the liberationists,

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[73] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 320.
[74] Pobee, J. S. *Toward an African Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon. 1979.
[75] Mbiti, J. "Some African Concepts of Christology", in *Christ and the Younger Churches*. Edited by George F. Vicedom. London: SPCK, 1972.
[76] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 320.
[77] Buetubela, B. « L'Autonomie des Jeunes Eglises et les Actes », in *Les Actes des Apôtres et les Jeunes Eglises: Actes du deuxième Congres des Biblistes Africaines*, edited by Amewowo et al, Ibadan, 31 Juillet-3 Aut, 1984, Kinshasa; Facultes Theologiques 1990,pp 77-105.
[78] Ukpong, J. S. "Inculturation and Evangelization: Biblical Foundations for Inculturation". *Vidyajyoti* (1984) 58 (5): 298-307).
[79] Osei-Bonsu, J. "The Contextualization of Christianity: Some New Testament Antecedents". *Irish Biblical Studies* (1990) 12 (3): 129-148.
[80] Martey, E. *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*, p 57.

the Bible testifies to the liberation of the oppressed people that began with God's liberative act in the Hebrew Scriptures and found fulfilment in Jesus the Christ in the New Testament.[81] According to Ukpong, the God of the Bible is a liberating God who delivered the Hebrews from socio-political oppression in Egypt. The Exodus narrative provides grounds for the hermeneutics of political liberation. God's instructions to Israel and Jesus' attitude and teaching in favour of the poor provide the basis for the hermeneutics of economic liberation. The agenda of liberation theology goes beyond the condemnation of political oppression and economic exploitation to include a commitment to the transformation of the society. Ukpong found this emphasis in authors such as Banana[82] and Ela.[83] In the part of the continent where oppression was based on race discrimination, social transformation required addressing issues of race relations. This was the preoccupation of Black theology.

2.2.2.2.2.2 Black theology

African Black theology was born out of black anthropological awareness in Southern Africa among a people that had experienced a history of racial discrimination, political oppression and economic exploitation under the oppressive regime of Apartheid. This awareness called for the creation of the Black Consciousness Movement, a movement that increased Africans' awareness of their political oppression and economic exploitation. Black theology was a theological expression of black consciousness. The agenda of Black theology was to bring radical transformation of the dehumanising social system. Steve Biko, a prominent figure behind the Black Consciousness Movement, understood Black theology as a situational interpretation of Christianity, [which] seeks to relate present-day black people to God within the context of the blacks' suffering and their attempt to get out of it.[84]

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[81] Boesak. A. "The Relationship Between Text and Situation, Reconciliation and Liberation in Black Theology" in *Voices from the Third World*, vol .2, no1, June 1979; cf. his *Farewell to Innocence*, p.20.

[82] Banana, C.S. *The Gospel According to the Guetto*. Guero: Mambo Press. 1981 see also Banana, C.S. *Theology of the Promise*. Harare: College Press.

[83] Ela, J.M. "Christianity and liberation in Africa", in *Paths of Afrcan Theology*, edited by R. Gibellini. Maryknoll: Oribis: 146-147.

[84] Biko, S. *I Write what I Like*: *A Selection of His Writings*. Ed. Aelred Stubbs San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986 , p59 quoted in Martey, M. African Theology, p103.

For South African black theologians, biblical theology was to be an "engaged theology", addressing specific situations and this was precisely what the biblical authors were doing to the communities which they addressed. Biblical themes containing liberating messages are studied and used to support the liberation struggle. According to Ukpong, this is the position of people like Moore,[85] Tutu[86] and Boesak,[87] for whom the Bible remains central to Black theology in its struggle for liberation.[88] A more radical position, however, suggests that for Black theology to be an effective tool for liberation, it needs to adopt a critical approach to the Bible in order to break with the ideological assumption of the elite that, at times, silences the voice of the oppressed. This is how Ukpong understands Mosala,[89] for instance, who contends that historical materialism is a more effective tool for a biblical hermeneutics of liberation.[90]

In addition to the valorisation of the African culture that remained the preoccupation of inculturation theology, African liberation theology went a long way in addressing socio-political and economic issues. The area of gender oppression still required special attention. This was the object of feminist hermeneutics.

2.2.2.2.2.3 Feminist hermeneutics

Feminist hermeneutics departs from the traditional mode of biblical interpretation that is deemed to use the Bible to support the oppression of women. As Ukpong observes, feminist approaches include the objection to, and rejection of, the androcentric interpretation of biblical texts, whereby God is portrayed in male terms and given only male attributes, while feminine attributes are ignored. Other feminist approaches focus on women in the Bible. These seek to critique or re-interpret biblical texts that are

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[85] Moore, B. "Black Theology Revisited" in *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* I, 1984. p 7.

[86] Tutu, D. "Whither African Theology?", in Fashole-Luke, E.W. *et al.* eds. *Christianity in Independent Africa*. London: Rex Collins. 1978. and Tutu, D. "The Theology of Liberation in Africa" in Appiah-Kubi, K. and Sergio Torres. eds. *African Theology en Route*. Maryknoll: Oribis. 1979.

[87] Boesak, A. *Black and Reformed: Apartheid Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition*. Johannesburg: Scotaville. 1984.

[88] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 322.

[89] Mosala, I. J. *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology I South Africa*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans. 1989.

[90] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 322.

oppressive to women, or to highlight those texts that portray women positively.[91] Among holders of these views, Ukpong has identified Oduyoye,[92] Nasimiyu-Wasike[93] and Okure,[94] who have been prolific in this area.

During this period, extending from the 1970s to the 1990s biblical studies were taken far beyond the mere recognition of African culture and religion, as a preparation for the Gospel. Biblical hermeneutics became a tool used to address relevant issues in the African context. Issues of cultural oppression were addressed through inculturation theology, economic exploitation through liberation hermeneutics, racial discrimination through black theology and gender oppression through feminist hermeneutics. These socio-political and economic issues brought to the attention of scholarship at this stage continue to be addressed, in an even more assertive way, in what Ukpong sees as the third phase, a phase in which the reader receives more attention.

2.2.2.3 The reader-centred phase (1990s)

The third phase is still proactive. In addition to the preoccupations of the preceding phase, Ukpong identifies new emphases directed at the contribution of ordinary readers. Another orientation emphasises the African context, which becomes the subject of biblical interpretation.[95] These emphases are exemplified, respectively, by the contextual Bible study promoted by West and by Ukpong's Inculturation Hermeneutics.

2.2.2.3.1 Contextual Bible study

The features of this approach, as pointed out by Ukpong, include its undeavour to empower ordinary African readers of the Bible, those who are not academically trained, to read the Bible. These readers are involved in a process of biblical interpretation and are

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[91] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 323-4.
[92] Oduyoye, M.A. "Violence against Women: a Challenge to Christian Theology" in *Journal of Inculturation theology* 1 (1994) (1) 47-60; Oduyoye, M.A. "An African Woman's Christ." *Voices from the Third World*, vol 11, no 2, December 1988.
[93] Nasimiyu-Wasike, A. "Polygamy: A Feminist Critique", in *The Will to Arise*, edited by Mercy Amba Oduyoye & Musimbi R.A.Kanyoro. Maryknoll:Oribis:73-80.
[94] Okure, T. "Biblical Perspectives on Women; Eve the Mother of All Living" (Gen 3:20) in *Voices from the Third World* 8 (1985) (3).
[95] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 324.

encouraged to critically study the Bible in relation to their situations and for personal and societal transformation.[96] This hermeneutical approach combines the conventional exegetical tools with the resources drawn from the people's culture, their history and their experience. The readers who are not theologically trained are empowered to develop a critical awareness and identify and use critical resources in their reading of the Bible. The advocates of this approach feel that it provides the best framework for the appropriation of the biblical message to the community of believers.[97] A different way of bridging the gap between the academic reading of the Bible and the needs of ordinary African Christians was suggested by Ukpong, in his model now known as Inculturation Hermeneutics.

2.2.2.3.2 Ukpong's inculturation interpretive approach

Ukpong's starting point is the concern to make the word of God alive and active in contemporary African societies and in the lives of individual Christians within their socio-cultural contexts.[98] He contends that African scholars cannot achieve this goal unless they move away from the tradition of Western biblical scholarship and the corresponding interpretive grid that hinders their own cultural perspective from having the expected impact. To him, inculturation hermeneutics is an approach that helps finding adequate answers to relevant questions that Africans are now asking about their life in Christ. He describes this approach as one that consciously and explicitly seeks to interpret the biblical text from socio-cultural perspectives of different peoples. This includes both their religious and secular culture as well as their social and historical experiences.[99]

In his approach, Ukpong encourages a holistic understanding of culture that includes both secular and religious aspects and requires reading the Bible within the African religious, economic, social and political contexts. This approach makes room for interface between the academic and ordinary reading of the Bible, paying attention to the worldview of the poor, oppressed and marginalised. It uses the African context as the subject of

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[96] Ukpong, J. *Developments in Biblical Interpretation*, p 324.
[97] See West, G. *Contextual Bible Study*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster.
[98] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 5.
[99] Ukpong, J.S. "The parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-13): An Essay in Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutic" *Semeia*, p190.

interpretation of the biblical text.[100] In short, this approach attempts to combine the cultural aspect of inculturation theology with the concerns of Liberation Hermeneutics and Contextual Bible Study. In Ukpong's interpretive approach, the reader does not try to discover through mere historical analysis the original meaning of the text to be applied to the present context, because there is no one and absolute meaning. Rather, the reader approaches the text with a critical awareness about his/her contemporary context and allows the text to evoke in him/her appropriate responses and commitments about the context. The text is read dynamically within the contemporary context.[101] Ukpong outlines five component characteristics of this interpretation process namely, an *interpreter* in a certain *context* making meaning of a *text* using a specific conceptual *framework* and its *procedure.[102]*

2.2.2.3.2.1 The interpreter

In Ukpong's inculturation hermeneutics approach, the focus is on the interpreter and his/her context. In reference to Barton's classification of biblical criticism,[103] Ukpong locates his approach among theories that focus on the reader. This approach requires that the interpreter be acquainted with his/her culture, so as to be able to view it critically. He/she needs to consciously take his/her socio-cultural context as a point of departure in the reading. Moreover, the interpreter is required to be aware of specific subjective factors arising from his/her context that condition him/her giving rise to biases in order to control them and use them critically.[104]

2.2.2.3.2.2 The context

Inculturation hermeneutics is a contextual hermeneutics. For Ukpong, this means a hermeneutical approach that is consciously done from the perspective of a particular context, namely the perspective of the world-view of the interpreter's culture. The context here is understood as an existing human community chosen to be the subject of

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[100] Ukpong, J.S. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa",p 325.
[101] Ukpong, J.S. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa", p 326.
[102] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 5.
[103] Borton classifies modern biblical criticism into four groups: those that focus on the biblical text and its context, those that focus on the historical events narrated in the text, those that focus on the author (s) of the text, and those that focus on the reader. See Borton, J. "Classifying biblical criticism" in *JSOT* 29:19-35.
[104] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 5.

interpretation. This community may be a country, a church denomination, an ethnic group or any other social entity united by a shared worldview and life experiences, whether historical, social, political, economic or religious. Making such community the subject of interpretation implies that the interpreter, who is an insider in that community, draws his/her interpretive materials from the daily life issues of the community.[105]

2.2.2.3.2.3 The text

In the interaction with the text, inculturation hermeneutics emphasises a holistic interpretation. Here Ukpong means that different aspects affecting the meaning of the text are analysed. These aspects include the inner logic of the text, the immediate, mediate and larger literary context, the historical context of the text and the contemporary context of the interpreter.[106] Ukpong has outlined what he called "axes" around which a holistic interpretation of a text rotates. These axes are the following:

- The structure of the argument that helps to grasp the inner logic of the text;
- The literary context that helps to avoid an overly subjective and skewed understanding of the text;
- The historical context that helps to understand the biblical world that made the text meaningful;
- The analysis of the interpreter's context that enables the interpreter to be aware of the factors that influence him/her as he/she reads the text so as to exercise control over them and to understand the text in a contemporary setting.[107]

Ukpong's interpretive process involves an interactive engagement between the biblical text and particular socio-cultural issues such that the gospel message serves as a critique of the culture and/or the cultural perspective enlarges and enriches the understanding of the text.[108] The interpreter approaches the text, bringing not only interpretive materials from his/her context, but also a mental construct. Ukpong calls this a conceptual framework that conditions his/her particular hermeneutical orientation.

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[105] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 6.
[106] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 7.
[107] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 7.
[108] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 7.

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2.2.2.3.2.4 The conceptual framework

Ukpong believes that people doing exegesis are trained within a mental construct into which they grow and within which they operate. This is an orientation in biblical interpretation geared toward certain areas of concern about the biblical text.[109] Any exegetical framework is characterised by theoretical assumptions that influence the kind of questions asked about the text.[110] For Ukpong, the inculturation hermeneutics framework is characterized by its specific cultural assumptions, on the one hand, and its presuppositions about the nature of the Bible, on the other hand.

2.2.2.3.2.4.1 Basic assumptions of the inculturation framework

Ukpong outlines four basic cultural assumptions that constitute the ground for the inculturation framework. The basic assumptions characteristic of African culture include first, the unitive view of reality that is exempt from the western dichotomy between matter and spirit, sacred and profane; second is the divine origin of the universe and the interconnectedness between God, humanity and the cosmos, resulting in the existence of a network of relationships between God, humanity and the cosmos; third is the sense of community whereby a person's identity is defined in terms of belonging to a community and last is the emphasis on the concrete rather than the abstract.[111] These aspects, believed to be common to all African world-views make up cultural assumptions guiding the methodology followed by inculturation hermeneutics. This approach operates also with certain presuppositions concerning the nature of the Bible and the goal of exegesis.

2.2.2.3.2.4.2 Presuppositions of inculturation hermeneutics

The inculturation framework recognizes two aspects inherent in the nature of the Bible. The Bible is viewed, on the one hand, as the word of God containing norms for Christian living and, on the other hand, as an ancient literary document "worth attention beyond its

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[109] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 7.
[110] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 8.
[111] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 9.

time".[112] Therefore, exegesis aims at actualising the meaning of the text in a contemporary context and, though historical critical tools are used, the focus is not on the historical context but on the theological meaning of the text and its relevance for the present.[113] In Ukpong's understanding, the inculturation framework does not endorse the view that assigns to the text one universal and eternal meaning. Rather, the text is seen as capable of yielding different valid meanings, depending on the point of departure of the interpreter. However, the possibility of wrong meanings is recognized. The meaning of the entire Bible and the basic biblical principles and affirmation, such as love and justice, helps to check the soundness of the theology of any text and any meaning derived from it. No meaning is acceptable if it contradicts such principles.[114] The meaning of the text is a product of the interaction between the contemporary situation and the text in its historical setting. The interpretation of the text aims at producing an actualised meaning of the text in the contemporary context of the interpreter.[115] All these assumptions and presuppositions permeate the whole process of interpretation, informing each step of the process. The steps followed in this interpretive model are described below.

2.2.2.3.2.5 Steps followed in inculturation hermeneutics

Ukpong believes that an awareness of, and commitment to, this approach that seeks strong interaction of the Christian faith with all aspects of culture life and thought is a precondition for doing inculturation hermeneutic. He thinks that the interpreter should not only be committed to the Christian faith, but also to the process of actualising the biblical message within his/her context. For this, he/she needs to be in a position to control his/her cultural biases so as to use them critically.[116] Ukpong has outlined four steps that the interpreter, equipped with the prerequisites mentioned, follows in the process of interpretation. The steps are discussed below.

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[112] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 9 following Stendahl, (1984:4),quotation marks in the original.
[113] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 10.
[114] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 10.
[115] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 10.
[116] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 10.

Firstly, the interpreter identifies his/her own specific context that corresponds or is dynamically equivalent to the context of the text. The historical analysis of the text provides information with respect to the socio-cultural, economic, political or religious aspects reflected in the text that may have corresponding or dynamically equivalent situations in the contemporary context of the interpreter. This is achieved through a dialogue between the total context of the interpreter and the historical context of the text.[117]

The second step still focuses on the context of the interpreter, which provides the background against which the text is to be studied.[118] Once identified it is analysed. Ukpong suggests five levels in the analysis of the context of the interpreter after its identification in step one.

At level one, a *phenomenological* analysis is done, aiming at the clarification of the specific issues in the context of the interpreter against which the text is to be interpreted. These are issues that are found in both contexts that make them similar or dynamically equivalent.

At level two, a *socio-anthropological* analysis focuses on the worldview of the people, with respect to the issues under discussion. The analysis at this level seeks to understand how the people in the interpreter's context perceive the issues, pointed out in the text, that are also real in their own context.

At the third level, a *historical* analysis seeks to investigate the issues in relation to the history of the concerned community. This is a look into history, to understand how the people have experienced the issues identified in the text.

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[117] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 11.
[118] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 11.

At the fourth level, a *social* analysis looks at the issues with respect to their implication to the lives of the people. This includes cultural, economic, political and religious implications.

The last level concerns the *religious* dimension of the issue. The analysis seeks to point out the religious implications of the issues identified.[119]

These are levels through which, according to Ukpong, the context of the interpreter is analysed. He does not mean, however, that all these levels will be required in all cases.[120] Once the interpreter's context is clarified, he/she then moves to the third step, concentrating on the biblical text.

The **third step** in the process of inculturation hermeneutics is the analysis of the text. Emphasis is on the historical context of the text that provides insights needed to relate the text to the contemporary context. Issues analysed in the historical context of the interpreter's people are now examined in the historical context of the text. The aim is to understand how they were experienced and their effects on the lives of the people of the text.[121]

The **fourth step** is the analysis of the biblical text in the light of the context of the interpreter. At this stage the text is analysed in its immediate and mediate contexts. Due attention is paid to the larger context and a critical review of the existing interpretation is necessary. The goal of interpretation is always to arrive at the meaning of the text dynamically, in the contemporary context. The questions put to the text are those provided by insights from the analysis of the interpreter's context. The fruits of the whole discussion are then gathered and the message is drawn from the text which is now ready for concrete actualisation.[122]

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[119] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 11.
[120] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 11.
[121] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 11.
[122] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 11.

As an application of inculturation theology to biblical interpretation inculturation hermeneutics is committed to producing a kind of Christianity that is truly biblical and truly relevant to Africa. In this, the interpretive approach faces the same challenges and shares some strengths and limitations with the theological approach, of which it is the expression.

2.3   The potential of inculturation hermeneutics

The major strength of the inculturation hermeneutics approach resides in the attention it gives to the context of interpretation and the worldview of the interpreter. It is concerned less with the acquisition of theoretical knowledge than with the appropriation of the biblical message to the concrete situation, in order to provide answers to questions of practical life. Interpretations that focus on the historical context of the text and on the meaning intended by the author have too often resulted in the formulation of theories and principles than do not necessarily help to address the real issues in the peoples' daily life in Africa.[123] Inculturation hermeneutics is an engaged hermeneutics. It does not seek merely to understand the meaning of a text but also to actualise the theological meaning of the text, utilizing it to address concrete issues in a contemporary context. It goes beyond the search for the objective universal and eternal biblical truth contained in the text and is more concerned with a pragmatic and existential reading of the text.[124] The outcome of this approach is a Christianity that is integrated in all aspects of daily life, into the sufferings, joy, work, aspirations, fear and needs of the African.[125]

Inculturation hermeneutics acknowledges the classical character of the Bible and the validity of secular literary techniques in its investigation without making this the end of exegesis. Both the historical and literary contexts of the text are taken into consideration

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[123] One Roman Catholic Bishop in Rwanda is reported to have lamented that the Gospel in Rwanda has been like a beehive placed at the top of a tree (the practice in Rwanda is to place beehives in trees and to wait for migrant bees to come and settle inside, then the beehives are moved to a designated place for the bees to build their honeycombs). He was referring to the little impact of Christianity in the real life of Rwandan peoples. To him, the way the teachings of the Christian Gospel were presented left a gap between the theoretical truth of the Gospel and the real needs of the people. The Gospel was not brought low enough to reach the people where they are.

[124] Ukpong, J. S. "Reading the Bible in a Global Village: Issues and Challenges from African *Readings*" in Ukpong et al. *Reading the Bible in a Global Village*, p 20.

[125] Shorter, A. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p 253.

so that the text is understood in its own context before it is reread dynamically against the background of the contemporary context. Interpretation done within the canon and in comparison with other texts, serves to prevent the risk of assigning to the text a meaning and a theology that are not consistent with the large context of the text. Although these aspects of the context of the text are considered, the focus of inculturation hermeneutics remains more on the context of interpretation than on the text.

The attention reserved to the context, the culture and worldview of interpretation remain the major elements that make inculturation hermeneutics an appropriate contextual hermeneutics. However, this approach has some limitations that are worth pointing out.

2.4 Limitations of inculturation hermeneutics

As an application of inculturation theology and a by-product of African Theology, inculturation hermeneutics is often described in opposition to Western hermeneutical approaches. In their endeavour to promote an authentic African interpretation of the Christian faith the champions of inculturation often seem to insinuate that Christian faith that is truly African should be stripped off all kinds of Western influences viewed as sequels of colonialism or expressions of imperialism. However, though it is easy to point out some cultural values and assumptions peculiar to the African worldview that have been ignored by Western theologians, the task of differentiating in an exhaustive way what is Western from what is authentically African in the Christian faith remains very difficult, if not impossible, just as efforts to isolate Christianity in its essence from elements of the Western and the Jewish cultures that served as mediums for its expansion would be futile. Inculturation is surely a relevant corrective of the shortcomings of traditional interpretive approaches with respect to the consideration of the African perspective ignored by those approaches, but it does not render them irrelevant.

Inculturation hermeneutics has the merit of emphasising the role of the African context and worldview in the interpretive process and in this it is an appropriate corrective to western approaches that do not pay due attention to important realities of the African worldview. However, the strengths of this approach with respect to contextualization

should not be the grounds for minimizing the achievements of traditional interpretive approaches, coined "Western", which are still helpful and relevant to Africa. If African culture has its specificity that makes it authentically African, this does not make Africa a cultural island. African culture, and any culture for that matter, is not a closed and static system; any culture is characterized by its openness to change through encounters with other realities.[126] Stressing elements of the African culture to which non-African interpreters have not paid due attention either because they do not understand them or they are not comfortable with them, does not mean that their approaches are totally irrelevant or useless in the African context.

The endeavour to recover the so-called "original meaning of the text", as it was "intended by the author", which is the preoccupation of traditional interpretive approaches, may lead to an incomplete process of interpretation when it fails to contextualize the message of the text to make it relevant to the contemporary situation. Cases exist in which the universal and timeless applicability of principles resulting from these interpretive approaches remain puzzling for scholars.[127] However, the attempt to discover the range of meanings that the text might have had in its context of production would not be a weakness. At this level of the analysis of the text, Ukpong's inculturation approach may be supplemented by the distantiation phase of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, as suggested by Draper:

> This stage of exegesis requires that the readers or reading community allow the text to speak for itself by creating space or critical distance between themselves and the text. It must be allowed to be other, different, over against ourselves and our concerns and questions. It is rooted in a specific historical, social, cultural and economic context. It is addressing its own questions relating to its needs. Its language of composition and rhetorical conventions are different to ours and so is its worldview. Hence exegesis should consider both the *context of the text* and

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[126] Nkeramihigo, Th. "Inculturation and the Specificity of Christian Faith" in Walligo, J.M. *et al. Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*. Nairobi, Kenya: St Paul Publications-Africa. 1986, p 69.
[127] Examples of this are instructions concerning women in the St. Paul's Epistles. Whether their applicability should be limited to particular situations Paul was addressing or extended to all women everywhere remain a debated issue.

how it came into being and the *structure of the text*, and how it signals meaning and seeks to manipulate the reader.[128]

If the discovery of the range of meanings the text may have had in its context of production is a commendable achievement, this is far from being the end of hermeneutics. The challenge remains with respect to knowing what to do with those possible meanings, as far as they can be recovered. Traditional interpretive approaches differentiated exegesis, the process of recovering "what the text meant then" that is, in its own time, from hermeneutics, the application of the recovered meaning to the contemporary context, "what the text means now". Such an approach resulted too often in forcing universal and timeless application of messages of particular texts to contemporary identified contexts. Advocates of inculturation hermeneutics object to this approach that assumes that a text has a fixed past meaning. They contend that the classical understanding of hermeneutics as a subjective, contextual exercise concerned with the application of the meaning of the text to the present context does not apply, since the meaning we get of the past is not the meaning of what happened in the past *pure and simple,* but of what happened in the past filtered through the present.[129] Inculturation hermeneutics advocates a shift in the focus from the meaning of the text in the original context to its meaning in the contemporary context. This approach is based on the assumption that biblical texts are plurivalent and can be understood differently, according to different contexts and perspectives. The approach suggests that there are dynamics built into biblical texts for guiding interpretation and these dynamics can function in different contexts to produce different, but valid, interpretations.[130]

The limitations of inculturation hermeneutics are not of the kind that can nullify its potentialities as an African interpretive approach. The interpretive approach used in the present work draws much from inculturation hermeneutics, especially with respect to the attention paid to the contemporary context of the reader.

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[128] Draper, J.A. "Old Score and New Notes", pp 153, 154. (emphasis in the original). Draper was describing the stage he calls 'distantiation' in his Tri-Polar Exegetical Model.
[129] Ukpong J.S. "Reading the Bible in a Global Village", p18, emphasis in the original.
[130] Ukpong, J.S. "The Parable of the Shrewd Manager", p 191.

2.5 Inculturation hermeneutics and the present work

The approach followed in this study is appropriate to the second phase of Ukpong's classification. This is a phase where African biblical interpretation is described as reactive and proactive. In this approach the African context is used as a resource for biblical interpretation, while liberation and inculturation hermeneutics are the dominant methods.[131] In the present study the context is narrowed down to that of Rwanda, with special focus on situations and events in the history of this country that may have a bearing on the Genocide of 1994. The present work has three major points or steps, similar to what Grenholm and Patte,[132] and later Draper,[133] called "Poles" of contextual exegesis in their Tri-Polar Exegetical Model.

The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model is known as an interpretive approach initiated by the scholars Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, and later on, developed further by Jonathan Draper. The three poles refer to three major phases or moments characteristic of the approach, namely the distantiation, contextualizaton and appropriation phases.

The distantiation phase focuses on the text, which is subjected to a critical analysis in an attempt to retrieve its most appropriate meaning in its own context, before applying that meaning to the reader/interpreter context. Distantiation means that the interpreter takes a distance and allows the text to speak to him/her, as the following comment explains:

> During the distantiation phase, the reader/interpreter strives to allow the text to speak for itself in its own context, and to address its particular problems and needs. This process requires the reader to stay far away from the text in order to hear what exactly it meant for its original audience before it can also address the reader/interpreter's life situation. The distantiation is therefore viewed as a moment whereby the reader/hearer seeks to listen rather than to talk. This is a

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[131] Katho, B *To Know and Not to Know: Jeremiah's Understanding and Its Relevance to the Church in DRC Congo*, PhD dissertation. University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2003.
[132] Grenholm, C. and Daniel Patte. eds. *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International. 2000.
[133] Draper, J. A. "Reading the Bible as Conversation: A Theory and Methodology for Contextual Interpretation of the Bible in Africa". In *Grace &Truth, A Journal of Catholic Reflection for Southern Africa*. Vol 19 No 2, 2002/2, pp 12-24. See also Draper, J.A. "Old Score and New Notes".

moment wherein various tools are used to allow the text be itself in its origin and social location, with the goal of reconstructing it in its original context.[134]

The disantiation "pole", as important as it is in this model, is only one step which needs to be completed by others in the process of the interpretation. The approach places emphasis on the necessary dialogue between the text and the interpreter, whose context is analysed in the contextualization phase.

The contextualizaton "pole" is concerned with the analysis of the context of the interpreter and his community. It is this context of the interpreter that determines the kind of questions that he/she brings to the text, as well as the kind of answer he/she may expect.[135] It is during this moment that the interpreter speaks back, to the text, challenging it with the specific questions and problems from his/her life-situation and from his/her context. For this dialogue to bear the expected fruits the interpreter is required to have a good knowledge of his context and to be aware of specific needs that the text should address.[136] The conversation between the two contexts reaches its climax during the third phase that has been called "appropriation".

The appropriation "pole" refers to a phase whereby the text and its context are brought to an agreement with the interpreter's context. The conversation between the text and the interpreter's context is facilitated by the reader. It is the reader who enables the regular back-and-forth movement between text and context, thus making the text and context mutually engage.[137] In his description of the process of appropriation, West has submitted that the context of the reader prompts him/her through his/her ideological commitment to it and through its ideological formation of him/her. Similarly, the sacred text prompts the reader through his/her theological orientation towards it and through its theological

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[134] Draper, J. "Old Scores and New Notes", p 156.
[135] Draper, J.. "Reading the Bible as Conversation", p 16.
[136] Draper, J.. "Reading the Bible as Conversation", p 17.
[137] West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile' in African Biblical Scholarship: an Ideo-theological Dilemma in Post-Colonial South Africa" in Becking, B and D. Human.eds. *Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa OTWSA/OTSSA* Pretoria August 2007. Leiden: Brill. 2009, p 250.

formation of him/her.[138] What Draper has designated as "Lived faith"[139] implied in the appropriative moment, West refers to as the reader's ideo-theological embodied faith.[140] The concept of appropriation implies a process by which the meaning of the text is owned by the interpreter.[141] The interpreter accepts and owns the message that he/she gets from the text. He/she accepts the implications of this meaning for his/her situation. The interpreter allows the text to stand against him/her, challenge, and even judge him/her by its original message so that the meaning acquired from the text challenges his/her life-style.

The whole process of interpretation is encapsulated in West's description of what he calls the integrative dynamic between the three poles, as follows:

> The contextual pole makes contribution to the ideo-theological orientation of the appropriation pole, in terms of the reader's social location and the choices readers make about their social location. The textual pole makes a contribution to the ideo-theological orientation of the appropriation pole, in terms of its own core axis (as discerned by particular readers).[142]

As was mentioned above, the present study comprises three main parts, that correspond to the poles of the Tri-Polar Exegetical model described above. The first step concerns the analysis of the Rwandan conflict that culminated in the Genocide in 1994. This history of the situation of ethnic conflict in Rwanda is the context of interpretation and it will serve as the subject of interpretation following the inculturation hermeneutic model suggested by Ukpong. The next step concerns the analysis of the passage of 1Kings 12: 1-24. The process described as the distantiation phase in the Tri-Polar model will guide the exegesis of this passage. The last part is the dialogue between the text and the Rwandan context in a way that corresponds to what has been called "appropriation" in Draper's Tri-Polar exegetical model.[143]

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[138] West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile'", p 254.
[139] Draper, J. A. "Reading the Bible as Conversation", p 18.
[140] West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile'", p 255.
[141] Draper, J. A. "Reading the Bible as Conversation", p 18.
[142] West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile'", p 255, (brackets in the original).
[143] Draper, J. A. "Reading the Bible as Conversation", p 18; see also Draper, J.A. "Old Score and New Notes", p 157.

2.5.1 Analysis of the Rwandan context

The goal of this work is not primarily to understand the meaning of a particular biblical passage, but to examine a particular situation of ethnic conflict in its socio-political context and in the light of scripture. Therefore the starting point is the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda. It is the consideration of the nature of this conflict, its background and its effects that guided the selection of the biblical text whose message can be relevant to the situation. Thus, the context of conflict in Rwanda is used as a subject of interpretation of the selected text; it is not a mere application of the message of the text.

Since the context of conflict in Rwanda is the subject of interpretation, its analysis comes first, so that it will provide the background against which the text is to be read. The analysis of the context considers different levels or areas of analysis, as the inculturation approach requires. At the phenomenological level, the nature of the Rwandan conflict needs to be clarified and its ethnic, social and political elements pointed out. The peoples' worldview and their understanding of the issue of ethnicity in Rwanda constitute the socio-anthropological aspect of the analysis. A historical inquiry into how ethnicity generated ethnic conflicts throughout the history of the Rwandan nation is an important element of this analysis of the context. Finally, the analysis of the Rwandan context seeks to point out the religious dimension or aspect of the conflict. The analysis of these different aspects of the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda is expected to provide the questions to put to the selected biblical text. This context of conflicts, oppression and discrimination constitutes the social location from which the text is read.

2.5.2 Analysis of the biblical text

The analysis of the selected text (1 Kings 12:1-24) includes its literary study following the narrative criticism approach and a socio-historical examination of the larger context of the text. The background of this text includes not only the socio-political situation that marked the history of the people of Israel, that is what can be reconstructed about ethnicity and tribal conflicts in Israel having a bearing in the event of the division of the kingdom, it but also the religious aspect of the issue of ethnicity/tribalism, that is, how these are represented theologically.

My own context and my experience as an African and a Rwandan who lived and experienced the effects of ethnic conflicts surely conditions the way I interpret and understand this biblical text. My social location shapes the hermeneutical questions brought to the text without depriving the text of its fundamental meaning, as Okure has explained:

> The social location of the interpretation does not deprive the text of its fundamental (that is divine) meaning. Rather, it furnishes the hermeneutical questions that are brought to the text in order to discover new meanings latent in the text as does the wise scribe (Matthew 13:52), meanings that can challenge and give fuller life to the reader. The social location cannot ask of the text answers to questions it never asked itself.[144]

My social location enables me in this study to pay attention to the voice of the frustrated mass of the people of Israel in their struggle for political change and for the adoption of a system of government based on a social contract and the intransigence that frustrated their non-violent request (1 Kings 12:1-15). It is this social location that shapes my ideo-theological orientation active in the dialogue with the literary and socio-historical analysis of the text. This dialogue is the object of the appropriation phase.

2.5.3 Appropriation

The text of 1 Kings 12:1-24 was chosen as a biblical text describing a conflict whose context has similarities with the Rwandan conflict that resulted in the Genocide in 1994. The present study is a dialogue between the biblical text in its context and the context surrounding the Genocide in Rwanda, so that the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda will enlarge the understanding of the text concerning tribal conflict in Israel. Both conflicts are socio-political events resulting from a long history of conflict, with an ethnic/tribal element and in which the divine/religious intervention is acknowledged or assumed. The two contexts are, of course, not equivalent but, as Ukpong suggests:

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[144] Okure, T. "Reading from This Place: Some Problems and Prospects," in Segovia, F.F. and Tolbert, M.A. (eds.), *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, 56.

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Just as in translation whereby dynamically equivalent words are used to translate the biblical text where there are no exact equivalents, so dynamically equivalent contexts are used to mediate the message of the text where there are no exact equivalent contexts.[145]

Each of the two contexts has a contribution towards the clarification of a particular aspect of ethnic conflicts. For example, the way God is represented in the selected text could help in the understanding of the theological aspect of the Rwandan conflict. In the same manner, the explicit ethnic character of the Rwandan conflict sheds more light on the less emphasized ethnic character of the conflict that divided the kingdom of Israel.

The entire the text is be read critically in the light of basic human and biblical values of love, justice, peace and inclusiveness, to point out and challenge any part of the text that conveys a meaning or a message which should not be adopted as normative or a basis for action.[146] This kind of critical reading, often referred to as "talking back to the text", interrogating it, or reading it against the grain,[147] is based on the acknowledgment that scripture does not have a self-evident shape, but that it has to be constructed.[148] Using West's terminology,[149] I would say that my social location influences my ideo-theological orientation towards opposing social injustice, oppression and discrimination, thus reading the text from the perspective of the exploited social groups, excluded from political and economic privileges. This approach fits the concern of liberation hermeneutics and its attention to the socio-economic and political situation of the oppressed.

Through the appropriation stage, the interpretation will bring together the horizon of the text and its community and the horizon of the interpreter and his community, to mediate a new consciousness leading to a new praxis.[150] This stage is expected to be the

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[145] Ukpong, J.S. "Re-reading the Bible with African Eyes", p 10.
[146] See Ukpong J.S. "Bible Reading with a Community of Ordinary Readers". In Getui M. N. *et al.* ed. *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*. Nairobi, Kenya: Action Publishers. 2001, p.191.
[147] Draper, J. "Reading the Bible as Conversation", p18 following Mosala, I. *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans. 1989.
[148] West, G. 'Interpreting 'the Exile'", p 256.
[149] West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile'", p 256 ff.
[150] Draper, J. "Old Score and New Notes",p 158.

culmination of the interpretive process, where the text is appropriated in the light of the context of interpretation, in our case, the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN RWANDA

3.0. Introduction

The present study is designed as a dialogue between the biblical narrative about the division of the kingdom of Israel, on one hand, and the event of the Genocide in Rwanda on the other. For this dialogue to take place the two events need to be examined in their immediate and broader contexts. The 1990 Genocide tragedy in Rwanda was an expression and a product of ethnic conflicts that developed throughout Rwandan history, just as the division of the kingdom in Israel resulted from social political problems with an evident ethnic character.

The present chapter highlights the context of the Rwandan Genocide used as the subject of interpretation of the biblical text narrating the event of the division of the kingdom in Israel. Historical research will help identify situations, in the Rwandan context of ethnic/tribal conflicts that are dynamically equivalent to those that are reflected in the biblical text so as to be used to mediate the message of the text. Aspects of the Rwandan situation under examination include the socio-cultural, economic, political and religious issues around which ethnic conflicts revolved. After a brief review of the background of social relations in Rwanda, the present chapter presents a historical analysis that considers different periods in Rwandan history that are significant for their specific contribution to ethnic conflicts. The focus is on the situation of social relations in the pre-colonial Rwanda, in the colonial period, from national independence to the Genocide and in the post-Genocide period.

3.1 Background to social relations in Rwanda

Rwandan history is marked by controversies over a number of issues, most of which have a bearing in the explanation of the root causes of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. These include the issue of the origin of Rwandan social groups, social relations in pre-colonial Rwanda, the role of colonialism in ethnic relation in Rwanda, the events of the troubled period of 1959-1962, ethnic relations from 1962 to 1990, the 1990 war and its culmination in the Genocide in 1994. Of all these issues, the question of the origin of

social groups and their relations, requires the examination of the situation in the pre-colonial period. The remaining issues fall under later epochs. Speculation about the origin of Rwandan social groups, and controversies about how they related throughout history, reflect the peculiar character of Rwandan ethnicity that needs to be examined first.

3.1.1 The peculiar character of Rwandan ethnicity

The Genocide that was perpetrated in Rwanda has been recognized as a crime carried out by one specific social group, the Hutu, and directed against a precise social category, the Tutsi. The existence in Rwanda of distinct social groups designated as Hutu Tutsi and Twa has been acknowledged throughout history. It is the criteria of identification, categorisation and differentiation of members of these social groups that fluctuated through time. While some have identified different races among the Rwandan people[151], others have seen all Rwandans as belonging to one homogeneous ethnic group. While ideological preoccupations may have prompted the argument in support of a particular view, it remains true that the structure of Rwandan society, the history and the culture of this people do not make easy their grouping into categories, especially as they are not even grouped in their mode of habitat in their geographical setting.

3.1.1.1 Physical setting of Rwanda

Located in the Central African Rift Valley, slightly south of the equator, Rwanda is a tiny country with an area of only 26,336 km². Bounded in the east by Tanzania, in the west by the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the north by Uganda and in the south by Burundi, it is squeezed into the heart of the continent. It does not have any access to the sea. Rwanda is 1,100 km away from the Indian Ocean and 2000 km from the Atlantic.[152]

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[151] The Hamitic theory suggesting this distinction will be discussed later

[152] Fegley, R. *World Bibliographical Series Volume 154: Rwanda*. Oxford, England: Clio Press. 1993, p. xv.

The physical topography of the country is mainly mountainous. The whole country lies above 1,000 metres, with over half in the 1,500-2,000 m zone.[153] A volcanic massif known as the Congo-Nile Crest[154] traverses the western region of the country, leaving on its western side Lake Kivu in the Rift Valley. These giant peaks include the chain of Virunga[155] on the border with Uganda, where the highest peak, the Kalisimbi volcano, reaches 4,507 m in altitude. From west to east, this volcanic massif, covered with thick tropical woodlands, merges into an undulating plateau in the central regions, where hills covered with banana groves alternate with marshy valleys. Further east, the landscape shades off into a savannah zone, where vegetation ranges from vast stretches of arid and treeless grassland to acacia scrublands and bamboo.[156]

Rwanda enjoys a climate that is particularly favourable to human life, with an average temperature of 18° C and 900 to 1,600 mm of rainfall per year, according to altitude. This temperature remains quite even throughout the year, so that the four seasons of the year in Rwanda are not divided according to temperature, but according to rain levels.[157] The first Europeans who came into direct contact with Rwanda described it as "a land flowing with milk and honey…where the breeding of cattle and bee culture flourish, and the cultivated soil bears rich crops of fruits. A hilly country, thickly populated, full of beautiful sceneries, and possessing a climate incomparably fresh and healthy; a land of great fertility, with watercourses which might be termed perennial streams…."[158]

The physical and climatic peculiarity of Rwanda provided the country with an ecological environment conducive to high population densities. The fertility of the land made agriculture and herding of cattle very prosperous, while its highlands provided a natural protection against foreign interference. Rwanda is one of the few African countries that

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[153] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1995, p 1.
[154] So called because it separates the waters that run toward the Congo River to its west and those running into the River Nile on the east.
[155] 'Virunga" is the local word for "volcanoes".
[156] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*. London: Pall Mall. 1970, p 13-14.
[157] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis,* p 2.
[158] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 14, was quoting Adolphus Frederick. *In The Heart of Africa*, Cassel. London: 1910, p 44.

were not directly affected by the slave trade. The first explorers who reached the Rwandese highlands after the malarial and war-torn expanses of the Tanganyika bush felt they were reaching a beehive of human activity and prosperity.[159]

From among the banana groves and the clumps of eucalyptus trees emerge numerous houses scattered all over the many hills of Rwanda where the Hutu and the Tutsi, the main social groups, live side by side. Even the Twa, usually marginalised by the other two groups, do not have a separate geographical location. This shared geographical location coupled with the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the Rwandan people, complicates the understanding of the character of their ethnicity.

3.1.1.2 The confusing homogeneity of the Rwandan society

The Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa are commonly referred to as three distinct ethnic groups. Yet, going by the sociological definition of an ethnic group, as difficult as this definition is, it can be argued that the three social categories belong to one and the same ethnic group. The complexity of the ethnic phenomenon complicates attempts to capture the concept through a simple definition. Maré[160] understands ethnicity as a term used to refer to a character or quality of an ethnic group. Hutchinson[161] defines an ethnic group as "a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memory of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as symbols of their peoplehood".[162] Understood in these terms, the concept of "ethnic group" would better be applicable to the Rwandan people as a whole, rather than to any one of the social groups.

Hutchinson suggests at least six main feature characteristics of an ethnic group, namely (1) a common proper name, to identify and express the "essence" of the community;(2) a myth of common ancestry that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship; (3) shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including

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[159] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis,* p 2.
[160] Maré, G. *Brothers Born of Warrior Blood: Polities and Ethnicity in South Africa.* Braamfontein, South Africa: Ravan Press. 1992, p 6.
[161] Hutchinson, J and A. D. Smith. ed. *Ethnicity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1996.
[162] Hutchinson, J and A. D. Smith. ed. *Ethnicity,* p 6.

heroes, events and their commemoration; (4) one or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified but normally includes religion, custom, language; (5) a link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie* but at least its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land and (6) a sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie*'s population.[163] Apart from the proper names designating each social group in Rwanda, and some sense of solidarity among members of each group, all other features suggested by Hutchinson are shared by all the three groups. There seems, therefore, to be little, if any, ground for categorizing Rwandans into distinct ethnic groups.

The adjective "ethnic" is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*. The Greeks used the term *ethnos* in a variety of ways and it could refer to a people, a race, a tribe or a caste. In the New Testament it referred to non-Jewish people, often translated "nations". All these usages have in common the idea of a number of people who share some cultural or biological characteristics and who live and act in concert.[164] Similarly, in Kinyarwanda, the unique mother tongue common to all the three social groups, the word "*ubwoko*", used to qualify the three groups, can mean a race, a people, an *ethnie*, a tribe or a clan. In fact, "*ubwoko*" more generally simply means "a specific kind". In French, the language of the coloniser, the groups have been designated as *ethnies* a term that suggests that these categories were perceived as ethnic groups. As it was stated earlier, however, there is no obvious reason to justify the qualification of each of these groups as distinct ethnic groups.

The features mentioned above, that are found in varying degrees in different ethnic groups, can also be used to identify a tribe. In fact, a tribe can constitute a sub-group within a larger ethnic group, so that a tribe can be rightly perceived as a sub-ethnic group. The commonalities existing among Hutu, Tutsi and Twa of Rwanda may testify to their belonging to one and the same ethnic group, while the peculiarity of each group may make it a sub-group within the same ethnic group. Since each sub-group comprises many

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[163] Hutchinson, J and A. D. Smith. ed. *Ethnicity,* p 7.
[164] Hutchinson, J and A. D. Smith. ed. *Ethnicity*, p 4.

clans, and is therefore broader than a clan, each of the three groups has been regarded as a tribe. But there is no consensus on this ethnic categorisation, as there is none on the origin of different social groups that make up the Rwandan people, as will be shown in the discussion that follows.

3.1.2 Historical origin of Rwandan people

Rwandan history is marked by controversies regarding the origin of the people who settled in the region now called Rwanda and the quality of socio-political relations among the social groups that made up that pre-colonial community. Although the Rwandan people have always been divided into three groups, the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa, there is no consensus among historians or anthropologists on the origins of these divisions. Divergences in the understanding of the meaning of the ethnic labels "Hutu" and "Tutsi" have reached two extreme positions. On the one hand, there are those who contend that there is no significant difference between the two groups. Since these people speak the same language, share the same territory, the same culture and the same religion; they are all Rwandans. On the other hand, there are those who affirm that Hutu and Tutsi are, and have always been, two distinct ethnic groups. It has been even suggested that the two are different races. Each of these positions has a subsequent corresponding presentation of what has been the historical rapport between the two social groups. Each of the positions mentioned above appeals to Rwandan history to prove and support its ground.

Of course, Rwanda has and can only have one past and one history. Yet this history has been told and written in varying versions. Efforts are still presently being made to rewrite and provide a correct and authentic history of Rwanda. However, as Eltringham explains, "in writing a historical narrative, even the most disinterested historian, with no ulterior motive to distort, does not produce a simple transparent 'window on the past'. His/her narrative is the result of *interpretation* and this differs among historians".[165] Most of the time, historical narratives attempt to explain how the country's past has created its present. The content of such narratives is determined by concerns and unanswered

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[165] Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror: Post Genocide Debates in Rwanda*. London, Pluto Press. 2004, p 152 (emphasis in the original).

questions asked in the present, so that one can argue, like Eltringham, that the present creates the past.[166] A correct and authentic version of Rwandan history, free of all ideological preoccupation, and authoritative enough to prevail over the other versions, is thus difficult to achieve.

The examination in this section of diverging historical narratives concerning the relations of Rwandan social groups does not aim at the discovery of the "true history" of Rwanda; rather, the investigation of the relationship between different narratives is expected to lead to the understanding of what these narratives reveal about current perceptions of conflict in Rwanda.[167] This is very important, especially as each of the differing positions is likely to have far-reaching implications when it is taken as the basis of political philosophies that are guiding Rwanda's destiny.[168] Three versions of the origin of the people who settled in Rwanda are presented in this section. The Hamitic hypothesis stresses the different origin of the Hutu and the Tutsi; the popular view concentrates on the order of settlement of the three groups; while the harmonising view denies any difference among the groups.

3.1.2.1 Popular view concerning the origin the Rwandan social groups

The view which has been the most prevalent holds that the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are three different ethnic groups that arrived and settled in Rwanda in different periods of history.[169] According to this view, the first inhabitants of Rwanda were the ancestors of the modern-day Twa. These were hunting-gatherer people, who lived by foraging in the forest. Not much is said about the location where the Twa may have migrated from and they are sometime called *Abasangwabutaka,* "those found in the land", to indicate that they were the first people to inhabit Rwanda. The Twa are said to belong to the pygmoid people.

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[166] Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror*, p 152.
[167] Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror*, p 152.
[168] African Rights. *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*. London: African Rights. 1994, p 3.
[169] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations: Rwanda", p 139.

The Hutu are said to have arrived second. This largest group of farmers is believed to be descended from Bantu tribes further to the west.[170] Hypotheses concerning Bantu expansion propose different locations supposed to be the origin of the Bantu homeland. While Guthrie[171] suggests the Katanga-Zambia area as the cradle of Bantu culture, Greenberg[172] locates the Bantu homeland in Cameroon. Greenberg, a linguist, and Murdock, an anthropologist, have argued that "the Bantu language originated in the Chad-Benue area, expansion was rooted in demographic pressure born from the drying of the Sahara, a process that began around the third millennium B.C. and from the resulting southward agricultural expansion".[173] In the Great Lakes Region, the Hutu cut large tracts of forest and confined the Twa to whatever forest remained.[174] They established a social system based on small-scale agriculture and petty kings called *Abahinza*, "those who cause things to grow"[175].

Tutsi are placed third in the order of migration to Rwanda. These pastoralist people, related to the Hima, one-time rulers of the Ugandan Kingdoms of Bunyoro and Buha, arrived in successive waves, possibly from about the fifteenth century.[176] This view contends that the Tutsi invaded and conquered territories that were populated by Bantu people. This is Lemarchand's position, as he says "under the leadership of a royal clan, successive waves of nomadic pastoralists spread their domination over the indigenous Bantu societies whose customs and traditions they gradually assimilated into their own culture".[177] Tutsi are also said to have migrated from Ethiopia and to be related to Oromo of the Horn in southern Ethiopia.[178] The hypothesis suggesting that the Tutsi invaded and

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[170] The term Bantu refers to a variety of people found in central eastern and southern Africa who are identified on linguistic ground. Fegley, R. *World Bibliographical Series Volume 154: Rwanda*, p. xix.

[171] Guthrie, M. *Comparative Bantu: An Introduction to the Comparative Linguistics and Prehistory of the Bantu Language*, 4 vols. Farnborough,U K: Gregg,1967-1971, quoted in Chrétien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History*. New York: Zone Books. 2003, p52.

[172] Greenberg,, J. "Linguistic Evidence Regarding Bantu Origin" *Journal of African History* 13.2 (1972) quoted in Chretien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 52.

[173] Chretien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 52.

[174] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002, p.12.

[175] Fegley, R. *World Bibliographical Series*, p xix.

[176] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p.12. See also Fegley, R. *World Bibliographical Series Volume 154: Rwanda*, p xix.

[177] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*. London: Pall Mall. 1970, p 18.

[178] Prunier G. *The Rwanda Crisis,* p.16, Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi, p18.* See also Maquet, J. *Le système des relations sociales dans le Rwanda ancien*. Tervuren (Belgium) : Musee Royal de l' Afrique

conquered Rwanda imposing a centralized monarchy was later questioned by historians who found it too simplistic. A more complex situation is suggested to explain how the alien Tutsi minority managed to extend their hegemony over the indigenous Hutu. According to Lemarchand,

> At some time in the remote past, wandering bands of Tutsi and Hima pastoralists infiltrated among the indigenous tribes with whom they established a symbiotic relationship. In some places these intruders set themselves up as minor chiefs controlling a few hills; elsewhere, relationship between the two communities were essentially of commercial nature, involving the exchange of cattle for agricultural products.[179]

The migrating Tutsi adopted the Hutu language and a great deal of their culture, before installing their own hegemony through the *Nyiginya* dynasty.[180] Hutu agriculturalists may have admired the Tutsi cattle so much that they readily aggreed to be part of the well-organized Tutsi polity. The most speculative identification of the origin of Tutsi was expressed through what was called the Hamitic Hypothesis.

3.1.2.2 The Hamitic Hypothesis in Rwandan ethnicity

The term Hamite has been often used in the Great Lakes Region, in opposition to the term Bantu; the two referring to the Tutsi and the Hutu, respectively. The hypothesis that advocated for the identification of Tutsi as Hamites made them a different race, whose origin was to be traced outside Africa. Taylor[181] has identified three strands in nineteen century Europe that contributed to the fabrication of the Hamitic Hypothesis. The strands are theology, biology and anthropology.

The Hamitic Hypothesis has its remote roots in theology. This is a theory whose name is derived from the biblical character, Ham, the son of Noah, who attracted his father's curse upon his family for failing to show respect to his father when he saw him drunk and

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Centrale. 1957, pp 22-26. (The Oromo are one of the Cushitic-speaking groups of people living in north-eastern and eastern Africa. The Oromos are found predominantly in Ethiopia, but also in northern Kenya and Somalia. The Oromo were originally a pastoralist/nomadic group).

[179] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 19.

[180] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p12.

[181] Taylor, C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 58.

naked. As part of this curse, Ham's descendents through his son Canaan, were condemned to become slaves of Shem and Japhet, the two brothers of Ham. Through an interpretation of this biblical story, it was explained how the descendants of Ham found themselves in Africa, where they were supposed to endure their fate as an inferior race. Yet, the proponents of this theory contended that the Hamites were a superior race compared to the Bantu groups around them. To explain this alleged superiority appeal was made to biology and anthropology through the Great Chain of Being theory.

According to Taylor,[182] the Great Chain of Being was a theory that ranked human races in terms of their moral and intellectual capacities. This ranking could be demonstrated quantitatively just by measuring the internal volume of the skull. The white Europeans (from whom the theory originated) were said to have a bigger skull and this was an indication of them belonging to a superior race. Sub-Saharan Africans were among those found with a smaller size and this explained their lower level of civilization.

This theory was challenged when exploration in the parts of the world believed to be populated with small-brained people revealed a level of organization and development higher than what was expected from inferior races. Hence the presence of complex state systems and developed arts in the Great Lakes region in the nineteenth century could not be attributed to the work of the indigeneous Bantu. An explanation of this "abnormality" was provided first by an English explorer, John Henning Speke. It is said that Speke visited the region of Central Africa in 1859 and was amazed at the high level of culture that he found there, the administrative structure and the intricate social order with aristocrats and vassals. He was convinced that such culture could not have originated from "savage Negroes". He concluded that the Tutsi ruling classes were a superior race. Their physical traits, the refinement of their feelings and their intelligence were rare among primitive people and they were rather closer to the noble Europeans.[183] The Great Chain of Being theory presented the Tutsi as belonging to a superior race, while the Hamitic hypothesis further explained how they arrived in the Great Lakes Region.

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[182] Taylor, C. *Sacrifice as Terror, p 58.*
[183] Melvern, L. *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide.* London: Zed Books. 2000, p 8.

If Hamites were doomed to inferiority in southern Africa, in interlacustrine Africa they became, for Speke, the superior conquering race. Despite their black skins, these Hamites were said to be Caucasian. According to Speke, Hamites moving out of the Middle East became the Galla and the Oromo in Ethiopia. Ethiopian Galla-Hamites migrating southward became the Hima in Uganda and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi.[184]

These theories presented the Hutu and the Tutsi as descending from two different races. They affirm that the Tutsi are superior to the Hutu and they hold that the Tutsi are aliens who came to conquer the land already occupied by the Hutu and the Twa. All these claims repeated over and over in the ears of both Hutu and Tutsi were internalised by many and they regularly fuelled the conflicts that opposed the two groups throughout the history of Rwanda. Before and during the Genocide, these claims were among the arguments advanced to justify the treatment which should be reserved for the Tutsi. More recently, voices have been raised from those who reject the traditional categorization of the Rwandan people, arguing that Rwandans have always been one, undivided people. This is the view referred to as the harmonizing view.

3.1.2.3 The harmonizing view

Those who contend that there were no ethnic groups in pre-colonial Rwanda hold a different view of the origin of ethnic groups in Rwanda. This claim is defended through what was called historical constructionism, a theory which stands in opposition to primordialism. While primordialism claims that ethnic distinctions existed from the beginning and the concerned groups have different biological, linguistic and geographical origin, constructionism claims that ethnic distinction in the Great Lakes Region was a socio-historical construction. Advocates of constructionism contend that if any distinction between Tutsi and Hutu existed in pre-colonial Rwanda it was that of class or caste that corresponded to a division of tasks and the groups differed in regard to the amount of power each could exercise.[185] The social groups designated by the terms Hutu and Tutsi

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[184] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 7.
[185] Melvern, L. *A People Betrayed*. p 8. See also Destexche A. *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*. London: Pluto Press. 1995, p.37.

had no characteristics of tribes, which are micro-nations.[186] Supporting this position, Keane reports that what separated Hutu and Tutsi in the past was primarily a matter of occupation and wealth. Thus the Tutsi clan owned large herds of cattle, while their Hutu subjects farmed the land and the Twa subsisted on what they could gather in fields and forests. As time progressed, many Hutus bought cattle and they were assimilated into the Tutsi aristocracy. Some Tutsi became poor and lost their privileged positions.[187]

Eltringham supports a similar position, contending that the terms Hutu and Tutsi did not refer to distinct races or ethnic groups in pre-colonial Rwanda. For him, "both over time and at any moment in time the terms Hutu and Tutsi were polyvalent there was no single meaning for the whole territory at any one time".[188]   He gives an example of various meanings that the term Tutsi may have connoted in pre-colonial and early colonial Rwanda. Eltringham states,

> My own reading of the diverging historical literature suggests six values of the term 'Tutsi', which implied (at different times and in different contexts) one or more of the following: a description of status (wealth in cattle); membership of certain 'high' lineage; the possession of authority derived from the Mwami; social recognition as a Tutsi owing to wealth or in order to extend central control (by co-opting the lineage heads); those who owned cattle; and simply 'non Hutu'. With the expansion and the centralization of the kingdom, it appears that the first four were conflated into an '*elite* Tutsi' identity.[189]

All these examples of the connotation of the term Tutsi seem to suggest that the term referred to an acquired status. This position may lead us to surmise that pre-colonial Rwandan people belonged to one ethnic group and were diversified only according to their lineages and clans. Those whose social status was higher, through the acquisition of power and wealth, became Tutsi and those who did not have access to those privileges remained Hutu. This theory does not account for the presence of the Twa group, neither does it explain how a great number of Tutsi, the so-called *petits Tutsi,* who did not enjoy

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[186] Prunier G. *The Rwanda Crisis,* p.5.
[187] Keane, Tergal. *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*. London: Penguin. 1996, p 12.
[188] Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror,* p 13.
[189] Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror*, p 14 (emphasis and brackets in the original).

any of the social economic and political privileges reserved for the prominent Tutsi, could still be recognized as Tutsi.

Close to Eltringham's view is Kamukama's position.[190] His opinion was that both Hutu and Tutsi are descendants of Bantu migrants who arrived in the region from West Africa. To him the common origin of the two groups explains the similarities in their language and culture, while their different economic activities are responsible for their physical differentiations. Taylor[191] has recorded a similar view, suggesting that diet and way of life has led to differences in physiognomy; concluding that ethnic categorisation in Rwanda is primarily a question of economic specialisation and social class.

More ambiguous is the argument of Rucyahana, who stated that there were no differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi that were not manufactured by forces outside of the country. Simultaneously, however, he described the distinctive features of pure-blooded Tutsi as differentiating them from those of pure-blooded Hutu.[192] Rucyahana seems to admit that long ago there used to be differences between the two social groups, but now these differences have disappeared as a result of intermarriage. He feels that a modern Rwandan is a blend of both groups, so that any attempt to tell Hutu and Tutsi apart would be like going to America and say that you can easily tell an Irish and a Norwegian apart.[193] If Rucyahana is right in the way he views the ethnic mix in Rwanda he does not explain how the Genocide was possible, because those who were killed could then not be said to belong to a distinct ethnic group. In fact, according to him, both the victims and their executioners belonged to the same ethnic mix; this could hardly be called Genocide! Prunier would not agree with Rucyahana's submission since for him the evidences of distinct physical features between Hutu and Tutsi seem plain enough when one has lived in the area.[194]Mamdani was referring to claims similar to Rucyahana's when, writing about his visit to Rwanda in 1995, he said:

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[190] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations: Rwanda", p 139.
[191] Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 74.
[192] Rucyahana, J. *The Bishop of Rwanda*, p 4.
[193] Rucyahana, J. *The Bishop of Rwanda*, p 4.
[194] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda crisis*, p 17.

I was nonplussed to be told over and over again by leading people in the RPF: 'we speak the same language, have same culture, and live on the same hills; we are the same people'. But in casual conversation and out in the street, some of the same individuals would readily identify Muhutu and Mututsi, sometimes by physical appearance.[195]

Taylor is less categorical in dismissing any possibility for separate biogenetic and geographical origins of the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Although he admits the socio-historical constructed nature of these categories, he contends that no construction is done *ex nihilo.* He believes that the Hamitic hypothesis divested of its racist claims and ideological biases may hold some truth. Evoking evidences from historical linguistics and archaeology, Taylor explains that as early as the first millennium B.C.E. interlacustrine Africa and the area adjacent to it acted as something of a 'melting pot' in terms of bringing together people of varied geographic origins, different languages and diverse substance types.[196] Following Excoffier[197], Taylor affirms that the genetic markers of the Tutsi and the Hima show them to be more closely related to the people who live in northern Africa and who are Afro-Asiatic speakers. However, he distances himself from the aspects of the Hamitic hypothesis that claim that the Tutsi are a superior race; that they arrived last in the region; that they conquered Bantu territories or even that they brought the institution of the state and kingship.[198]

Arguing against the theories of Bantu expansion and Hamitic conquest, Chrétien[199] agrees with Taylor's position. Referring to archaeological findings, Chrétien contends that the Great Lakes region was populated as early as the first millennium B.C.E., dates which are much earlier than the period during which Bantu migration, and later Hamitic conquest, are said to have occurred. He suggests that an integration of different groups of people may have taken place in the region over a long period in history, involving Bantu-speaking groups from the eastern Congo basin and from Central Sudan; proto-Nilotic

[195] Mamdani, M. "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda". *New Left Review*. 1996. 216:3-36, quoted in Pottier, J. Re-imagining Rwanda, p 122.
[196] Taylor, C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 63.
[197] Ecoffier, L. *et al*. "Genetics and History of Sub-Sahara Africa" in *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology*, vol.30. 1987: pp 151-94, quoted in Taylor, C. *Sacrifice as Terror*. p 63.
[198] Taylor, C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 63.
[199] Chrétien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 58.

groups from what is now Uganda and southern Cushitic groups from south west of Lake Victoria.[200] Considering the length of time that elapsed since the integration took place, Chrétien thinks that it is impossible to be categorical in explaining the present categorization observed in the region:

> When one refers to the distant origins of the internal categorization that marks the region's societies, notably in the western part, two kinds of answers are possible: on the one hand, populations with different geographic origins and from different linguistic families encountered one another; on the other hand, a socio-economic cleavage developed between largely agricultural groups and largely pastoral ones, each of which found an ecological niche for itself. The first episode would have occurred more than two thousand years ago, and the second more than one thousand years ago. It is therefore impossible to hold fast to explanation tied to this distant past, which would mean neglecting everything that happened demographically, economically, socially and politically during the last ten or twenty centuries.[201]

Increasing controversies concerning the pre-colonial history of Rwanda seem to confirm that Chrétien is correct about the difficulty of uncovering the total truth concerning this period. But even if he was proved wrong, why should the truth about the first settlers in Rwanda centuries ago affect the peace, unity and harmony of the country in the present? The truth about history is not dangerous in itself, its effect on the present depends on the ideological purpose for which it is sought and used. Unfortunately Rwandan history has often been seen through biased ideological lenses. Lemarchand notes:

> Hence efforts ultimately made by Hutu and Tutsi intellectuals to reinterpret oral traditions so as to create new justifications for political action – the first by deliberately calling attention to the role played by monarchy in perpetuating a situation of social, economic and political inequality, the second by emphasizing the unifying bonds of kingship and imputing most of the responsibilities for social injustices to Belgian authorities. The normative ambivalence involved in the concept of Mwamiship made it possible for each set of protagonists to extract from the traditional arsenal of the monarchy the ideological weapons they needed for the realization of their political objectives.[202]

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[200] Chrétien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 62.
[201] Chrétien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 74.
[202] Lemarchand, R. "Stratified Kingships: Rwanda and Burundi" in Lemarchand, R. ed. *African Kingships in Perspective: Political Changes and Modernization in Monarchical Settings*. London: Frank Cass. 1977, p 71.

What Lemarchand stated about different evaluation of the monarchy applies to many elements of Rwandan history including the issue of the origin of Rwandan social groups. It is possible that the present Rwandan social groups may have originated from one same ethnic group that underwent socio-economic cleavages. Rwandan people may have been formed from an encounter between people of different geographical origins, or both phenomena may have occurred, as Chrétien suggests. This should not be a serious problem in itself and it is not a situation idiosyncratic to Rwanda. But the quarrel about the origins of different groups that settled in the regions, the modalities, order and process of their settlement have gone beyond the limits of mere academic debate. Controversies become particularly hot among those who attempt to draw conclusions about the present social relations. Most of those arguing for the initial homogeneity of the Rwandan people stress that the differences were created by the colonisers who are totally and exclusively responsible for the exploitation and oppression that the Hutu suffered under the Tutsi monarchical regimes. Those insisting on the original social differences include those who want to trace the roots of the present social conflicts back to the disharmonies already existing during the pre-colonial period that embittered the exploited Hutu. The question of social relations during the pre-colonial period deserves more attention.

3.2 Social relations in pre-colonial Rwanda

The controversies that characterize different narratives about the historical origin and settlement of the sub-groups that make up the Rwandan people have resulted in different descriptions of the relations that existed between the sub-groups in the pre-colonial period. Generally, those who think that there were no ethnic groups in pre-colonial Rwanda claim that all the social groups were living in harmony. Holders of this view contend that it was European demands for resource extraction that bastardised Rwanda's social system, forced a small group of Tutsi administrators to oppress the Hutu majority and, by so doing, polarized and hardened ethnic identities. A different position is held by those who stress that even before the arrival of the Europeans relations among the sub-groups was characterized by exploitation and oppression of the Hutu by the Tutsi and discrimination against the Twa by the two groups. They argue that colonial powers

merely formalized and institutionalised a pre-existing racist system by taking steps such as issuing identity cards that listed group affiliation.[203] Besides issues related to access to political power and to administration privileges monopolised by one social group, the Tutsi, two institutions come to the fore in the debate about social relations in pre-colonial Rwanda. These are the cattle clientship, *Ubuhake,* and the compulsory and non-paid labour, *Uburetwa*. Although both institutions are often perceived as instruments of mass exploitation, the *Ubuhake* had more to do with relations between the social groups.

3.2.1 The cattle clientship "Ubuhake": expression of social disharmony

The cattle clientship *Ubuhake* was the chief institution of pre-colonial Rwanda. This was a contract by which a Hutu client entrusted himself to a Tutsi patron, who would grant him some privileges in terms of usufruct on cattle and land in exchange for commodities and services regularly offered by the Hutu servant. The *Ubuhake* contract also involved an aspect of personal relationship involving reciprocal bonds of loyalty between the Hutu client and the Tutsi patron which meant that one became the other's man.[204] This institution, considered by some to be mutually advantageous, was seen by others as extremely exploitative.

Those who like to see *Ubuhake* in a positive light feel that this institution was not an instrument of ethnic dominance or exploitation. Included among these is Semujanga, who states that, in the practice of this institution, a patron or a servant could come from any of the three social groups.[205] Surprisingly, this assertion follows another one of his in which he admits that the Hutu belonged to the category of servants as he explains that the term "Hutu" referred to the activities of a farmer or *umugaragu* (servant).[206] The most common positive description of *Ubuhake* views it rather as a personalised relationship

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[203] Kuperman, A.J. *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. 2001, p 6.
[204] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 36.
[205] Semujanga, J. *Origins of Rwandan Genocide*. New York: Humanity Books. 2003, p 137. Semujanga's harmonizing view of pre-colonial Rwanda is also expressed in his claim denying the existence of administrative privileges of the Tutsi over the other social groups when he insinuates that Hutu were chiefs of the land, Tutsi were chiefs of livestock while the chief of the army could come from either of the two social groups. (Semujanga, J. *Origins of Rwandan Genocide,* p 136).
[206] Semujanga, J. *Origins of Rwandan Genocide*, p 137. Here he admits that it was the Hutu and not the Tutsi who was associated with service and dependency.

between a client and a patron involving the exchange of certain commodities and services. The Hutu (servant) farmers offered the products of their farms while the Tutsi (patron) offered cows and milk. This institution had even facilitated social mobility across fluid occupational categories.[207]

It seems, however, that the benefit that the Hutu servant – who was the one in a weaker position – could draw from the *Ubuhake* clientship depended much on the disposition of his Tutsi patron. To some lucky servants, this contract was an opportunity for acquisition of cows and subsequently a means of upward mobility, while others ended up with too many obligations toward their patrons that would not allow them to make any progress.[208] Although the *Ubuhake* contract was generally between a Hutu servant and a Tutsi patron, it was not impossible that a commoner Tutsi would offer his services as a servant to a more prominent Tutsi. To some extent this attenuated the ethnic aspect of the institution.

The most negative view of *Ubuhake* perceives it as exploitative and generative of hierarchical differences between Tutsi and Hutu. It was an entrenched form of quasi-slavery, enabling the Tutsi masters to exploit the poor, downtrodden Hutu. The abuses that could result were better described by a certain group of Tutsi who opposed it:

> The Buhake system is the means par excellence through which the Batutsi have managed to maintain and safeguard their ascendancy over the masses. The indefinite duration of contractual ties it creates at each echelon of the hierarchy implies a constant obligation to obey the dominant caste; through pure and simple spoliation an instant remedy is found against the danger of over-rapid social mobility or the emergence of competitive centres of power, while intrigues and dilation, both of which are encouraged by the system, maintain the omnipotence of the powerful by fostering rivalries among the weak.[209]

Despite the abuses that could result from *Ubuhake*, this institution was a contract that involved the will of the parties involved, each of whom had benefits and responsibilities,

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[207] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p. 110.

[208] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp 13-14.

[209] Ruhara, C. *et al*. 'Le Buhake: Une Coutume Essentiellement Munyarwanda' *Bulletin de Jurisprudence des Tribunaux Indigenes du Rwanda Burundi*. No 3, May 1947,pp 103-136 quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp 40-41 (footnote).

at least in theory. In this, Ubuhake can be said to be better than its sister institution, '*Uburetwa*'.

3.2.2 The "*Uburetwa*" forced labour: instrument of oppression

The compulsory and non-paid work called *Uburetwa* was introduced in the late nineteenth century by King Kigeli IV Rwabugiri.[210] Initially, the peasants were requested to work one day per week, but later this was increased by the chiefs to three days. *Uburetwa* undermined the livelihood security of Hutu commoners and made their survival more difficult. In certain regions of the country both men and women would sell their labour to survive, even though the common pattern was for only men to do the *corvée*,[211] while women would work for the family.[212] This *corvée*, very much abhorred by the population, was the only way given to the agriculturalists to regain access to the land that the king had taken from them. It affected only the Hutu, while the labour expected from the poor Tutsi consisted of seasonal service at the residence of the chiefly residence. The work there would be, for example, maintenance of the fences surrounding the houses of the patron. This discrimination emphasised the ethnic character of social differences before the arrival of the European colonists. Those who insist on presenting the social relationship between Hutu and Tutsi in pre-colonial period as 'harmonious' explain that the *Uburetwa* was not a form of oppression of the Hutu by the Tutsi, but rather an imposition of the Nyiginya-dominated central power upon the people of lower class, both Hutu and Tutsi.

Different interpretations of social relations in pre-colonial Rwanda have resulted in different evaluation of this period of Rwandan history. To some, the hegemony of the Tutsi that characterized this period resulted in the exclusion, oppression and abuse of the other two social groups. To them, both Ubuhake and Uburetwa were institutions of exploitation by which the Tutsi consolidated their economic superiority. Myths were created to justify the social inequalities and the privileges reserved to the Tutsi, so that

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[210] Villa-Vicencio,C. *Building Nations: Transitional Justice in the African Great Lakes Region*. Cape Town, Soth Africa: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. 2005, p 73.
[211] A French term for non paid and compulsory labour.
[212] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p.13.

the other groups could not question the *status quo*. Before the arrival of the coloniser, they argue, the Hutu and the Twa were already browbeaten servants of the Tutsi. People from these three social categories were conscious of their social differences. Holders of this view think that the root causes of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda are traceable to the pre-colonial period. This is the view that inspired the propaganda against the Tutsi in Rwanda before and during the Genocide. People were 'reminded' that the Tutsi have always been oppressors who disdained the other groups.

A different view is held by those who contend that the pre-colonial Rwanda was marked by social harmony. Those who hold this view argue that the social categories existing in pre-colonial Rwanda were not ethnic groups. The respective privileges and obligations of each social group were socially accepted and mutually profitable. Moreover, it is argued that this period never witnessed any ethnic conflict. Never did one social group rise against the other in an open and violent conflict. All social groups formed one people with one army and under the same political authority of the king. For holders of this view, ethnic differences and subsequent conflicts are the consequence of colonialism. This is the view that is promoted by the post-Genocide political regime in Rwanda.[213]

Although social relations in the pre-colonial era are interpreted differently, it is generally agreed that the society was then made up of social categories with unequal rights and privileges. Pre-colonial Rwanda was marked by the hegemony of the elite Tutsi over the Hutu and Twa peasants. The transition from statelessness to kingship is often said to have been achieved around the fifteenth century, at the expense of Hutu chiefdoms conquered by Tutsi kings.[214] In his book *Inganji Karinga*[215], published at the request of King Rudahigwa, a well-known Rwandan Catholic priest, Kagame, recounts the history of Pre-colonial Rwandan Kingdom as a series of Tutsi victories over Hutu chiefs. The account of these conquests is presented in a way that "makes no concession to delicate sensibilities in its description of the tortures and humiliation meted out to the vanquished,

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[213] Kuperman, A.J. The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention., p 5.
[214] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 19.
[215] Kagame, A. *Inganji Kalinga*, 2 vols, Kabgayi, Rwanda. 1959.

including a description of the custom of adorning the royal drum, *Karinga*, with the severed testicles of enemies".[216]

A softer and less ethnic-oriented version of this account of conquest and domination attributes them only to one Tutsi clan, the Nyiginya dynasty. Under the leadership of their leaders, the Nyiginya, notorious for cattle rustling, embarked on a series of conquests, rustling more cows and expanding their territory for more pasture. By the end of the fifteen century, the wide territorial structure under the Nyiginya lordship was called Rwanda.[217] The Nyiginya aristocracy constituted a class that thrived on the labour of their exploited subjects, the peasant Hutu and the Twa, as well as the Tutsi who were not part of the ruling class. However, to ensure the security of their domination, they found it more efficient to entrust political and administrative responsibilities to their fellow pastoralist Tutsi. This resulted in the differentiation of Rwandan society between ruling pastoralists and ruled agriculturalists.[218] This view seems to be closer to reality in that without exaggerating social divisions it acknowledges not only the existence of inequalities in the pre-colonial period but also a form of exploitation, of which the Hutu were the main victims.

The pre-colonial part of Rwandan history is an integral part of Rwandan heritage, certainly rich in very positive things worth remembering. Unfortunately this period has been an object of manipulation and misinterpretation from those who were less interested in historical truth than the pursuit and defence of particular ideologies. This has often been the case, especially when it came to the issue of relations between the Hutu and the Tutsi. When the Hamitic superiority was in line with the desire of the elite Tutsi to keep the monopoly of power, they accepted it wholeheartedly and found arguments to support it.[219] The Hutu, who felt victimized by this theory, tried to refute it, but met with strong

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[216] Franche. D. « Genealogy du Genocide Rwandais, Hutu et Tutsi: Gaulois et Francs? » *Les Temps Modernes*, no 582, Mai-Juin, 1995, p 21 quoted in Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 76.
[217] Kamukama, D. *Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relation* , pp 140-141.
[218] Kamukama, D. *Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relation* , p 143.
[219] Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as Terror,* p 42.

opposition.[220] Later it was the turn of some Hutu extremists to evoke the same theory in an attempt to justify their discrimination against the Tutsi. This time the protest came from the Tutsi. Hence the same argument from history was used when it fitted the context of those holding it, who did not hesitate to refute it when the context was different. The biases that characterise the description of social relations in the pre-colonial period complicate the understanding of the exact contribution of colonialism to Rwandan ethnicity. But whatever may have been the pre-colonial legacy, the responsibility of the colonial powers for social conflict in Rwanda remains great.

3.3 Socio-political relations in colonial Rwanda

Historians and politicians generally agree to the fact that colonialism greatly contributed to the sharpening of ethnic distinction in Rwanda. The divergences start when it comes to the evaluation of the significance of that contribution. To some, colonialism created ethnic groups out of what used to be mere social classes, to others the colonizer inherited ethnic categories and stereotypes which it reinforced, consolidated and ultimately exacerbated.[221] The present study focuses on the description of the attitude and behaviour of the colonizer toward social categories in Rwanda. This section discusses the contribution of the Germans and the Belgians during their respective periods of control over Rwanda

3.3.1 German contribution to ethnic conflict in Rwanda

The Germans were the first colonial power in Rwanda. It was in 1894 that the first military-scientific expedition arrived in the country and Germans stayed in the country until after their defeat in the First World War. For 10 years Rwanda together with Burundi and Tanganyika, constituted what was called "German East Africa".   But their short stay contributed to social conflict in Rwanda through their indirect rule policy and their military support to the ruling Tutsi.

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[220] It is reported that at the heat of Hutu protest in 1958 a group of Tutsi close to the court responded with intransigence, claiming that their ancestor Kigwa came to the throne by reducing indigenous Hutu tribes to a state of servitude, and thus there could be no basis for brotherhood between Hutu and Tutsi. See Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 154.
[221] Eltringham has reported the views and arguments of these opposing groups. See Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror*, p 168.

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3.3.1.1 The Indirect Rule strategy

Having never established a significant presence in the country, the Germans did not have sufficient human power to directly control the whole territory.[222] They decided to administer the country through the existing traditional institutions. This was called the Indirect Rule policy. This policy consisted of maintaining unchanged the traditional administration structure and controlling the country through local officials who became the executive instruments of the colonial power. Apart from supplying the staff that the Germans lacked, this approach aimed at avoiding resistance and eventual confrontation from the local population that could have resulted from any attempt to displace traditional rulers. In his report of November 1905, Captain von Grawert, then Resident of Burundi, elucidated the rationale behind the indirect rule:

> The deal is: unqualified recognition of the authority of the sultans from us, whether through taxes or other means, in a way that will seem to them as little a burden as possible; this will link their interest with ours. This ideal will probably be realised more easily and earlier in Rwanda, which is more tightly organized, than in Urundi where we must first re-establish the old authority of the sultan, which has generally been weakened by wars with Europeans and other circumstances.[223]

In a Tutsi-led kingdom, where high-status individuals were from the Tutsi group, these early colonizers found it easier subcontracting local control to Tutsi chiefs. The indirect rule policy reinforced the power of members of the Tutsi elite, some of whom, secure in the white man's support, acted as rapacious quasi-warlords.[224]

3.3.1.2 Military support to Tutsi kings

In addition to their favouring the Tutsi over the other two groups, Germans provided the Tutsi regime with military assistance that enabled them to conquer the remaining

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[222] The number of German officials that administered the whole of German East Africa (Rwanda, Burundi and Tanganyika) never exceeded 70 people (see Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 49).
[223] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 49.
[224] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis* p 25.

independent Hutu kingdoms.[225] With the military support of the German colonizers, the king was able to extend his control to the peripheral regions, especially in the north of the country, where some Hutu polities had maintained their autonomy *vis-à-vis* the central state.[226]

Although German control was not for a long period, their influence had long-lasting effects. As Prunier has recorded, the colonial policy of indirect rule left considerable leeway to the Rwandese monarchy and acted in direct continuation of the pre-colonial transformation toward more centralization, annexation of the Hutu principalities and increase in the Tutsi chiefly power.[227] Germans may not be held responsible for creating ethnic categories in Rwandan society. However, their support for the Rwandan traditional political structure resulted in the reinforcement of Tutsi hegemony. In this regard, Germans are criticized for contributing to the oppression of the Hutu, although more criticism is directed at the Belgians, who took over from Germans and stayed longer. The colonial behaviour considerably affected social relations during the Belgian colonial administration. [228]

3.3.2 Belgian contribution to ethnic conflicts in Rwanda

Favouring the Tutsi over the other groups continued and was reinforced when Belgium took over from Germany in 1916. The sympathy of the Belgians shifted, however, and they later supported the Hutu in the 1950s. This was after a period of about forty years of Tutsi regimes, supported in many ways by the Belgian colonial power.

3.3.2.1 The Belgian support to Tutsi hegemony

Belgian support to Tutsi regimes was manifested through the systematisation of indirect rule, the support of the territorial expansion of their dominion and the substantialisation

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[225] Count von Gotzen, the then Governor of German East Africa, believed that German policy must be to support the traditional chiefs in such a manner that they will be convinced that their own salvation and that of their supporters depend on their faithfulness to the Germans. See Melvern, L A. A People Betrayed, p 9.
[226] Fegley, R. *World Bibliographical Series*, p xx, xxi.
[227] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 25.
[228] Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as Terror,* p. 39 ff.

of Tutsi superiority in many other ways. These included the privileges granted to them in education, in leadership positions and in the judiciary.

3.3.2.1.1 Systematisation of Indirect Rule

During the first years of Belgian administration, there was much uncertainty concerning the attitude to adopt toward the Rwandan political structure that the Belgians inherited from the Germans. They waited for about 10 years to formulate and implement their reforms. A League of Nations Mandate made official in 1919 their occupation of Rwanda resulting from the Germans' military defeat in 1916. At the time of the Mandate, the Belgians were undecided as to how to behave towards the traditional socio-political structure. It was not until 1926 that they started to implement a series of measures later known as "*Reformes Voisin",* named after the then Governor, Charles Voisin. Although they were not impressed with the administrative achievements of the Germans, the Belgians' policy concerning social relations seemed to stay in line with that of their predecessors. Their goal was to ensure peace and public order, while maintaining the existing balance between the native groups.[229] Like the Germans, the Belgians believed that Indirect Rule would make easier the implementation of their colonial policies and practices. They preferred to maintain the institution of kingship in order to use the king as a legitimiser of their policies.[230] Ryckmans, the first Belgian Resident of Burundi, put it in these words:

> The presence of the king, the only one capable of conferring a legal, customary investiture upon a candidate of our choice, makes it possible for us to go forward without running the risk of being faced with a fatal impasse, without having to make an impossible choice between a rebellious legitimacy and an impotent submission…. It is therefore not because of a pure love for tradition or local colour that we keep the native kings. Let their powers be curtailed if necessary but let none challenge their existence and outward prestige.[231]

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[229] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 65.
[230] Ryckmans, P. "Le Problème Politique au Rwanda-Urundi" *Congo*. Vol. 1, No 3, 1925, pp 410 ff. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 66.
[231] Ryckmans, P. "Le Problème Politique au Rwanda-Urundi", pp 410 ff. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 65.

The Belgian strategy consisted of maintaining traditional political institutions in order to manipulate them. While the concern to appear legitimate before the people compelled them to maintain the traditional institutions, their determination to achieve their own goals required suitable personnel fitting into their vision. Not all the existing chiefs met these requirements: "There are among the chiefs some who are incapable, imbecile, who will never gain authority…. There are some who are irreducibly hostile and who will never accept civilization…".[232] These were to be replaced by the Belgians' candidates appointed by the king to achieve what the colonial power called progress. The strategy is clearly expressed in these terms:

> The agreement between the native king and the European authorities will lead…to this final result whereby the country will be left only with chiefs willing, or resigned, to march toward progress – and thus acceptable to the occupying power – all while maintaining legitimacy and thus being acceptable to the natives. [The native kings] are the familiar décor that permit us to act behind the scenes without alarming the people.[233]

It was the concern of administrative efficiency that motivated the administrative reforms initiated by the Belgians in 1925. For the Belgians, the traditional local administration, with its triple hierarchy, whereby three different chiefs had separate and independent commands on land, cattle and army, was deemed to be leading to conflict anarchy and chaos.[234] They decided to streamline the structure of local government and to bring the three branches of power under the rule of a single Tutsi chief. As a result of this reform, a few Hutu who were chiefs of the land lost their positions. This eventually led to a situation of almost total dominance of the chiefly functions by the Tutsi. As Taylor notes, domination in Rwanda became concentrated in the hands of a relatively small clique of Tutsi administrators and a handful of Belgian colonial administrators.[235] If the more rationalized administrative system that resulted from the Belgians' reforms was less

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[232] Rapport sur l'administration du Rwanda-Urundi, 1925, p 63. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 66.

[233] Ministère des Colonies, Rapport sur l'Administration Belge, p 63. Quoted in Chrétien J. P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 267.

[234] Under the traditional Rwandan systems there were normally three types of chiefs on any given hill, namely, a chief of the cattle, a chief of the army and a chief of the land. Sometimes the chief of the land was a Hutu.

[235] Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 43.

redundant, it also reduced the ability for weak and poor servants to choose a less oppressive chief. Hutu peasants, who before could cleverly manipulate one level of chiefly authority against the other, now found themselves tightly controlled by one chief only, whose backing by the white administration was more efficient than the loose support the traditional chiefs used to receive from the royal court.[236]

In the process of these reforms attempts were made by the Belgians to substitute Hutu chiefs and sub-chiefs for Tutsi incumbents who were judged either incompetent or rebellious. This move met with resistance, not only from the Tutsi elite, but especially from the Catholic missionaries concerned about the vacillation of the colonial authorities with regard to the traditional hegemony of the well-born Tutsi.[237] Even Mgr Leon Classe, who had initially expressed his views in favour of the promotion of Hutu and Twa, reacted strongly against these reforms which, seemed to undermine the prerogative of the Tutsi caste. According to Classe, the greatest mistake the colonial administration could make would be to suppress the Mututsi caste, by insisting on the equality of social groups.

> Such a revolution would lead the country directly to anarchy and to hateful anti-European communism. Far from furthering progress, it would nullify the government's action by depriving it of auxiliaries who are, by birth, capable of understanding and following it. This is the view and the firm belief of all superiors of the Rwanda Mission, without exception. Generally speaking, we have no chiefs who are better qualified, more intelligent, more active, more capable of appreciating progress and more fully accepted by the people than the Tutsi.[238]

The colonial administration took note of the warning from the missionaries. Not only did they halt the appointment of Hutu into chiefly positions, but also the few to whom positions had been given were dismissed. Further efforts were made to preserve and strengthen Tutsi hegemony. This strengthening of Tutsi supremacy was achieved in three major ways: by facilitating the territorial expansion of the Tutsi political hegemony, by a

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[236] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 27.
[237] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 73.
[238] de Lacger, L. Le Rwanda : Aperçu historique. Kabgayi, Rwanda: 1939, p 524. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 73.

rigorous control over all education opportunities and by the introduction of judicial machinery designed to perpetuate the subjection of the Hutu caste.[239]

3.3.2.1.2 Sponsoring territorial expansion of Tutsi hegemony

The expansion of Tutsi political hegemony, from the centre to the periphery, had started but was not completed under the German administration. While the Germans' support had consisted of helping the central power fight the rebellion, the Belgian policy went further in strengthening Tutsi domination. With Belgians' help, more Tutsi chiefs were appointed in the predominantly Hutu areas of the north and north-west parts of the country, a region that for centuries had remained autonomous from the central Tutsi regime. Hutu chiefs "*bahinza*" were removed from office and replaced with Tutsi ones.[240] This period is sometime referred to as a time when central Rwandan Tutsi 'colonized' northern Rwanda.[241]

This political expansion had far-reaching socio-economic implications in the regions that came under the control of the central power. The lands in the north were held by lineage groups as undivided usufruct in the system called *ubukonde.[242]* The Belgian administration did not recognize this form of land property. According to the Belgians, these lands were not occupied in the legal sense by the native and were considered vacant. The state could dispose of such land after due compensation.[243] The Tutsi chiefs, who enjoyed the support of the Belgian administration, did not waste time in modifying the traditional land rights in their favour. The *Ubukonde* system was replaced by *ibikingi* grazing lands, a form of private property recognised to the owners of cattle. Through this

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[239] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 73.
[240] Tabara, P. *Afrique : La Face Cachée*. Paris : La Pensée Universelle. 1992, p84-90. Quoted in Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 26. ("abahinza" were Hutu chiefs in regions which had not yet fallen under the control of the Tutsi central regime. They should not be confused with the chiefs "abatware" nominated by the king).
[241] Vansina, J. *L'évolution du Royaume du Rwanda des Origines à 1900*, Brussels, Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre Mer. 1967. Quoted in Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 42.
[242] *Ubukonde* was a traditional system, according to which people regarded as the original owners of the land "*abakonde*" exercised rights of ownership. They would open their land for exploitation to the "*bagererwa*", who would pay a tribute in kind in exchange for the usufructuary rights.
[243] Adriaensens, J. *Le Droit Foncier au Rwanda*. Mimeographed course text, Butare: Université Nationale Du Rwanda, 1962, p 42. Quoted in Nkurikiyimfura, J. N. *Le Gros Bétail et la Société Rwandaise* : *Evolution Historique des XIIème Sciècle à 1958*. Paris : L'Harmattan. 1994, pp132-40. Quoted in Prunier,G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 28.

system the Tutsi chiefs took control of the land taken from Hutu farmers. Prunier has noted that the Tutsi were hated for this and paid a great price during the 1959 revolution.[244]

The geographical expansion of the indirect rule was accompanied with the spread of the *ubuhake* contracts to the regions where it had not existed before. This institution in its later form was strongly resented by the people who perceived it as a foreign imposition. It brought a hardening of the social relationship.[245]

The Belgians are also credited for having transformed and generalized the institution of forced labour '*Ubuletwa*'. Introduced by King Rwabugiri, the *Ubuletwa* in its initial form was a family obligation so that a lineage had the latitude to delegate only one person to do the corvee on behalf of all the members. As a result of the expansion of the authority of the king with the help of the colonial power, the forced labour was taken to parts of the country where it had never existed before. Moreover, it was made an individual obligation, so that at times, when needed, women and children had to go and perform the corvee.[246] The Hutu were considered a working class and their children were not even given the opportunity to go to school.

3.3.2.1.3 Exclusion of the Hutu from education

The indirect rule policy was extended to the sector of education. The assertion that the Tutsi were born to lead had its logical corollary that they alone should have access to education. By the early 1930s and until well after the Second World War, the consensus of opinion among Belgian administrators was that the Tutsi should remain the sole recipients of secular and missionary education.[247] Government schools were created to be the training ground for exclusively Tutsi sons. These would later serve as auxiliaries of the colonial administration and from among them new chiefs would be appointed. One

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[244] Prunier,G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 28.
[245] Prunier,G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 30.
[246] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 27 following Newbury, C. "Uburetwa and Thangata: Catalyst to peasant Political Consciousness in Rwanda and Malawi" in *Centre de Civilisation Burundaise* (ed.) La Civilisation Ancienne des Peuples des Grand Lacs. Paris: Carthala, 1981, pp 138-47.
[247] *Lemarchand, R. Rwanda* and Burundi, p 75.

popular school, the "Ecole des Frères de la Charité," also known as "Groupe Scolaire d' Astrida" was especially conceived to provide training for future chiefs. This school progressively became "the grace giving institution through which the Tutsi elites managed to perpetuate themselves in the seats of power and through which they gained the technical skills and training necessary for the preservation of their traditional claims to supremacy."[248] Lemarchand has recorded the ethnic distribution of student enrolment at the Groupe Scolaire of Astrida from 1932 to1954 as follows:[249]

Year	Tutsi pupils	Hutu pupils
1932	45	0
1933	21	0
1934	26	0
1935	41	0
1945	46	0
1946	44	1
1947	44	2
1948	85	2
1949	85	5
1953	68	3
1954	63	3

The ratio of Hutu pupils was not better in other schools, such as the schools of Nyanza, Ruhengeri, Gatsibu and Cyangugu, designed to train Tutsi sons. The scarcity of Hutu in schools does not mean that they disdained education, as a certain chief Gashugi may have insinuated when he asserted that "the Mututsi earns his living through mental work while the Muhutu lives by manual work".[250] Education was geared to impart skills to those destined to rule, so that those who were not eligible for leadership positions were aware

[248] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 74.
[249] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 138.
[250] Maniragaba, B. Les Relations Interethniques à la Lumière de l'Agression d'Octobre, 1990.Ruhengeri, Rwanda: Université Nationale du Rwanda. 1991, p 151. Quoted by Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relation.

that schools were not meant for them. The consciousness of this reality was expressed in a popular expression of resignation "*ndiga se ngo nzagabane umusozi?*" (Why should I bother going to school, shall I ever be appointed a chief over any hill?).

The monopoly of education went a long way to consolidating the already recognized pre-eminence of the Tutsi aristocracy. Lemarchand noted:

> No longer was their birth their sole justification for claiming ascendancy over the peasant masses; they could also invoke their superior education and technical competence to strengthen their supremacist claims. By providing them with Western skills and knowledge, with the literary media necessary for the elaboration of their own traditional culture, and above all by acknowledging their innate superiority, the Christian missionaries gave the Tutsi aristocracy the means and opportunities to reinforce their sense of group identity and cultural superiority.[251]

In addition to preparing young Tutsi for their future position in the administration, the missionary-run schools were used to indoctrinate them with the Hamitic ideology. Among the missionaries there were ethnographers such as R. Pages and A. de Leacger, who were champions of this ideology and undertook to popularise it. Of course, such teaching fell on fertile ground, as Taylor has stated:

> Many upper-class Tutsi understood that it was to their advantage to reinforce the European perception of Hamitic superiority and they obliged with pseudo-historical fabrication that extolled their intellectual, cultural, and military supremacy. Although Tutsi elite were only echoing what colonialists had told them, the story of Tutsi natural superiority and predisposition to govern took on the aspect of truth as the story was repeatedly told.[252]

The indirect rule was not limited to the administration and education but was also applied in the judiciary.

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[251] Lemarchand, R. "Stratified kingships: Rwanda and Burundi" in Lemarchand, R. ed. *African Kingship in Perspective"*, p 76.
[252] Taylor, C. C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 42.

3.3.2.1.4 Tutsi supremacy in the judiciary

Another institution through which Indirect Rule was practised was the native tribunals initiated in 1936. The system of native courts was instituted to tackle any problem related to the native administration. These tribunals were expected to be institutions through which the traditions would be preserved, but monitored, in order to progressively achieve assimilation. These tribunals, always headed by Tutsi, provided more opportunity for the ruling Tutsi oligarchy, not only to retain their privileges but also to abuse them. One Belgian official has noted, "The native tribunals never played a moderating role because they were intimately linked to the political authorities. In many cases these tribunals were organs used by the Tutsi to give a semblance of legality to their exactions…."[253] Their function was not so much to dispense justice as to legitimise abuses and wrongdoings.[254] This description may be harsh, but what is obvious is that it was difficult to challenge the privileges and eventual abuses of them before the courts controlled by the beneficiaries of those privileges.

3.3.2.1.5 Introduction of the identity card

Throughout the colonial period the privileged Tutsi elite accepted the idea of their superiority, while the increasingly marginalized Hutu were becoming more frustrated. The emphasis on differences between the different groups convinced them of their different identity. This identity was finally fixed after the census organized by the Belgian administration in 1933. Every registered Rwandan was given an identity card which indicated and fixed once and for all his/her ethnic group. The introduction of these identity documents rigidified further the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. This system of identification continued and was still in use during the Genocide. The identity card played a significant role during the Genocide, as the bearer could be saved or condemned, depending on whether the identity card labelled him/her as a Hutu or a Tutsi.[255]

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[253] Anon, "Notes sur les causes de troubles du mois de Novembre 1959 au Rwanda" Unpublished. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 76.

[254] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 76.

[255] The role played by the identity card to determine who should be killed in the Genocide, as regrettable as it is, should not be exaggerated. Generally, Tutsi were identified and killed either because their neighbours had always known them as belonging to that social category, or because their physical appearance indicated to the killers that they were Tutsi. This is why many Hutu with "dubious" physical appearance and mistakenly identified as Tutsi were killed even though their identity cards indicated that they were Hutu. In

Despite this division and inequality of privileges that characterized the pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda, the different social groups seem to have managed to co-exist free of mass violence. The surprising cohesion of the Rwandan traditional social structure has been explained through what was called the "premise of inequality".[256] According to Maquet, people born in different castes are unequal in inborn endowment, physical as well as psychological and have, consequently, fundamentally different rights. Maquet contends that the acceptance of inequalities was a basic principle influencing the whole structure of Rwandan life.[257]

It was argued that caste structure in Rwanda was based on a shared and culturally elaborated image of society, involving a combination of exclusiveness and reciprocity, of inequality and solidarity. It was the premise of inequality that allowed this structure to retain its stern rigidity, holding the society together over the years.[258] Moreover, a variety of structures are said to have served integrative functions and fostered inter-caste cohesion. These include the *Mwami* (king) as a representative of the deity, a king, father and protector of the whole people, not of one particular social group; the *Ryangombe* cult and *Kubandwa* sect that brought together everybody, irrespective of social group or caste hierarchy; the system of clientship that included aspects of solidarity, reciprocity and complementarity among the people, irrespective of their category; and also the carrying of similar clan names by Tutsi and Hutu.[259] Such social structures that ignored various boundaries were factors of unity and social cohesion.

Elements in traditional Rwandan culture and structure, such as those mentioned above, have surely been significant to the cohesion of the society. More importantly, one could note that the psychological ties of dependence that resulted from a long period of *Ubuhake* clientship may have created what was called a "dependence complex"[260] and

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the neighbouring Burundi, where the identity cards did not bear the mention of ethnic categories, Tutsi and Hutu were still identified and similar massacres were easily carried out.

[256] Maquet, J. *The Premises of Inequality in Rwanda*. London: Oxford University Press. 1961. Maquet is quoted in Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 172.

[258] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 34.

[259] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 34.

[260] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 96.

prevented the Hutu from having a conscience of themselves as a group. This is what Lemarchand refers to:

> The roles norms and statuses associated with clientage structure tended not only to block the emergence of a separate Hutu consciousness but also to positively reinforce the attachment of the individual Hutu peasant to his lord. The result has been up to a point to hamper the development of any sort of corporate ties other than those based on feelings of personal allegiance.[261]

The ideology surrounding the Mwami and the institution of the monarchy played a central role in the cohesion of Rwandan society. As a representative of *Imana* (God) the Mwami served as the supreme integrative symbol, through which a sense of corporate solidarity could be achieved in the midst of inequality.[262] The prosperity of both the exploited masses and the privileged Tutsi elite was is some way associated with the institution of the monarchy. Lemarchand's analysis of the situation is quite accurate:

> Because of the different perceptions of their self-interests held by each caste, the masses and the aristocracy tended to "identify" with the monarchy in different ways. Monarchical legitimacy for the Tutsi elites was generally identified with the attainment and preservation of instrumental, secular goals. The political myths fashioned around the Court provided them with ideological justification for maintaining their supremacy in all walks of life. For the masses, however, monarchical legitimacy conjured up an entirely different vision – that of a unifying whole through which a sense of all-embracing solidarity could be achieved in spite of inequality. The symbolic roots of monarchical legitimacy, in short, made it possible for the masses to endure inequalities – and for the ruling elites to enforce it.[263]

The foregoing socio-cultural factors, coupled with the closed and atomised character of the Rwandan rural community, did not allow for an environment conducive to an organized protest from the subjugated groups. This minimized the risk of ethnic conflict. The absence of tribal conflicts, however, should not necessarily mean that the less privileged social groups had happily accepted the inequalities. The acquiescence of the exploited groups may have simply resulted from the consciousness of their inability to

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[261] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 96.
[262] Lemarchand, R. ed. *African Kingships in Perspective*, p 68.
[263] Lemarchand, R. ed. *African Kingships in Perspective*, p 69.

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successfully challenge the system. They could probably have behaved differently if they were convinced that they could safely question the legitimacy of the regime. This was noticed in the attitude of the northern Hutu inhabitants, when Ndungutse aroused them against the particularly exploitative Tutsi regime of Bega dynasty:

> Undoubtedly the Bahutu did not voluntarily accept the somewhat burdensome fiscal regime. The most telling proof of this is the enthusiastic response of the local populations to Ndungutse's call in 1912, when he threatened to invade the [central] kingdom, and the unanimous rallying of the peasantry to his cause at the mere mention of suppressing the corvee.[264]

Ndungutse's revolt was easily quenched but it revealed the potential for change inherent in the traditional society. The traditional base of social prestige and political power was seriously challenged later, when the peasantry became bold enough to question and repudiate their conventional bonds to the ruling caste. This was a long process that culminated in what was called the social revolution in 1959. At this time the sympathy of the Belgians shifted and they supported the Hutu almost the same way they had wholeheartedly supported the Tutsi regimes.

3.3.2.2 The Belgians support of the Hutu uprising

From the early 1950s the socio-political atmosphere in Rwanda underwent progressive changes. This was a period when disgruntled masses started to voice their complaints. The events that marked this period and culminated in what was called the 1959 revolution in Rwanda made this period a turning point in the history of the country. It had long-lasting implications that have much bearing on the 1994 Genocide. The upheaval that began as a protest later transformed itself into a localized rebellion, before it finally wound up as a social and political revolution.[265] The attitude of the people in the events that marked this period indicates how shallow was the level at which they had accepted the premise of inequality. "The rapidity of the polarization in Rwandan society may

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[264] Sandrart. "Rapport sur le Territoire de Kigali », p 45 in the Derscheid Collection. 1929. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 9 (footnote).

[265] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 5. The revolutionary character of the events that took place in this period, affirmed by Hutu politicians, is rejected by many Tutsi, who argue that what happened was simply a Genocide (see Eltringham, N. "Debating the Rwandan Genocide" in Kaarsholm, P. ed. *Violence Political Culture and Development in Africa*, p 78).

suggest that the acceptance of the premise of inequality was not so deeply rooted, or that it was coloured with much ambivalence". [266] But for the people to be able to express their feelings concerning the regime, many changes needed first to take place. As much as these events resulted from dissonance inherent in the traditional structure of Rwandan society, which are analysed below, there were more factors of change connected with the presence and the attitude of the colonial power which are equally accountable for these events. These will be examined next, after a brief look at the disharmonies inherent to the traditional society.

3.3.2.2.1 Disharmonies inherent in the traditional texture of Rwandan society

Despite the noted solidaristic features that were instrumental in holding the traditional Rwandan society together, the inequalities that characterized this society constituted a fragile aspect of the foundation of its cohesion. The traditional structure often called a caste structure and the resulting functional division of labour that often took a character of exploitation and oppression provided an atmosphere conducive for potential tensions. As Lemarchand observes, "much of the momentum gained by the revolution after the initial outbreaks came from the resurgence or reactivation of long-standing inter-group tensions which the ruling oligarchy had either failed to dissipate or could no longer manage with the same degree of efficacy as it had in the past".[267]

Social harmony in Rwanda could be maintained as long as the existing socio-political structure was not questioned. This required that the downtrodden groups remained unaware of any alternative form of social organization, different from the one imposed on them. "The evil that one has suffered patiently as inevitable looks unbearable once one comes to realize that there is a way of escape from it".[268] Abuses in the traditional clientship system that made it increasingly exploitative and the labour control policy enforced by the Belgian administration caused much frustration among the rural people and eventually aroused their political consciousness. It was the rural anger which gave

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[266] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 172.
[267] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 97.
[268] Kamukama D. *Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations*, p 51quoting Rwanda Embassy Press Release: "Background Information to the Problem of Refugees".

energy to the emergent national Hutu leadership and party organization. "The (Hutu) leaders did not create rural political consciousness, however, they articulated and channelled it, even being pushed to make particular demands by their constituencies".[269] If the colonial policies contributed to making the situation unbearable for the rural masses, the presence of the colonialists and the missionaries also made available the resources that were used for effective protest.[270] These external powers stimulated and encouraged the revolutionary activity.

3.3.2.2.2 External stimuli of revolutionary sentiment

Although the root causes of revolutionary sentiment stemmed from the disharmonies inherent to the Rwandan indigenous social structure, there were foreign forces that shaped the growth of the revolutionary activity. The most noted of the external factors that contributed to arousing the revolutionary consciousness and activity among the masses include the administrative changes introduced by the Belgian colonial power, as well as the attitude of the Catholic missionaries.

3.3.2.2.2.1 Changes in the Belgian administration

Belgians' administrative reforms led to the concentration of power in the hand of one chief who combined the positions traditionally held by three chiefs. This innovation destroyed the old balance of forces between cattle chiefs, army chiefs and land chiefs. It reduced the chances for a subject to choose a less oppressive chief, as well as the possibilities of appeal in case of abuse. This change conferred on the chiefs unlimited powers, which they were later reluctant to relinquish when the legitimacy of their rule was questioned.

The Belgian administration did not only rationalize the office of chieftaincy, it also bureaucratised it. Although the indirect rule policy required preserving the office, the job description of the chiefs was thoroughly reviewed. New sets of obligations were forced upon them, with new standards of performance. The chiefs were asked to discharge a host

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[269] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression,* p 181.
[270] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression,* p 181.

of new functions and these corresponded to new obligations imposed on the peasantry. The bureaucratisation of their position was enhanced by the introduction of financial incentives and sanctions. This made the chiefs increasingly more accountable to the colonial administration than they were to the king.

The bureaucratisation of chieftaincy resulted in the prioritization of administrative efficiency at the expense of traditional affective ties that existed between the chiefs and the subjects. The concern to meet the expectations of the system led the chiefs to make more demands from the people. Their rule became more harsh and impersonal. Administrative efficiency was more often than not synonymous with sheer brutality and arbitrariness. Although acting as agents of the colonial administration, the chiefs were generally held responsible by the peasantry for all the hardships and sufferings associated with colonial rule.[271] Taxes and corvees increased by the Belgians were implemented by the chiefs, who would also administer punishment, including physical beating. Since the Tutsi had the monopoly of chiefly position, the abuses of the chiefs were identified with the abuse of the Tutsi as a group. This exacerbated racial tensions and may explain the tendency for Hutu leadership later to make not only the chiefs but also the Tutsi, as a group, the target of their revolution.[272]

The increasing abuses that resulted from the bureaucratization of chieftaincy created a kind of rural radicalism that predisposed the people not only to challenge the rule of the chiefs, but also to heed a potential call to revolt against the whole regime. If a development of this kind had once been unthinkable, given the inhibiting effect of the traditional client-patron relationship, the situation was changing as a new set of relationships began to take shape outside the traditional system of authority.

With the introduction of a money economy, the social stratification changed and became more fluid and diversified.[273] New social groupings emerged and a growing number of individuals came to be identified on a basis different from patrons and clients. There were

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[271] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations: Rwanda", p 47.
[272] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* pp 25-26.
[273] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations: Rwanda", p 49.

clerks, schoolteachers, carpenters, traders, catechists, etc…. Some opportunities for higher education and some modest development of industry, commerce and agriculture had opened up alternative ways of access to resources outside the system of clientship and beyond the control of chiefs.[274] New occupational categories appeared among the Hutu, who were classified among the so-called '*evolués*'. This was a serious blow to the traditional system. It brought the sundering of vassalage ties resulting from the surge of modern economic and social forces which brought about the collapse of the chieftaincy and the kind of social order for which it stood.[275] Such a break in the chain of subordination between Hutu and Tutsi was a precondition to the rise of Hutu self-consciousness and the accompanying revolutionary sentiment.

The Belgian contribution to the revolutionary move was not limited to the consequences of their administrative policy. After the Second World War, Rwanda changed from a mandated territory to a trusteeship under the United Nations. This implied more commitment from Belgium to effecting political change and more accountability to the United Nations. A Trusteeship Council set up by the United Nations regularly visited the country and is credited to have greatly contributed to the political awakening of the population. The visits of the Trusteeship Council provided to nascent Hutu revolutionary elites opportunities to articulate their grievances and to make them known to the world.[276] In addition, these visits stirred up repeated criticism in the United Nations against Belgian policies and their half-hearted commitment to political reforms.

Belgians were initially reluctant to allow any significant changes. One Resident[277] once made it clear, in his answer to the United Nations: "It would be harsh and unfair to render unhappy, or in a state bordering on social anarchy, one or two generation by imposing premature reforms by virtue of a political ideology or on the excuse that we are

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[274] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 173.
[275] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 27.
[276] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 106.
[277] A Resident was the highest Belgian authority in the colonised country. One Resident administrered Rwanda and Burundi.

hoping to bring happiness in this fashion to future generations".[278] This position was reflected in the Belgians' half-hearted commitment to constitutional reforms. They declared that the election of the chiefs was not necessary but under the pressure of the United Nations Belgians introduced in 1952 an elective system that aimed at establishing advisory councils at different levels of administrative hierarchy. The complicated system of co-optation they used made the system to be reguarded as "only very moderately elective and representative".[279] Initially the process did not include a popular vote. Rather it allowed the chiefs and sub-chiefs to nominate 'suitable' candidates, so that even the few Hutu who were co-opted were the servants of the chiefs, hardly daring to express an opinion contrary to that of their patron. The process was expected to be a move toward democracy. It became nothing but "a process of diffusion of power but principally among the group which already possessed it, that is to say, the Tutsi caste".[280]

A second election was organized in 1956. This time it allowed a popular vote, where adult males were involved in the election of electoral colleges at the level of sub-chiefdom. Still at higher echelons, "an indirect vote influenced by the ruling authorities – a vote responsible for the composition of chiefdoms councils and the High Council of Rwanda –was far more favourable to Batutsi".[281] This was a situation of frustrated expectations for many Hutu, whose optimistic expectations for the future were denied by elections which merely confirmed Tutsi in their dominant positions.[282]

The Belgians' opposition to significant socio-political reforms was reflected in their attitude in relation to Ubuhake. As early as 1926, the institution of Ubuhake clientship was affected by the socio-economic changes that brought about the loosening of vassalage ties, so that some patrons and clients had started to terminate their contracts by common consent. But still the Belgian administration clung to this old institution (which, of course, was the nerve-centre of the indirect rule), even when King Rudahigwa

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[278] League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission 23rd session, 1931, p 19.Cf "Statement by R. Schmidt, Resident of Urundi, Presented at Usumbura, 9 August 1948", MTRU/48/Inf. 13, August 10, 1948, unpublished document. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 80.
[279] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 81.
[280] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 43.
[281] Chrétien, J P. The Great Lakes of Africa, p 300.
[282] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 174.

suggested its abolition. It took heavy pressure from the United Nation Trusteeship Council to convince the Belgians to allow this abolition in 1954.

The abolition of Ubuhake resulted in the transfer of ownership rights from patrons to clients who received full rights of ownership over a portion of cattle. The dissolution of the rights and obligations attendant upon Ubuhake contributed to the emancipation of a part of the peasantry and to the erosion of legitimacy of the old feudal system.   The abolition of Ubuhake, however, was far from terminating the people's exploitation by the patrons. Clients who acquired cattle were immediately confronted with the problem of pasture. The only way for them to be able to graze their cows was through dependence on their former patrons, who controlled pasturage.[283] Thus a number of former patrons, by asserting their claims over the grazing area, in effect compelled hundreds of theoretically emancipated cattle-owners either to accept reinfeudation or to give up their cattle. [284]

The suppression of Ubuhake, as well as the other attempted reforms, contributed to the revolution sentiment, mainly not through their achievements in the social order but through their psychological consequences. In-as-much as these reforms increased the expectations of the Hutu, who looked forward to freeing themselves from the bonds of the old feudal system, they aggravated their disappointment as they noticed their continuous dependence on the Tutsi oligarchy. Some of the Tutsi patrons perceived in the reforms a threat to their positions and, in a bid to retain their privileges, were becoming more oppressive. Many Hutu were then convinced that nothing short of a revolution could possibly loosen the Tutsi hold over the peasantry.[285]

In the face of ever-increasing pressure, the Belgians had difficulties in maintaining their intransigence with respect to political reforms. Change was sought not only by the Hutu, who hoped for a society where justice and equality would replace discrimination and exploitation, but also by the Tutsi oligarchy, who wanted first to obtain independence, in order to pursue political reforms on their own terms. The setting of a target date for

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[283] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p, 146.
[284] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 131.
[285] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 132.

independence fuelled more revolutionary activity. The Hutu counter-elite feared that independence granted to Rwanda while still under the rule of the Tutsi oligarchy would result in the perpetuation of this regime. Liberation from feudalism was their priority even if this meant delaying independence. For the ruling Tutsi, the sooner self-government was granted, the better.

In the process of their 'fight' for independence, the Tutsi oligarchy ended up alienating themselves from historical Belgian sympathy. The attitude of the Belgians in the transitional period that preceded independence revealed the shift of their support in favour of the Hutu.[286] Throughout the events that marked this period, "the Belgians played a determining role, gradually destroying or neutralizing all sources of resistance to the revolutionary movement, while at the same time creating new institutions through which further changes could be generated".[287] However, if the Belgians facilitated and supported the action of the Hutu revolutionary leaders, it was the Catholic Church through its European missionaries, who contributed to training them.

3.3.2.2.2.2 Attitude of the European clergy

The church that struggled at the beginning to have a firm grounding in Rwandan social reality later grew to become an important social institution that had an impact on many aspects of Rwandan society. The Catholic missionaries were among the champions of Tutsi supremacy ideology. They did this through popularising the Hamitic ideology and by restricting their schools to Tutsi children and supporting exclusive Tutsi rule.

This attitude of the Catholic missionaries underwent an important reorientation, which after the Second World War was translated into a shift from supporting the Tutsi elite to helping the revolutionary Hutu. Different reasons have been advanced to explain the

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[286] This shift of the Belgian sympathy was also explained as a reaction against the radical Tutsi nationalism. Following the example of Patrice Lumumba in the neighbouring Congo, the Tutsi nationalists may have called not only for independence from Belgium but also for a new strategic alignment. Rejecting the Western economic imperialism, they may have been seen to be more attracted toward the socialist nations. See Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice As Terror*, p 44. It was even suggested that the Tutsi received support from communist sources and this reinforced the Belgian shift. See Kuperman, A.J. *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention*, p 6.
[287] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 95.

Church's change of position. According to Taylor, the shift was reinforced by the fact that the Church was recruiting more of its European missionaries from the blue-collar strata of Flemish-speaking Belgians, who felt a certain affinity toward the Hutu, whom they helped to gain access to higher education.[288] It was suggested that this was a time when a new generation of missionaries, inspired by the ideals of democracy, intimately supported Hutu populism.[289] A good example is the contrast between the conservative attitude of the early leaders of the church, such as Mgr Hirth and Mgr Classe, who wholeheartedly supported the Hamitic ideology, and the position of Mgr Perraudin, often viewed as a saviour by the Hutu and a hateful sycophant by the Tutsi. [290]

It is worth noting that at this time the native clergy, who were almost exclusively Tutsi, formed about half the total number of the clergy in the Rwandan Church. Confronted with ideas of racial equality, democracy and independence, they understood the possible implications of these new ideas to their traditional privileges. This awareness led them to join their voice with those who advocated the Belgian transfer of power. This stand sent a clear signal to the European clergy, who understood that they were not spared by the contestation of colonial order. Their perceived risk to lose control of the church to the native clergy may have brought an end to their historic sympathy for the Tutsi. The question of the control of the Rwandan church may have combined with many other reasons to influence the attitude of the European clergy. This seems to be Prunier's opinion:

> The combination of changes in white clerical sympathies, struggle for the control of the Rwandese church and increasing challenge of the colonial order by the Tutsi elite, all these combined to bring about a slow but momentous switch in the church's attitudes, from supporting the Tutsi elite to helping the Hutu rise from their subservient position towards a new aspiring middle class situation.[291]

[288] Taylor, C. *Sacrifice as Terror*, p 43.
[289] Chrétien, J. P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 01. See also Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 107 and Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 44.
[290] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 107.
[291] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 44.

The support of the church to those who became the Hutu elite first consisted of offering them education opportunities, especially in seminaries when they were denied access to government schools. Beside the opportunities they offered for higher education, seminaries had become a field for human endeavour, free from racial discrimination. Through them, the Hutu elite came into contact with Christian ethics. They were able to internalise the universalistic egalitarian values and to gain a new perception of themselves as human beings. This led them to develop a strong sense of disaffection towards their rulers.

Of importance to note at this juncture, colonial institutions, ideologies and the entire system had given birth to a class that was confident enough to question and challenge the order of the day. This was the middle class, born out of the colonial education system or the religious one.[292] Beside the psychological stimulus, the church provided this Hutu counter-elite with the political weaponry to bring reality in line with their expectations.[293] When these Hutu started to voice their revolutionary claims the European clergy was on their side, helping to lobby for moral and financial support from church affiliated associations in Europe. Supported by the missionaries and favoured by the colonial administration, the Hutu could now openly challenge the Tutsi hegemony. Their challenge resulted in socio-political polarization.

3.3.2.2.3 Socio-political polarisation under Belgian supervision

It was with the support of white missionaries that in various parts of the country Hutu started to organize themselves into societies and cultural organizations. The first political challenge to the Tutsi oligarchy came in March 1957, when a group of nine Hutu intellectuals published what they called 'Notes on the Social Aspect of the Racial Native Problem in Rwanda,' a document better known as the 'Bahutu Manifesto'. By this text the Hutu counter-elite aimed at presenting to the United Nations Visiting Mission their own appraisal of the prevailing situation. This came as a response to the *Mise au Point* (Statement of Views) expressed earlier in February by the *Conseil Superieur du Pays*

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[292] Kamukama, D. *Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations: Rwanda*, p 151.
[293] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 106.

(National Supreme Council), a statement that insisted on a rapid transfer of power to the incumbent Tutsi oligarchy. The manifesto denounced the political monopoly of one race, the Mututsi, a monopoly which, according to the authors of the document, was turned into an economic, social and cultural monopoly, condemning the desperate Bahutu to be forever subaltern workers.[294] This was not yet a call for revolution but a plea for democracy. However, by focusing attention on the gap between the democratic-egalitarian aspirations of its signatories and the oligarchical structure of Rwanda society, it laid bare the nature of the social and political tensions that ultimately led to the revolution.[295]

Despite the apparent conciliatory tone of the manifesto, it contributed much to ideological and ethnic polarization. The issues raised in the manifesto became staple news in the local press[296] and a prime subject of discussion in the hills, arousing social consciousness among the Hutu masses.[297] In June 1957 Gregoire Kayibanda, one of the signatories of the manifesto, founded the 'Muhutu Social Movement (MSM)'.[298] This movement was committed to the same programme expressed in the manifesto. About five months later, in November 1957, another Hutu activist, also a signatory of the manifesto, Joseph Gitera, founded the first political party, the APROSOMA (Association for Social Promotion of the Mass).[299] Although this apparently was a class party aimed at the mobilisation of common people for social and political reform, APROSOMA attracted only Hutu adherents.

The manifesto provoked a highly defensive reaction from members of the Tutsi oligarchy, who saw in it a threat to their traditional privileges. Reacting against the egalitarian ideology expressed in the manifesto, a group of Tutsi notables, called

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[294] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 45.
[295] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 114.
[296] The local press was owned by the Catholic Church and run by members of the Hutu counter-elite, such as Gregoire Kayibanda. One of the signatories of the Hutu manifesto, Kayibanda assumed the position of chief editor of the Catholic periodical L'Ami written in French, then chief editor of Kinyamateka, written in Kinyarwanda. Founder of the Mouvement Social Muhutu, later transformed into a political party, the Parmehutu, Kayibanda will be the first President of Independent Rwanda.
[297] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 152.
[298] Translation of the French name "Mouvement Social Muhutu".
[299] From the French : Association Pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse.

abagaragu b'umwami bakuru (the senior servants of the king), issued in May 1958 a statement rejecting any Hutu pretensions to common ancestry with the Tutsi. Their argument ran like this: "Hutu were already in the country when the ancestors of the Tutsi arrived. Tutsi kings had conquered the Hutu, killed off their princelings, and reduced Hutu to serfs. By what rights then could Hutu claim to be the brothers of the Tutsi, and demand a share in the common patrimony to which only brothers have the right to claim?"[300]

The polarisation grew stronger from the top. Fifteen months after its publication, the Hutu manifesto was finally discussed by the Supreme Council of Rwanda in June 1968. The outcome was anything but conciliatory. Playing down the Hutu-Tusti problem, which he said to be a fallacy, the king declared his intention to deal with trouble-makers who were raising that false problem. To him,

> the only problem was one of wicked rumours propagated by a small group of enemies of the country, acting under foreign influence; but they would not succeed in sowing dissension; the whole nation was united in the search of the bad tree producing the fruits of division; the tree would be found, cut down, uprooted and burnt, it would be totally extirpated.[301]

This radical position of the ruling oligarchy on the issue of race relations was obviously bound to call for a violent reaction from the Hutu counter-elite. Responding to the re-asserted historical Tutsi supremacy, the Hutu undertook to challenge the supreme symbol of this supremacy, the Kalinga drum, which became the target of criticism in the Hutu dominated press. In October 1958, Gitera appealed to Mgr Perraudin to "bring an end to the idolatry surrounding the Kalinga".[302] For him this was a matter of first importance. This sacred royal drum had the peculiarity of being adorned with sexual organs of the vanquished Hutu kings. For the Hutu leaders it could not serve as a symbol of national unity. The attack on the Kalinga triggered a strong protest from members of the Tutsi

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[300] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 176.
[301] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 180-1Quoting Nkundabagenzi, F *Rwanda Politique*. Brussels: Centre de Recherche et d'Information Socio- Politiques. 1961, p 37 and d'Hertefelt, M. "Myth and political acculturation in Rwanda" in Allie Dubb, ed. *Myth in Modern Africa*. Proceedings of the 14th Conference, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research . Lusaka. 1960, 114-135, p 124.
[302] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 155.

oligarchy that were more than ever determined to reassert the legitimacy of their traditional institutions. The whole climate became poisoned, as the two camps engaged in disputes marked with racialized and polarized ideologies.

The increased attacks directed against these sensitive aspects of Tutsi political culture increased the anxiety of the Tutsi elites and sharpened their sense of solidarity. They were already feeling abandoned by the Belgian administration, who now seemed to be biased in favour of the Hutu. This impression grew even higher upon the announcement of a forthcoming Belgian parliamentary commission appointed to investigate the suitable conditions for a safe transfer of authority. The Belgians seemed to support the idea of introducing a democratic process that should result in the rule of the majority. This made the ruling class uncomfortable.

The Tutsi's qualms about the attitude of the Belgians were brought to a head by the mysterious death of King Mutara Rudahigwa. The king was in Bujumbura, when he suddenly felt ill and died shortly after receiving an injection of antibiotics. The Tutsi did not believe the Belgians' explanation of this death and remained suspicious, especially as the king died shortly after he had an exchange of views with Belgian officials. His death occurred two days before he was scheduled to issue what everyone expected to be an important policy statement.[303]

The death of King Rudahigwa exacerbated Tutsi acrimony against Belgians and marked the rupture of relations and collaboration between the chiefs and the administration. The message of this rupture was sent to the Belgians during the King's burial ceremony. On this occasion the successor to the throne, unilaterally designated by the chiefs, was proclaimed, to the dismay of the Belgians who were totally ignored in this process. The enthronement of Kigeri Ndahindurwa at Mwima in Nyanza was so dramatic that it has been often referred to as the coup d'état of Mwima.

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[303] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 156.

The new king was only 21 years old when he was brought to the throne. He lacked the experience and ability to adequately handle the socio-political problems of the time and preserve the image of kingship. Conscious of this weakness, the pro-monarchist chiefs realized that the king needed support. On 15 August 1959, the conservative Tutsi created the UNAR (Rwandan National Union),[304] a party whose programme was conceived to eulogize the monarchy. Though ostensibly dedicated to "the union of all Rwandese for the purpose of achieving true progress in all spheres", under the leadership of a Hutu, Francois Rukeba, UNAR was perceived as a party clearly intended to serve as an instrument of Tutsi supremacy.[305] Though under the nominal presidency of a Hutu, the party was mainly a Tutsi party, its leadership was dominated by Tutsi chiefs.[306] It was described as a party which was strongly monarchist and hostile to the Belgians. It defended the idea of immediate independence.[307]

The party's radical position was expressed during its meeting on 13 September 1959. In his speech, the president of UNAR declared that any person who refused to join UNAR would be regarded as the enemy of the king and of Rwanda. The Secretary-General of the party supported him, calling for a merciless war against any traitor who would not assist in the "conquest" of immediate independence (from Belgium). The threats contained in these speeches were not empty words and were followed with concrete actions. In the days that followed tracts were published with names of those branded as enemies of the king. In almost all the regions, bands of terrorists circulated, intimidating by threats, blows and attacks on property, those who had not joined UNAR.[308] The tension was very high and people could sense the imminence of a deadly conflict.

Not all the Tutsi were pro-monarchy, however. In September 1959, just one month after the creation of UNAR, some Tutsi reformists formed their own party, the RADER, "Rassemblement Democratique Rwandais" (Rwandan Democratic Rally). Unfortunately this liberal party had difficulty in attracting adherents. Though it was mainly a Tutsi

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[304] The French name being: Union Nationale Rwandaise.
[305] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 176.
[306] Kaarsholm, P. ed. *Violence Political Culture and Development in Africa,* p 81(footnote).
[307] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 47.
[308] Kuper, L. The Pity of It All, p 184.

party, most Tutsi perceived it as too close to the Europeans and they suspected that it was formed to challenge the monarchist programme of UNAR. As for the Hutu, they never trusted its liberalism and they were more attracted to a party committed to the Hutu cause. On 19 October 1959, Kayibanda converted his MSM into a fully fledged Hutu political party the PARMEHUTU, "Parti du Mouvement pour l'Emencipation des Hutu" (Party of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Bahutu). The mission given to this party was to achieve the social, economic and political democratisation of the country. At the beginning, PARMEHUTU did not rule out the possibility of continuing with the monarchy, provided that this would be a constitutional monarchy, with strongly democraticised institutions, before the granting of independence. The creation of PARMEHUTU aroused the protest of UNAR, which denounced the new organisation, calling its members the "enemies of Rwanda", against whom the "children of Rwanda" and "subjects of Kigeri" should rise and fight. Some UNAR militants took the message literally and started to implement it. It is their attitude that may have set off an explosion, causing the Hutu uprising in November 1959. In their violent reaction to provocation from UNAR militants, the Hutu enjoyed the support of the Belgian administration.

3.3.2.2.4. Belgian bias in the riots of November 1959

The igniting spark came on 1 November 1959, when a group of UNAR activists attacked Mbonyumutwa, a renowned Hutu subchief. A day after this assault rumours that he had died of his wounds were followed by a violent reaction from the Hutu population. Hutu troops gathered in protest, which gave rise to violent incidents, first through the central province of Gitarama, then spreading to Ruhengeri and Gisenyi in the north. Initially the attacks were directed against Tutsi chiefs and known UNAR members. But in the few weeks that followed, confused fighting was involving Hutu and Tutsi in general. Bands of Hutu were circulating from hill to hill, burning and pillaging Tutsi huts.[309] Although these Hutu raids followed the same pattern in pillaging and burning huts, their lack of

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[309] It seems that at this stage violence was limited to looting and burning of Tutsi dwellings, while Tutsi lives were generally spared. It was reported that "generally speaking the incendiaries, who were often unarmed, did not attack the inhabitants of the huts and were content with pillaging and setting them on fire. The most serious incidents, involving tragic wounding and death occurred, when the Tutsi were determined to fight back, or when there were clashes with the forces of order." See UN Trusteeship Council, *Report of the Visiting Mission* T/1538 (1960) par. 202-203 quoted in Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 195.

organisation and co-ordination indicates that they were not following any master plan. Most of the arsonists participated simply because that is what everybody was doing; the operation did not involve any risk but it provided the occasion to loot the victims' huts.[310] Many of the Hutu arsonists joined the violent movement without fully understanding what was happening. There were among them those who seemed to have acted with the conviction that the king himself had ordered the burning of Tutsis' huts.[311]

The Tutsi counter-attack was launched from the court. Despite the Belgians refusal to grant to the king permission to intervene and restore order, instructions were given from the court to arrest Hutu leaders. Some of these Hutu were killed or brought before the king, where they were tortured by UNAR militants.[312] The Tutsi reaction was better organized and it seems to have been more brutal than the Hutu initiatives. The main targets were well-identified individuals, considered by UNAR to be the instigators of subversion. The United Nations Visiting Mission described the conduct of repressive military operations as follows:

> Each commando party amounted to some hundreds of persons and more, *and included a majority of Hutu* [italics added], but the leaders were generally Tutsi or Twa. The group would set off on missions with very definite instructions. In other cases emissaries were sent from Nyanza with verbal orders instructing them to bring back or kill certain persons, and permitting them to appeal to local authorities for armed forces to be assembled on the spot to help them in their mission. It seems an established fact, moreover, that in many cases a commando group set out with orders to arrest a person, but in effect killed him, either because he resisted arrest or because some attackers had the instinct to kill.[313]

The repression organized by UNAR seems to have motivated the Belgian intervention to act generally in favour of the Hutu.[314] The Belgians believed that the Tutsi regime intended to eliminate Hutu leaders in the hope that this would squelch the movement of

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[310] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 163.

[311] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 164.

[312] Hubert. *Toussaint Rwandaise et sa Répression*. Brussels, 1965, p 34-41, quoted in Newbury C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 196.

[313] U N Visiting Mission, 1960, p 29, quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 165.

[314] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 195.

rural radicalism and agitation in the countryside.[315] Therefore their preoccupation to protect Hutu leaders led them to take sides in their intervention to prevent violence and restore order. While the biased intervention of the Belgians pushed the Tutsi to increase their efforts to seize the independent control of the state apparatus, it was these efforts which, in turn, generated strong counter-action on the part of Hutu leaders and the Belgian administration.[316]

The joint proclamation issued by the King and the Governor, calling for calm, and the State of Emergency declared on 11 November, brought a relative calm. The UN Visiting Mission estimated that 200 people had been killed, while the wounded were estimated at 317. In addition, thousands of huts were destroyed and an undetermined number of plantations plundered, livestock killed and personal belongings pillaged.[317]

The November riots had far-reaching consequences. Although they were not revolutionary in nature, they prepared the ground for more revolutionary activity. Hutu leaders who had not thus made the abolition of the monarchy a prerequisite for the achievement of social justice were losing their illusion about the monarchy and becoming republican revolutionaries. After these riots a significant part of the Hutu peasantry was becoming permeable for revolutionary ideals and ready to be converted into supporters of the republic. The November events constituted a step further in the process of polarisation. The chances for peaceful coexistence between Hutu and Tutsi were becoming increasingly slim. Views were voiced, suggesting the geographical separation of the two groups and the formation of a confederal organization. According to one Hutu leader, Hutu and Tutsi constituted "two nations between whom there is no intercourse

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[315] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 196. Harroy, the Governor of Rwanda-Urundi, may have asserted that UNAR consciously provoked the Hutu uprising in order to stage a "crushing counterrevolution", in which the traditionalist Tutsi planed to kill all Hutu leaders - according to a carefully planed list – and carry out in selected regions – Astrida – enough massacres of the peasant population to eliminate the possibility of a Hutu reaction before independence…or after" (Harroy, Rwanda, 291, 305) quoted in Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 287, n 48.
[316] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 196.
[317] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 167.

and no sympathy, who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets".[318]

3.3.2.2.5 Belgian supervision of power transfer from Tutsi to Hutu

In the aftermath of the November riots, passive resistance and open opposition to Tutsi rule spread throughout the country. A number of chiefs were forced to resign simply because the population refused to obey them. The Belgian administration encouraged this phenomenon in many ways, either by doing nothing to restore the authority of a rejected chief, or sometimes by encouraging the local population to get rid of an undesirable chief. It seems that Colonel Logiest, then military Resident, appointed in November during the State of Emergency, had the mission to instal structures of administration staffed by Hutu. To ensure that Tutsi supporters of UNAR would not regain control of the state after the riots he instructed the local Belgian administration to depose as many Tutsi chiefs as possible.[319]

As Tutsi chiefs and sub-chiefs were forced to resign, their offices were declared vacant and taken over by Hutu interim authorities (with the blessing of the Belgian administration). At the beginning of March 1960, about 22 out of Rwanda's 45 chiefdoms and 297 of the 531 sub-chiefdoms were headed by Hutu.[320] These positions provided valuable political resources to Hutu leaders, giving them the opportunity to prove their political and administrative abilities and to expand their zone of influence to areas where the people were not yet fully sensitised to revolutionary ideals. These interim appointments put Hutu leaders in a privileged position to campaign for the communal election scheduled for June-July 1960.[321]

The appointment of Hutu chiefs and sub-chiefs resulted in an increased number of Tutsi who left their homes. At the end of November 1959, the number of refugees was estimated to about 7,000 people. By April 1960, this number had increased to about

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[318] Supplement to *Jya Mbere*, November 27, 1959. No 3, mimeo quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 169.
[319] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 197.
[320] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 197.
[321] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 197.

22,000 people, who were either internally displaced or had gone into exile in neighbouring countries.[322] The hardships of refugee life endured by this multitude of people and their subsequent emotional pain contributed to further corrosion of Hutu-Tutsi relations. The flight of the Tutsi was a blow to the monarchists, who saw their territorial support dwindling and the prospects of a UNAR victory at the polls weakened. Capitalizing on the misfortune of the Tutsi refugees, UNAR spokesmen found in their dissatisfaction an opportunity for carrying out political campaigning. In their efforts to keep alive the grievances of the refugees population they kept reminding them that the Hutu were responsible for their misery:

> …they constantly reminded the refugees of their 'brutal uprooting', of 'the devastation of their crops, the killing of their cattle, the destruction of their dwellings, the rape of their wives and daughters'. Likewise, attention was drawn to 'the enforced promiscuity of the refugee camps, to the criminal expulsion of the old and the young from their salubrious native regions and their parking [sic], without shelter of any sort, in a region…infested with tse-tse flies'.[323]

The electoral campaign for the June and July elections was conducted in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, fear, provocation and recurrent violence. Initially, violence could be initiated by the Tutsi leadership, exacerbated not only by the intimidation by Hutu local authorities but also by the pervasive official (Belgian) propaganda for democracy. Sometimes Tutsi extremists reverted to intimidation and violence to keep the people away from the polls. Each time the Hutu retaliated violently by burning Tutsi huts. As time went by, burning Tutsi huts became a routine duty for the Hutu population, who would not wait for provocation by the Tutsi.[324]

The communal election gave an overwhelming victory to PARMEHUTU which obtained 2,390 seats out of 3,125.[325] This victory brought about a radical shift in the distribution of power. PARMEHUTU could not only count on the newly elected communal councillors to consolidate its electoral gains, it was also favoured by the new structure of power at

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[322] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 172.
[323] Laurent Nkongori. *L'Administration Tutrice Cause de la Révolution du Rwanda*. Typescript, Astrida, n,d. quoted in Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 172.
[324] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 180.
[325] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 181.

grass-roots level. Subsequent to the elections, the country was organized in 229 communes, headed by burgomasters (district mayors), of whom 210 were Hutu.[326] This new structure brought an end to the power traditionally exercised by Tutsi chiefs. The electoral victory further encouraged many Hutu to wage a final war against feudalism and this attitude perpetuated the cycle of violence. The increasing frustration of the Tutsi predisposed them to initiate incidents of violence.[327]

In a number of communes situated at the border there were recurrent cases of attacks instigated by Tutsi refugees from neighbouring countries. Such acts of terrorism would then give Hutu a pretext to retaliate against the local Tutsi population. Many of the newly elected local authorities exhibited little ability or commitment to restore order. In some places, they were involved in instigating disorder to provoke the exodus of Tutsi families whose land and property were then seized and distributed among their Hutu supporters.[328] Because of this deterioration of relations among the groups, the UN Visiting Mission recommended that the legislative election be delayed, to allow for a cooling-off period that would pave the way for national reconciliation.

The postponement of the legislative election was not a good idea for the Hutu, whose plan was to achieve internal autonomy that would help local administration to consolidate the Hutu rule before accession to independence. Realizing that the UN was not on their side, but counting on the support from the Belgian administration, the Hutu leaders convened a meeting of all the local leaders, held at Gitarama on 28 January 1961. On this date the councillors and burgomasters declared the abolition of the monarchy and proclaimed the birth of the Republic of Rwanda. This event is sometimes referred to as the *Coup d'Etat* of Gitarama.[329]

The months that followed were marked by a campaign for legislative elections. This period was punctuated with sporadic violence, in which more Tutsi huts were burnt

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[326] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 184.
[327] Newbury, C. *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p 198-9.
[328] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 185.
[329] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 193.

down, a number of Tutsi killed and thousands more displaced, increasing further the number of refugees in neighbouring countries. The elections were held in September 1961. The outcome was an overwhelming victory for PARMEHUTU. At the same time, the abolition of the monarchy declared earlier was confirmed by a referendum.[330] PARMEHUTU had now a free hand to prepare for the accession to independence, which was proclaimed a few months later, on 2 July 1962. To some, this was a happy ending of the revolution that started in 1959 and ended with the victory of the Rwandan people. This surely was the sentiment of many Hutu, who were happy to put behind an era of discrimination, exploitation and oppression.

While some were cerebrating, however, many others were grieving. This was a time of sorrow for thousands of Tutsi, many of whom were mourning relatives killed in the process, others grieving over their lost positions and property and the appalling refugee life they were relegated to. Rwanda had become a democratic republic under an almost exclusive Hutu leadership. Unfortunately, the benefits of the socio-political changes that ensued were not enjoyed by everybody in the same way. The first republic brought a reversal of fortune in favour of the Hutu at the expense of the Tutsi and did not end the confrontation between the two social groups.

3.4 Social relations from national independence to the time of the Genocide

Rwanda regained its independence in July 1962, shortly after the abolition of the monarchy. From that time to the time of the Genocide in April 1994 the country that had become a republic experienced two regimes, referred to as the First and the Second Republics. Both regimes were characterized by the monopoly of political power by the Hutu, to the exclusion of the Tutsi. Social conflicts more open and violent in the First Republic subsided at the beginning of the Second Republic, but became even more explosive at the end of this regime.

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[330] Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 186.

3.4.1 Social conflicts under the First Republic

The First Republic was the regime of the PARMEHUTU party, led by its founder president, Gregoire Kayibanda. This regime inherited the tensions and bitterness resulting from the political and social conflicts that preceded it and led to national independence. Both the abolition of the monarchy and the accession to independence were understood as a victory for the Hutu, who from now on would capitalize on their demographic majority to claim the right to enjoy exclusive privileges of power from which they themselves had been excluded throughout history. The determination to keep and protect these privileges resulted in violent conflicts whenever the Tutsi threatened to jeopardize them, whether the threat was real, as in the cases of "Inyenzi raids", or potential, as in the case of the Hutu massacre in Burundi.

3.4.1.1 The Inyenzi raids and retaliation on the Tutsi

The grief and bitterness of the Tutsi population, who had lost everything, rendered many of them susceptible to UNAR propaganda. Those in exile enlisted themselves into bands of guerrillas that attacked the Kigali republican regime. Between March 1961 and July 1966, Tutsi bands known as *Inyenzi*[331] launched at least ten major attacks on the Kigali regime.[332] Almost each time these attacks resulted in the recrudescence of violence against the Tutsi within the country and subsequent waves of people going into exile. The bloodiest attack was the invasion of Bugesera in December 1963, when the assailants attempted to march on the capital. The violent repression that ensued was not limited to the assailants. Most prominent Tutsi politicians who had not fled the country were arrested and executed and many Tutsi people were killed.[333]

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[331] Inyenzi is the Kinyarwanda for cockroach. It is not very clear when and by whom this pejorative name was given to bands of exiled Tutsi who attacked Rwanda from 1960s to 1967. Some suggest that it originated from the Hutu who intended to sneer at their enemies at the same time referring to their methods of infiltration and doing their damage in the night and disappearing in the day. Others suggest that it came from the name by which the insurgents called themselves: "*Ingangurarugo ziyemeje kuba ingenzi*" literally "The defenders of the house who are determined to be brave". "Ingenzi" here translated as brave may have been transformed (probably by the detractors) into "inyenzi" (See Kaarsholm, P. ed. *Violence Political Culture and Development in Africa,* p 85).

[332] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations, p 139.

[333] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp 216-223.

From 1966 the raids of Inyenzi stopped and violence against the Tutsi inside the country abated. They enjoyed a relative calm, even though they were excluded from the privileged positions of leadership and their access to secondary schools and to employment was controlled. After ten years of democracy, Lemarchand could formulate this comment with regard to the achievement of democracy in Rwanda:

> Inasmuch as the end result has been the systematic exclusion of the representatives of the Tutsi community from participation in the political institutions of republican Rwanda, one reaches the conclusion that democracy in contemporary Rwanda means, at best, democracy for the Hutu rather than democracy per se. By refusing liberty to the enemies of liberty the Hutu elites have seriously undermined their claims to democracy; for if one takes democracy to mean equal access to opportunities and life chances, irrespective of caste or races, it is just as a remote ideal in republican Rwanda as it ever was under the monarchy.[334]

Democracy and freedom for all required first a process of genuine reconciliation that could fix the damages of a long history of exploitation, oppression and rivalries that had generated violent conflicts. These seem to have never been the preoccupation of those whose major concern was to acquire or keep power. Neither of the two antagonistic social groups seem to have believed in power sharing. Instead of a sincere commitment to reconciliation, mistrust kept the two groups apart, each seeing a threat in the other. Even the event happening in the neighbouring Burundi could resuscitate the "demons" of fear and mistrust in Rwanda, resulting in acts of violence.

3.4.1.2 Hutu massacre in Burundi and unrest in Rwanda

The relative calm enjoyed by the Tutsi was again disturbed in the second half of 1972. This time their misfortune resulted from the massacre of Hutu by Tutsi in neighbouring Burundi in May-June 1972.[335] The situation in Burundi revived a hostile sentiment against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Vigilante groups were organized and toured the country, expelling Tutsi students from secondary schools and from university. Though this time

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[334] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 116.
[335] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 60.

the unrest was not as bloody as in the preceding cases,[336] many Tutsi victims of this hate campaign understood that their situation in Rwanda was so precarious that it could not give them any hope for a better future. This was another cause for Tutsi emigration.

These disturbances, that lasted from October 1972 to February 1973, provided an occasion to the then chief army commander, Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, to trigger a military coup that ousted the Kayibanda government on the 5 of July 1973. Habyarimana's main reproach against the toppled regime was its ethnic and regional discrimination, to which he had come to put an end. This was good news for the Tutsi, who hoped to see their security improved by the new regime. The Second Republic seemed to have a more conciliatory tone with regard to social relations between the two rival groups. Only time could prove the sincerity of the promises of peace that the Second Republic made.

3.4.2 Social relations during the Second Republic

The overthrown regime of the First Republic was criticised for its ethnic discrimination and its sectionalism. To show their commitment to correct these injustices, the junta that conducted the coup constituted what they called the *Comité pour la Paix et l'Unité Nationale* (Committee for Peace and National Unity). If peace meant the absence of war, there was peace in Rwanda during this regime. The attacks on the Tutsi in the country stopped, although discrimination against them increased. This was a time when "national unity" was more spoken about than sincerely pursued. The regime was perceived as determined to reserve the monopoly of political power and subsequent privileges for a small group in the north of the country to the exclusion of the Tutsi and the southerners.[337] It continued to display a stubborn opposition to the request of the exiled Tutsi to be allowed to return in the country. These major weaknesses constituted the perils of a regime that had promised unity and peace. The peace provided was a conditional peace, without justice.

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[336] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 60. (This time the population generally did not take part in the troubles. The operation was conducted by vigilante committees that toured the country expelling Tutsi students from secondary schools, university and sometimes from their employment).
[337] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 86.

3.4.2.1 Conditional peace for the Tutsi under Habyarimana's regime

After he seized power in 1973, Habyarimana banned all political parties. He created the "*Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement*" (MRND), which he made a single and totalitarian party. As the founder of the "Mouvement", Habyarimana was not only the never-challenged president of this party, but also the sole presidential candidate, always "elected" by an overwhelming majority. Government and administrative officials at all levels recruited from the cadres of the *Mouvement* exercised tight control over the population. This regime, though authoritarian, was able to achieve significant social and economic stability that gave a favourable image to the country and it attracted sympathy from foreign donors.

The good years of this regime lasted until the early 1980s, when the economic atmosphere of the country changed due to the collapse of world prices that affected the few commodities that Rwanda exported (coffee and tin). From this time on the country relied more on foreign aid. Reductions on annual budgets resulted in cutting of social services, worsening the life of the population already overburdened with a variety of taxes. Overpopulation and subsequent scarcity of land made the country heavily dependent on the vagaries of the weather. This resulted in an increasingly marginal food supply. [338]

This economic crisis affected the socio-political stability of the country. The Habyarimana regime that resulted from his *coup d'etat* in 1973 had always been perceived internally as a northern revenge against the former Kayibanda's southern regime. More political and economic privileges were reserved to people from two northern *prefectures.* The shrinking of resources from the early 1980s resulted in a competition for access to economic opportunities. Strife existed, even among the few privileged northerners who could no longer be equally satisfied. Privileges were unequally shared, more favour being reserved for those who were geographically or

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[338] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 87.

otherwise closer to the ruling "*akazu*".[339] The marginalized southerners were more sensitive to abuses of privileges from which they were excluded. The most vocal among them who dared to speak out against some dubious practices of those in charge of managing public funds and properties were brutally silenced, some of them dying in unexplained circumstances.[340]

Habyarimana's attitude towards the Tutsi was ambiguous. On one side, he is credited for having ensured that no more violent attack was directed against the Tutsi. This had prevailed from his coming to power in 1973 until the invasion of the Rwandese Patriotic Front in 1990. Under his regime, many Tutsi prospered in business and became not only prominent but also close friends or business associates of the ruling Hutu individuals. However, Habyarimana's protection of the Tutsi did not go as far as recognizing all their full rights. His regime enforced the discrimination initiated by the former government through the system of quotas that was implemented in the admission to secondary schools, to university and in public employment. Tutsi were no longer told that they were aliens, but they were constantly reminded that they were a minority. As Mamdani put it, from a nonindigeneous race, the Tutsi became an indigeneous minority. As an ethnic group, they could aspire to rights like other Rwandans; but as a minority, they would have to give up any claim to power.[341]

Under Habyarimana, no single Tutsi was appointed to be a leader in the local administration in the position of Prefect or Burgomaster. His successive cabinets never included more than one Tutsi minister and the number of Tutsi members of what was equivalent to the parliament was never beyond two out of about 70.[342] Above all, Habyarimana continually opposed the return of Tutsi refugees to the country. It appears

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[339] From the Kinyarwanda, "a small house", *akazu* is a term designating a small group of people normally related by blood and sharing some social features peculiar to them. This term was used to refer to a small group of people very close to Habyarimana, most of whom were relatives of his wife and who in the late eighties had a final say it the management of the country.

[340] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 89.

[341] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2001, p 231.

[342] Melvern, L.R. *A People Betrayed: the Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*. London: Zed Books. 2000, p 25.

that he was very careful not to allow the Tutsi to form a power centre that would be strong enough to challenge the *status quo*.

Under the Habyarimana regime the peace of the Tutsi was conditional. They were not disturbed as long as they stayed away from politics. Their peace and security were to last as long as they were willing to accept the conditions and, of course, they would submit as long as they could not see any other alternative. If the Habyarimana's regime managed to keep the Tutsi inside the country under control for about seventeen years, those who escaped his control were the Tutsi in exile.

3.4.2.2 Activities of the Tutsi in the diaspora

Most Tutsi who left Rwanda after 1959 became refugees in neighbouring countries. As time passed, their hopes for a quick return to the country faded away. Some of them dispersed further to other countries in Africa, Europe, Canada and the United States. Their life in the diaspora was marked with increasingly diversified situations, depending on their geographical location, and on how they positioned themselves in the host society. Some of those who, with the assistance of the UNHCR, had had access to education and were lucky to be employed in Europe, America or even in the Great Lakes Region, were generally better off than those who remained in refugee camps. Guichaoua described this diversity of life:

> In a way, being excluded from the local labour market, which was monopolized by nationals, pushed the refugees to try new professional paths where the characteristics of their communities (dissemination in various countries, high mobility, strong ties of solidarity) could be helpful. A limited number of individuals acquired a reputation for professional and financial success which was quite often exaggeratedly extended to the whole community in the Great Lakes area. But one should point out that many people remained in precarious social and economic situations: widows and families with a single male parent, lone young adults, people left behind in the camps, and groups in conflict situations with the local populations.[343]

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[343] Guichaoua, A. *Le Problème des Réfugies Rwandais et des Population Banyarwanda dans la Région des Grand Lacs Africains*. Geneva : UNHCR. 1962, p 20, quoted in Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 65.

The above description fits especially the situation of Tutsi refugees in Uganda, where both challenges and opportunities encouraged them to plan their return to Rwanda. As will be shown in the discussion below, Rwandans exiled in Uganda became the nucleus of the Rwandan diaspora and played a central role in activities and events that prepared for, and culminated in, the return of refugees to Rwanda after the Genocide. The following discussion on these Rwandans based in Uganda accounts for their vital role in the events reported, without neglecting the support they enjoyed from the Rwandan diaspora, worldwide.

3.4.2.2.1 Organization of the Rwandan diaspora in Uganda

Upon their arrival in Uganda, Rwandan refugees initially attracted some sympathy from the people of Uganda. This was due to their helpless situation, as well as the thought that their stay in Uganda was temporary, as they were supposed to return home soon. As time went by, the struggle for survival eclipsed the prospect of their return in Rwanda. Conflicts over land and pasture arose between the indigenous people and the refugees.[344] In time, some Rwandans succeeded in reaching high status due to their traditional cattle-rearing ability in a society where cattle were a yardstick for social status, others through education and subsequent employment or simply through intermarriages with prominent families. This social advancement attracted jealousy from the local people, who began to perceive the refugees as a rival group, in competition for social mobility.[345]

A more important determining factor in the fate of Rwandans in Uganda was their involvement in Ugandan politics. With their supposedly Roman Catholic background, Rwandans did not inspire much confidence in the then Ugandan President Milton Obote, whose party, the Ugandan Peoples' Congress (UPC), recruited mostly from the predominantly Protestant Ankole region.[346] To prevent them from voting for the Catholic dominated Democratic Party, Obote organized a census in 1969 in order to keep the Rwandans away as non-citizens.[347]

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[344] Melvern, L.R. *A People Betrayed,* p 25.
[345] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations, p 154.
[346] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 69.
[347] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 73.

Obote's hostility to Rwandans pushed them into the hands of Idi Amin, whose regime they welcomed and served. They did this for security and employment.[348] By their service in Amin's notoriously oppressive espionage machinery, the State Research Bureau, Rwandans attracted hatred from the Ugandan people who were affected by Amin's oppressive regime.[349] The indigenous people had the opportunity to show their feelings toward Rwandans when Obote returned to power in 1980. Only two years later, Tutsi communities were attacked by government-backed thugs and thousands of Tutsi were evicted, their cattle stolen and their lands occupied.[350]

The eviction of Rwandans and their treatment by native Ugandans as hated foreigners increased the realization of their homelessness. The hardship of life in exile revived in their minds the image of a mythical Rwanda and an idealized past life, contrasted with the suffering they were enduring. Many of them had left Rwanda as babies or were born in exile and had not personally witnessed the problems which pushed their parents into exile. Therefore they imagined Rwanda as a country of milk and honey to which they were dreaming to return.[351] Economic problems linked with their eventual return, such as overpopulation, overgrazing and soil erosion, were dismissed as Kigali regime propaganda.[352] Unwanted by Obote's regime and unwelcome in their mother country, many exiled Tutsi found refuge in joining Museveni in the bush, from where his National Resistance Army was fighting Obote.[353] Their support to Museveni was significant. When he took Kampala on 26 January 1986, his army included about 3000 Rwandans.[354]

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[348] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations, p 155.
[349] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 67 (footnote).
[350] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 69.
[351] Kamukama, D. "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relations, p 155.
[352] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 66.
[353] It seems that Museveni's alliance with Rwandan refugees dated from his early political activities. The most renowned Rwandans, Fred Rwigema and Paul Kagame, may have been members of the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), an organization created by Museveni in 1973 to fight Idi Amin's regime. After he lost the 1980 elections, the two were among his twenty-six companions who launched an attack on Kabamba Military School, an event that marked the beginning of Museveni's guerilla war against Obote. See Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 68.
[354] This estimate is suggested by Prunier in his bid to challenge the former "Rwandan Government's propaganda" that claimed that the Tutsi had put Museveni in power so that he could help them invade Rwanda. Prunier, G. The Rwanda Crisis, p 70 n54,56. Prunier's comments seem to indicate that the number of Rwandan fighters in Museveni army could be bigger. Not only does he assert that they joined his force

After he assumed power in Kampala, Museveni was facing a rebellion from elements of the army of the former regime regrouped in southern Sudan. This obliged him to carry out recruitment to increase his fighting force. More Rwandans joined his army. Museveni's officer corps contained a disproportionately high number of Rwandan veterans.[355] These were Museveni's older fighting comrades whom he trusted most and on whom he counted to fight the northern guerrillas and to strengthen his power in Kampala. In fact, his Commander-in-Chief and Minister of Defence was the Rwandan Major-General Fred Rwigema. Moreover, Museveni's friendship with Rwandans attracted more Rwandans, who converged on Uganda from all over the world and were becoming key players in the economy of the country.[356]

The pervasive presence of Rwandans in Uganda's key political and economic sectors could not pass unnoticed by disgruntled Ugandans. Hostility to Rwandans was expressed especially by Museveni's negotiating partners from different rebel groups who were opposed to the presence of foreigners in the army. Museveni became increasingly aware that many Ugandans were irritated by various positions that Rwandans were holding in his regime. His old allies were becoming an encumbrance to him. Since he could not dispense with Ugandans' goodwill he was obliged to review his policy and change his attitude toward Rwandans. As part of this change of attitude, the promotion of Rwandans in the army slowed down, the hope of massive naturalisation died off and in November 1989 Major-General Rwigema was demoted and rumours circulated about a planned census of Rwandans in Uganda.[357] This new development in Uganda's politics was a blow to those among Rwandans who hoped to find an alternative haven outside their mother country. More than ever, the question of their return to Rwanda became one of urgency and they were prepared to spearhead the movement that campaigned throughout the Rwandan diaspora and acted for their return home.

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en masse, but he also estimates the percentage of the female combatants to about 15%, most of whom being Rwandans, according to Prunier. If one can surmise that the number of Rwandan male fighters were a bit higher than that of the females, the total number of Rwandans in Museveni's army could be at least 30% of the estimated 14,000 fighters who took Kampala in 1986.

[355] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 71.
[356] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 72.
[357] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 72.

The violent repression of which Rwandan refugees in Uganda were victims subsequent to the fall of Idi Amin Dada in 1979 had led to the creation of the Rwandese Refugee Welfare Foundation in June 1979. This welfare association was quickly turned into a political organization in 1980, under the name Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU).[358] The main objective of RANU was the return of the exiles to Rwanda. Since Obote's regime was not favourable to Rwandans residing in Uganda, RANU could not fully exercise its activities in Uganda until the fall of Obote's regime in 1986. The victory of Museveni in 1986 created an atmosphere more conducive to the political activities of RANU. It was in December 1987 that the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity changed into a more offensive political organization, the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), which envisaged the use of armed forces to return to Rwanda.[359] Once released from his functions in the Ugandan government, Rwigema could devote his full time to the activities of RPF, preparing the invasion which was to be launched only eleven months later.[360]

3.4.2.2.2 RPF's invasion and the October war

The authorities of Kigali were certainly aware that the Rwandan refugees were preparing an attack on Rwandan territory. The threat of this invasion put Habyarimana under pressure, obliging him to soften his position on some issues on which he had always been intransigent. These issues included the right of the Rwandan refugees to return in the country.

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[358] Melvern, L. R. A People Betrayed, p 26.

[359] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 67.

[360] The short period that elapsed from the date of Rwigema's decommission in November 1989 and the date of the invasion of Rwanda on 1 October 1990 may suggest that preparations for a military attack on Rwanda were already underway when Rwigema left his position in Museveni's government. This has led some to cast doubts on the real motives of his decommission.

There is a view that Rwigema's decommission was actually nothing but a way of allowing him to organize and lead a military invasion of Rwanda. This view is generally held by those who believe that the exiled Rwandans had always been preparing this invasion. They contend that the Rwandans enrolment in Museveni's army was part of their preparation for a military solution to their problem, as it provided them with the needed fighting experience, but also was based on Museveni's promise to help them to return at the right time. They note that the victory of Museveni and the subsequent promotion of Rwandans did not deter them from fighting for their right to return to Rwanda. In fact it was only two years after Museveni's victory that RANU was changed into the more offensive Rwandese Patriotic Front that advocated a military invasion of Rwanda. This view implies that Museveni was not taken by surprise by the invasion of Rwanda, as he claimed, but rather that he knowingly participated in its preparation.

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Habyarimana had repeatedly claimed that the country was too small to contain everybody. He suggested that most refugees should seek to be naturalized in the countries that hosted them. The joint Rwando-Ugandan commission created in 1988, charged with examining the question of the refugees, had not yielded any result.[361] A special commission on the problem of Rwandan refugees was created in 1989. While rumours about an imminent invasion of Rwanda spread, this commission was reactivated so that in July 1990 an agreement was reached with the Ugandan authorities on the modalities for the selection of Rwandan candidates for repatriation. This operation was scheduled for November, but the RPF was not interested in the kind of repatriation that was to be conducted on Habyarimana's terms. Foreseeing that this Kigali-initiated project could be attractive to some refugees, who would prefer to go home peacefully rather that risking the possible casualties associated with a military solution, the RPF launched its attack on 1 October 1990, one month before the scheduled date for the implementation of the repatriation project.[362]

If Habyarimana's offer to receive Rwandan refugees did not prevent RPF's military attack, it somehow weakened RPF's argument justifying the war with the refugees' long denied right to return home. In fact, since October, when RPF launched its attack, the emphasis was no longer on the refugees' right to return. The RPF was now fighting against what its leaders perceived as a rotten, undemocratic, corrupt, oppressive and discriminative regime.[363] Leaders of the RPF had made up their minds to use a military solution in order to change the regime. Even some political reforms that Habyarimana was forced to accept were judged not good enough to deter the RPF from invading the country.

While RPF was finalizing its attack plans, Habyarimana's regime suffered a serious blow that came from his French ally. During the Franco-African summit held at La Baule in June 1990, President Mitterrand made it clear to his African allies that France would link economic aid to political democratisation. He urged them to open their regimes up to

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[361] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 90.
[362] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 91.
[363] Kamukama, D. *Arms and Draggers in the Heart of Africa*, p 155.

multiparty democracy.[364] Considering the economic crisis that the country was facing and rumours of a looming invasion by RPF, Habyarimana counted too much on French co-operation and assistance to ignore Mitterrand's instructions. In July 1990 he declared that he allowed the formation of political parties.[365] This move was timely, as it was intended to weaken the argument that the RPF was using to justify the necessity for a military invasion in order to liberate the people from a dictatorial and undemocratic regime. Those in the country who were unhappy with the regime did not wait to know whether Habyarimana was sincerely committed to the political reforms that he announced. During the month that followed his July speech political parties were already being launched.

From their exile in Uganda, leaders of the RPF were aware of political developments in the country. The politico-economic crisis in the country may even have hastened the preparations for the invasion. They believed that the Rwandan political system was on the verge of collapse and any push from outside would complete the process.[366] The attack was launched on 1 October 1990 from the Rwandan border with Uganda. It remained unclear what RPF's plan was for the protection of the Tutsi who were in the country at the moment of the invasion.[367] From past experience, it was clear that any attack by Rwandan exiles would jeopardize the security of the Tutsi within Rwanda. This time their risk was even higher, as many of them had joined opposition parties. The predominance of Tutsi in the Liberal Party resulted in its being viewed by some as the RPF's "antenna" within the country.

The situation of Tutsi in the country was indeed precarious. This became evident the fourth day after the attack. After an overnight shooting in the capital city by government soldiers false rumours were spread that the RPF's men had infiltrated the capital. This

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[364] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 89.
[365] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 90.
[366] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 90.
[367] It has been suggested that the RPF had planned to march straight to Kigali and take the capital within a maximum of three days. With this plan the Tutsi in the country would not have much to worry about. A more cynical hypothesis suggests that the RPF was more concerned with taking power in Kigali and did not care much about the fate of those Tutsi who had benefited from the Hutu regime.

claim was advanced to justify the manhunt that ensued. Many prominent Tutsi were arrested and accused of being the RPF accomplices.

As many as the cases of killing may have been subsequent to the RPF's invasion, these remained isolated cases, far from being a generalized and spontaneous reaction of the population. In most parts of the country attention was focused more on the tension generated by the formation of opposition parties, daring for the first time to openly denounce the weaknesses of the MRND regime. It is true that the RPF's attack resuscitated the demons of suspicion against the Tutsi, especially after rumours spread about atrocities committed by RPF soldiers on civilian populations and the assumption that many Tutsi living in the country were accomplices of the enemy.

The October invasion produced an effect contrary to what the RPF may have expected. In reaction to the invasion the people inside the country tended to increase their solidarity to Habyarimana and to view the RPF as a common enemy. Since Rwanda was now victim of an external attack, Habyarimana had justification to seek and obtain assistance from friendly countries. The effect of the attack was far from precipitating the expected collapse of the regime. In fact, within one month the RPF was defeated and forced to retreat back into Uganda, from where a guerrilla war was organized. But the attack at the border and political opposition in the country became a source of pressure that the regime in Kigali could no longer ignore.

3.4.2.3 Political reforms under pressure

The revived mistrust between Hutu and Tutsi was reflected in people's enlistment by political parties. While the two main opposition parties, the MDR and the PSD, led by Hutus, had very few Tutsi adherents, most prominent Tutsis in the opposition belonged to the Liberal Party, the PL. It did not take long, however, before these main opposition parties realized that they needed to overlook their differences to work together in order to successfully fight their common enemy, the MRND regime. The strategic unity of

opposition parties was materialized in a coalition which they called the *Comité de concertation de l'opposition.*[368]

On 17 November 1991, this group submitted a common memorandum to President Habyarimana in which they protested against the obstacles he was putting in the way of real democratisation. They called for a national conference to take over the organization of the whole process of democratisation.[369] In response to Habyarimana's intransigence and intimidation, the coalition used popular mobilization and on 8 January 1992 they organized a massive demonstration to protest against the appointed Prime Minister and his MRND-dominated cabinet.[370] The ever-mounting popular pressure, coupled with pressure from the RPF, obliged Habyarimana to accept the compromise and on 14 March 1992 he signed an agreement with the opposition, according to which he consented to share power with the opposition in a transitional government.[371] The principle of a national conference was agreed upon, as well as the peace negotiation with the RPF.

In the new coalition government the MRND could not have the majority of seats any longer. Some key positions went to the opposition. These included the position of Prime Minister, the ministries of foreign affairs, finance, justice and education. This did not mean total surrender for the MRND, however. In addition to the presidency, Habyarimana's party had kept key portfolios such as defence, the interior, the civil service and transport. He therefore still had significant power and a great say in the orientation of events.[372] However, the opposition-led government now had at least the minimum of required power to embark on the arduous task of redressing some injustices of the previous regime, although this was to be pursued amidst a climate of increased violence. It was especially daring to initiate contacts with the RPF at a time when many hardliners would see in such an initiative a grave betrayal of the nation.

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[368] Gatwa T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994*. United Kingdom: Regnum Books. 2005, p 189.
[369] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 134.
[370] Prime Minister Nsanzimana Sylvestre was unilaterally nominated by Habyarimana. The opposition parties boycotted his cabinet that ended up being another MRND cabinet, with only one minister from a small opposition party, the PDC.
[371] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 145.
[372] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 145.

From within the ranks of the members of the MRND arose a group of hardliners who in March 1992 formed a counter-opposition party, which they called the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic, CDR.[373] From its creation the CDR claimed to be a Hutu party whose objectives, as its name implies, was to defend the Republic which was, according to them, threatened by the RPF and its accomplices. The CDR perceived the RPF as an organization of Tutsi monarchists and all the Tutsi inside the country were its accomplices. If there was to be any negotiations with the RPF, which represented the Tutsi cause, only true representatives of the Hutu cause should constitute the other party[374]. The opposition parties, not understanding that logic, were not qualified to negociate with the RPF. This gave rise to the violent response to the meeting of Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira with Patrick Mazimpaka, then Vice-Chairman of the RPF, in Kampala, on 24 May 1992. The news about this contact was the cause of a clash between the Interahamwe[375] and CDR members on one side, opposing the negotiations, and youth from opposition parties supporting them. In Gisenyi barracks soldiers mutinied in protest against the negotiations.[376]

Far from being deterred by intimidation, members of the opposition met again with delegates from RPF on 6 June 1992, in Paris. An agreement was signed on the technical modalities of serious peace talks. The chosen venue for negotiations was the Tanzanian city of Arusha. Things seemed to go smoothly, when a cease-fire agreement was signed as early as 14 July. [377] This allowed the belligerents to pursue the negotiations that took a period of about two years. However, neither the CDR nor the MRND was supportive of these talks, which were beyond their control. There were frequent demonstrations in the

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[373] Chretien J. P. *The great lakes of Africa*, p 326.
[374] The founders and members of the CDR boasted to be the true advocates of the Hutu cause.
[375] Initially, "Interahamwe" was a name given to MRND's youth organized by the party. These youth were instrumental in intimidating the opposition. In reaction to the mobilization of these youth, who behaved as a militia, the opposition parties mobilized their own youth. So the MDR organized its *Jeunesse Democrate Rwandais,* JDR (Rwandan Young Democrats), the PSD called its youth "Abakombozi" (from a Swahili word "Mkombozi" meaning a saviour, a redeemer, a rescuer) and the PL had its JPL, the Youth of the Liberal Party.
[376] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 150.
[377] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 150.

streets, with violent clashes between MRND and CDR youth on one side and the youth of the opposition on the other side.

While the CDR was insisting that it should be included in the government, the MRND was complaining that the delegation to negotiations was not consulting them. On 15 November 1992 the President himself said that the government delegates were going beyond their mandate and he rejected the July cease-fire agreement, calling it 'a piece of paper' that the government was not obliged to respect.[378] Nevertheless, the negotiations continued and a power-sharing agreement was signed on 9 January 1993.[379] This agreement defined the modalities for a broad-based government, including the political parties and the RPF. Of course not everybody was happy with this achievement and on 21 January 1993 it was the turn of the National Secretary of MRND to reject the agreement, speaking for his party. Such confusing declarations created more tension and sporadic violence ensued. In this climate the negotiations in Arusha were suspended and, before they could resume, the RPF decided to break the cease-fire and on 8 February they launched an attack in the north-east region of Byumba.[380]

The February attack had grave consequences. It provided an opportunity for those who were already opposed to the negotiations to argue that the RPF was not acting in good faith and could never be trusted. For them, this attack betrayed the Front's hardly hidden agenda to seize power by any means. It was reported that the RPF had committed a number of atrocities against civilian people and to some this was evidence that this was the Front's usual behaviour. Therefore Hutu people could not be safe under an RPF regime.

The new development was a challenge to the opposition parties with respect to their rapprochement to the RPF. If the need to unite efforts to fight a common enemy had obliged both the RPF and the opposition parties to overlook their differences, this could

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[378] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 170.
[379] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 173.
[380] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 174.

hardly imply that the two groups fighting the MRND regime had become strong allies.[381] Although their meeting around the negotiations table was considered by each group a possible way out of the crisis, this had not wiped out a great deal of mistrust that members of one group had always had with the other. From now on, divergences appeared among members of the opposition on the question of dealing with the RPF.

In an attempt to prevent the disastrous effect that the RPF's attitude risked having on the negotiation process, opposition parties sent a delegation to Bujumbura to meet with the RPF. At the end of the meeting, that lasted from 25 February to 2 March 1993, the parties had agreed to continue with the negotiations in Arusha. Reacting to this meeting, President Habyarimana convened a "National Conference" that brought together, in addition to his MRND, all the minor parties that were not in the government. Surprisingly, representatives of the four main opposition parties involved in the Bujumbura meeting were also there. The resolutions of this meeting were, of course, not in line with the spirit of the Bujumbura meeting. The leadership of the four opposition parties who attended the Bujumbura meeting, disavowed their members who attended the National Conference, saying that they did not have the mandate to represent their parties.[382] This was the beginning of open divisions among members of the democratic opposition.

Despite increasing mistrust and opposition to the RPF, even among members of the parties that had adopted a moderate approach, the negotiations continued. A protocol on the repatriation of refugees was signed on 9 June 1993 and it was announced in Arusha that the signature of the final agreement was to be expected before the end of the month.[383] The thorny issue of the organization of the future army was not yet solved, the

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[381] For example, as Prunier has correctly noted, "the MDR in one of its early programmatic documents could still describe the RPF as the Inyenzi, the armed branch of unreconstructed feudalists who have not accepted the people's will expressed in the 1959 revolution and especially the Kamarampaka referendum of 25 September 1961. In the same way, despite its 'progressive' ideology, the RPF counted among its members (and even among its outside sympathizers) a considerable number of Tutsi supremacists for whom the Hutu were a despicable and backward mass of peasants." See Prunier, G. The Rwanda Crisis, p 151.

[382] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 179.

[383] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 187.

President being opposed to the posts requested by the RPF in the composition of the future officer corps. Unfortunately, an additional confusion was added to the process, when the Nsengiyaremye cabinet that had worked in the negotiations was dismissed. On 17 July 1993 Faustin Twagiramungu, the Chairman of the MDR, apparently in consultation with President Habyarimana, removed Dismas Nsengiyaremye from the position of Prime Minister and replaced him with Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Twagiramungu appointed himself the designated Prime Minister to lead the broad-based transition government after the signature of the Arusha Accords.[384] The majority of his colleagues in the party leadership rejected his decision and deposed him from his position as chairman of the MDR, but since he had the support of President Habyarimana, he and a small faction of his party prevailed. This event further deepened the split in the MDR, from which the party never recovered. The new cabinet received from the President the mandate to sign the Arusha Accords on 4 August 1993.[385]

The Arusha Accords comprised different agreements reached at different stages of negotiation. These included the power-sharing agreements defining the modalities for the constitution of the Broad Based Transitional Government and the National Transitional Assembly, as well as the agreement concerning the integration of armed forces. Being a product of so many tensions, the whole structure was pervaded by an almost obsessive concern to avoid dominance by any force of any other. The result was that the whole carefully balanced construction ended up being based on a strict consensus between mutually hostile elements. For the whole structure to be workable it required a great deal of goodwill from all the parties.[386]

The negotiators had succeeded in the difficult task of defining the modalities of positions-sharing in the government and the National Assembly among all the political parties and the RPF. Now a problem arose, when members of some parties failed to agree on the people who should take the positions attributed to their parties. Conflicting lists were submitted with totally different candidates from the same parties. The split that occurred

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[384] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 189.
[385] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 191.
[386] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 192,3.

around the Bujumbura and Kigali meetings in March 1993 was deepening. Most affected was the MDR, the party which was supposed to provide a Prime Minister for the Broad Based Transitional Government. While these divisions within parties contributed to delaying the implementation of the Arusha agreements, those who were kin in rejecting the agreement altogether on the ground that the Tutsi of RPF could not be trusted received additional boost to support their contention, when President Melchior Ndadaye of Burundi was murdered.

3.4.2.4 The socio-political consequences of the assassination of President Ndadaye

Ndadaye was the first Hutu president in Burundi's history. His victory in a free and fair election was expected to bring an end to a history of Tutsi monopoly of power and to the resulting never-ending violent ethnic conflicts in Burundi. Despite the overwhelming victory of his party, the FRODEBU, Ndadaye had adopted a conciliatory attitude and was trying to minimize the tension generated on one hand by Hutu radicals wishing to capitalize on their victory in the polls and make up for the privileges from which they were excluded for years, and on the other hand by Tutsi extremists frustrated and afraid of losing their control of power. A group of Tutsi army officers kidnapped him and murdered him on 21 October 1993.[387]

The similarities in social structure and a shared/parallel history constantly caused Rwanda and Burundi to be mutually affected by their socio-political developments. The assassination of Ndadaye therefore had far-reaching consequences on the political situation in Rwanda. This unfortunate event fuelled the propaganda according to which there was a plan to establish a Hamitic empire in the Great Lakes Region. President Museveni, who was thought to have sponsored the RPF's invasion of Rwanda, was now seen as supporting the Tutsi putschists in Burundi.[388] The preachers of hatred found more arguments to convince many of those who were still hesitant to join their camp.

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[387] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 199.
[388] Proponents of this hypothesis knew that the Burundian putschists were living undisturbed in Uganda. See Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 202.

Of course the population of Rwanda was not immune to the psychological effects of the events in neighbouring Burundi. Many Burundians who fled the violent clashes that followed Ndadaye's assassination sought asylum in Rwanda, where they told their host villagers about the ordeals that Hutu people endured under the Tutsi army in Burundi. These reports increased fear among the Hutu population in Rwanda and served as a confirmation of what some Hutu extremists had been saying about the Tutsi. With President Ndadaye's murder the hysterical choice of kill-first-not-to-be-killed could be developed into a general feeling shared by large segments of the population.[389]

The assassination of Ndadaye did more than provide an argument for the position of the radical Hutu in Rwanda. Even the most moderate politicians were alerted to ponder the situation. The effect of Ndadaye's murder on the democratic opposition in Rwanda is described by Prunier:

> …they realized that institutional change was fragile and that at any time violence could overturn what a moderate process, either electoral or negotiated, had achieved. Then seeing themselves as (mostly) Hutu political group forced to collaborate with an armed Tutsi group brought back the uneasiness they had felt at the time of the February RPF offensive. What was really the aim of those *Inkotanyi*? Would they remain content with what they had achieved in Arusha or would they want a monopoly of power, in which case the Hutu opposition would have been a quickly-discarded Trojan horse?[390]

Lastly, President Habyarimana himself may have drawn a lesson from the treatment meted out to Ndadaye, his neighbour, given some similarities in their social-political situations. If a political victory was not enough to provide security to a popular Ndadaye against armed Tutsi, what assurance could the less politically supported Habyarimana have that the Arusha Accords would put him in a better situation once his control over the army had been taken away from him? Much concern about his fate after the fall of his regime, coupled with pressure from those who insisted that Rwanda should be ruled by the majority, namely the Hutu, was surely behind Habyarimana's endeavour to sabotage the implementation of the Arusha Accords. After the signature of the Accords in August

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[389] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 200.
[390] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 201.

1994, excuses were found to delay their implementation. Following a period of disputes and reticence, the date of the ceremony for the transfer of power was finally diarised for 10 February 1994. But even at this time, Habyarimana was not ready and any incident in the country could serve as a pretext for the postponement of the ceremony. Thus from 10 February, the ceremony was postponed to 22 February, then successively to 25 March, 26 March and 28 March.[391] At this time tension was high in the country. Incidents of assassination were many. At this juncture, the General Secretary of the Social Democratic Party, PSD, Felician Gatabazi, who was among those nominated for the position of minister in the awaited transitional government, was killed. This assassination, that caused more tension, was followed by the murder of Bucyana Martin, then Chairman of the CDR. In reaction to Bucyana's murder, violence erupted in the capital, resulting in many dead and wounded. This was a foretaste of what was to happen, with the catastrophic assassination of President Habyarimana.

3.4.2.5 The assassination of Habyarimana and the apocalypse for the Tutsi

The pressure from the international community upon Habyarimana to persuade him to consent to the transfer of power had not ceased to mount, but so far without the result hoped for. On 6 April 1994, Habyarimana went to Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, to attend a meeting that brought together the presidents of the region. They were supposed to discuss the situation in Burundi. During this meeting, the subject of the transfer of power in Rwanda may have been discussed and some believe that when Habyarimana flew back to Kigali, he was convinced that he did not have any other choice but to allow the ceremony to take place. Unfortunately he was unable to put his intention into practice, because his plane was shot down as it was preparing to land at Kigali Airport. President Habyarimana was killed, with all the people who were with him, the crew and the passengers, including President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi. The death of Habyarimana was the beginning of a bigger tragedy, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. The question of who was responsible for the President's assassination is not resolved to date. Nobody claimed responsibility

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[391] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 205-208.

for the assassination, which had dire consequences because of its purported bearing on the Genocide.[392]

The Presidential plane was shot down at about 20:30.[393] That same night the violent reaction of the presidential guard (GP) started. The first victims seem to have been carefully selected. They included all members of opposition parties, most of whom were designated to hold prominent positions in the transitional government.[394] The death of the president was announced on national radio early on the morning of 7 April and everybody was requested to stay at home. In Kigali, the capital, roadblocks were erected at every corner of all the streets and a house-to-house search started. During the following days, the systematic massacres that started in Kigali spread to the prefectures.

The presidential guard was joined by the *Interahamwe/Impuzamugambi*[395] militias. While the GP formed a regular unit of the army, the militias were young people recruited usually from the lower classes mostly unemployed young Hutu. Some of them had received sufficient training to enable them to handle military equipment such as hand grenades and assault rifles. Many of them were armed with machetes, clubs and knives. As soon as the massacre started, more thugs joined the initial nucleus of militia. Prunier's following description of the whole phenomenon seems fairly accurate:

> As soon as they went into action, they drew around a cloud of even poorer people, a *lumpenproletariat* of street boys, rag-pickers, car-washers and homeless

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[392] Although no independent investigation was conducted to shed more light on this case, many hypotheses concerning the possible persons responsible have been suggested. Two main hypotheses seem to have most attention of analysts. One is the contention that the plane was shot down by Hutu extremists. This is said to be a group of Hutu supremacists who once were loyal to Habyarimana but had now lost confidence in his ability to defend their interests. They may have acted to prevent the sliding of power into the hands of the Tutsi, with the help of some members of the opposition through the Arusha Accords. The other popular hypothesis attributes the responsibility of Habyarimana's death to RPF. Holders of this view argue that, despite what RPF had gained through the Arusha agreements, the negociated solution remained a second option for the RPF, because it never relented in its preparation to seize power in Kigali. The main obstacle in its way had been the French support that Habyarimana was enjoying. They may have decided to kill him with the calculation that the French support will go with him, allowing for their guaranteed military victory.
[393] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 212.
[394] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 230.
[395] While Interahamwe were MRND's youth, Impuzamugambi identified themselves with CDR, but in practice these seemed to be the same people, since they could not be differentiated on the basis of their ideology, their objectives nor their behaviour.

unemployed. For these people, the Genocide was the best thing that could ever happen to them. They had the blessings of a form of authority to take revenge on socially powerful people as long as they were on the wrong side of the political fence. They could steal, they could kill with a minimum of justification, they could rape and they could get drunk for free.[396]

Beside the well-known liberal politicians, most of whom were killed during the first few days (apart from those who managed to hide), the target of the killers was anybody whom they identified (according to their own criteria) as Tutsi. All Tutsi were presumed to be accomplices of the RPF, the enemy. Incidentally, many Hutu were killed, not only those whose Hutu identity was not satisfactorily established, but also those who were percieved to associate too closely with the Tutsi, or to express some sympathy for them, let alone to attempt to protect them.

On 9 April, Theodore Sindikubwabo, then speaker of the Assembly, announced on national radio the formation of a new government. This government comprised in addition to ministers from MRND, those from the "Power Wing"[397] of the MDR, from PSD, PL and from PDC. Among the priorities set by the new government was to reopen talks with the RPF, which had renewed the fighting. The commander of the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), General Romeo Dallaire, was willing and tried to negotiate a cease-fire, but the RPF was not interested in negotiating with those it saw as criminals.

The resumption of fighting added more impetus to the massacre. As fighting intensified from the north of the country and later in Kigali, the capital, the parties in the government were calling for all their members to unite and resist their common enemy. The "Power" brand, which had been used for one wing of the MDR was now extended to all the parties. The rallying slogan became "Hutu Power". The killings, initially perceived as an

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[396] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 231,2.
[397] When Twagiramungu, then President of MDR, decided to appoint himself as the candidate for the position of Prime Minister in the then awaited transitional government, the MDR split into those who supported him and those who opposed him. The faction that sought to depose him called themselves "MDR Power". After the assassination of President Habyarimana a "power wing" arose from within almost all the opposition parties. These were hardliners who saw themselves as the defenders of the Hutu cause, threatened by the ambitious determination of the Tutsi to rule.

angry reaction to the death of the president were given another motive. With the help of constant warnings and instructions announced through the media, the people could easily understand that the same people who killed the President were now on their way to seize power in Kigali and to subdue the Hutu tribe. To the fear of losing one's privileges (rational level) was added the fear of losing one's life (visceral level) and the fear of losing control of one's world (mythical level).[398]

Within one week the killings that started in Kigali had spread to most parts of the country. More people were joining the initial nucleus of killers made up of *Interahamwe/Impuzamugambi* militia and the Presidential Guard. The combination of war and massacre brought about a climate of total confusion among the population for whom the massacre was the direct consequence of the war. The RPF's progress resulted in greater displacement of the population, who feared the reported imminence of the rebels' arrival in the area still under government control. People reacted differently to this increasingly tense atmosphere. There were those who were convinced that a Tutsi regime was a threat to their security and who resolved to support the ultimate solution of wiping them out to prevent the realization of their dominion. Such people joined the killing groups or actively supported them. Others were convinced that their Tutsi neighbours had betrayed them in supporting the invading RPF and deserved their fate. Such people, even if they did not take part in the killing, were indifferent to what was happening to their neighbours. Others were deeply opposed to the killing, but were too intimidated to voice their opinion. Only a few heroes were able to speak their mind and in some cases they even tried to protect the victims. Most of such people paid with their own lives.[399] If it is true that the majority of the population were not actively involved in the killing, there were many who were not resolutely opposed to it, either. In fact the Genocide was possible not because of the great number of the people who were involved in the killing but because of the weakness of those who, though not supporting the massacre, could not do anything to stop it.

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[398] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 200.
[399] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers*, p 220.

The pogrom that lasted for about three months claimed the lives of an estimated 800,000 people,[400] most of them Tutsi. The targeted Tutsi had almost nowhere to hide and those who survived can call it a miracle. Most of those who survived were those who, by one way or another managed to sneak into the zone under the control of the RPF or those who enjoyed the sympathy of a courageous, unsuspected or feared Hutu who would dare harbour them until the soldiers of the RPF could reach their hiding place. Finally, the massacre ended totally[401] in early July, when the RPF took control of the entire country.[402]

Subsequent to the victory of the RPF, a new government was sworn in on 19 July 1994. This government had a challenging situation to manage. After three months of civil war and Genocide, the country had become a complete socio-economic disaster. An estimated 10 percent of the population had been killed and 30 percent forced into exile.[403] "Those people still in Rwanda were in a complete state of disarray. Many were displaced and living some distance from their *ingo* (homes). A large number (especially from the Tutsi survivors) had lost all they possessed, including their houses. Psychologically most people were in various states of shock".[404] Social relations were at the lowest level, as Hutu-Tutsi relations were more than ever characterized by mutual mistrust, fear and hostility. It was clear that the path to reconciliation was going to be difficult and long in post-Genocide Rwanda.

3.5 Social relations in post-Genocide Rwanda

The Government of National Unity, instituted after the Genocide, acknowledged that the restoration of peace and reconciliation was to be among the priorities. The success in achieving this goal was to depend on the way they handled various situations arising from

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[400]Melvern, L. *Conspiracy to Murder: the Rwandan Genocide*. London: Verso. 2004, p 250. (Different figures have been suggested, but it is impossible to know exactly how many people died in the Rwandan Genocide. For different estimates, see Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp 261-265).

[401] Killings had reduced in intensity in the month of June, since it was rare to meet a Tutsi in circulation. All the survivors were hiding.

[402] Apart from the so-called Safe Humanitarian Zone that was under the control of French soldiers in what was called Operation Turquoise.

[403] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 299.

[404] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 299.

the war-Genocide context. After this tragedy, the Rwandan population could be grouped into different categories, according to the different situations people found themselves in. There were the Rwandans returning from exile, the Tutsi survivors of the Genocide, the Hutu population who had fled the country as the RPF was taking control of the country, the Hutu population internally displaced and those who had decided to stay in their homes. Any effort of reconciliation needed to consider peculiar problems arising from the situation of each of these groups. But the greatest challenge to national unity remained the gap in the relations between the Hutu and the Tutsi that had widened more than ever from the beginning of the Genocide. The victims of the Genocide were now living side by side with those perceived as their executioners. Social relations were to be characterized by bitterness and resentment from the former and fear and anxiety from the latter.

3.5.1 Fear and anxiety in the aftermath of the Genocide

After four years of war and a hate campaign the Hutu people had been taught that the Tutsi were their enemies to be feared or hated. The Genocide was evidence that there were many Hutu who subscribed to this divisive ideology. Those who did not heed the call to kill had witnessed the tragedy of the Genocide against the Tutsi, carried out in the name of their social group and by people with whom they were identified. Thinking about possible reprisals from the former victims inspired fear, anxiety and uncertainty about the future. Millions of the Hutu population had opted for exile and were now living in refugees' camps, mostly in the neighbouring Congo and in Tanzania. Thousands were internally displaced, mostly in the "Humanitarian Zone", and were hesitating to return to their homes. The majority had decided to stay in their homes, some with a clear conscience, hoping that their non-involvement in the Genocide would guarantee them some security, others aware of their guilt but hoping not to be identified, or accepting to face the consequences of their actions. If the Hutu were in this state of anxiety, fear and uncertainty, most devastated were the Tutsi, especially those who had witnessed and survived the tragedy of the Genocide. Their fresh wounds, their pain and trauma were elements to be considered in any reconciliation initiative.

3.5.2 Bitter sentiment in the aftermath of the Genocide

The Genocide survivors were men, orphans and widows, all of them with physical and/or psychological wounds. Their relatives had been killed, their houses destroyed and their properties looted. There were raped women, many of them with unwanted pregnancies and/or HIV/AIDS. Given the horror they had endured, inflicted on them by the Hutu, one can understand the amount of bitterness they were likely to harbour against anybody perceived as their executioners. Many of them were calling for vindication and some would not hesitate to take 'justice' into their hands whenever they could. The temptation to take revenge was even higher when the survivor was a son who had joined the battle with the RPF, only to come back after the war and find his family decimated. Since the real killers were not always identified or were not present, anybody related to him/her would sometimes pay the price. The situation was worse when some people sought not only to avenge their relative killed, but also to avenge their persecuted ethnic group. In such cases, any Hutu was the offender. In the same way that all Tutsi during the Genocide were labelled as "Inkotanyi",[405] after the Genocide the tendency was to perceive any Hutu as "Interahamwe"[406].

The alleged collective responsibility of all Hutu in the Genocide was sometime cited for material purposes. This was often the case when the Tutsi returnees used this pretext to evict Hutus from their properties, which they usurped. Prunier describes this phenomenon as:

> …the real colonization of some parts of the country (mainly Nyanza, Nyamata, Kibungo and of course Kigali) by an increasingly massive influx of Tutsi returnees coming partly from Uganda and much more from Burundi. They grabbed whatever dwellings were 'available' and at times evicted owners at gunpoint when the property they wanted was occupied. As a direct consequence of this state of affairs there was of course a sharp increase of criminality which the RPA alone could not suppress since there were no civilian police to work locally and since many of the offenders were its own soldiers.[407]

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[405] This was the name adopted by RPF fighters. To be called by this name during the Genocide meant that you were the enemy, automatically condemned to death.
[406] For the meaning of this term see page 116, footnote 374.
[407] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 301.

Retaliation against the Hutu after the Genocide included eviction from properties and/or arrest. Many of those who were arrested simply disappeared and were nowhere to be found, living or dead. The most fortunate among them went to increase the population in prisons.[408] The less fortunate were those who were simply executed. In connection with this, Human Rights Watch reported:

> …the indiscriminate massacre of individuals and groups bearing no arms, and posing no threat to them and the execution of individuals, selected according to their reputations, political party allegiance, denunciation by others in the community or after interrogation by RPF soldiers….All were judged to be the enemy by the fact of being alive, including, sometimes, people who were Tutsi and, often, people who had protected the Tutsi…These killing were widespread, systematic and involved a large number of participants and victims. [409]

Some have suggested that the killing of the Hutu after the Genocide was a result of a deliberate policy of the RPF.[410] Others suggest that, without necessarily being planed, the killing resulted from a growing wave of Tutsi extremism, which was particularly strong in the 'Burundese' community, favouring a kind of 'let them die' attitudes. [411] According to Prunier:

> The killings are not orchestrated deliberately but those that happen are seen by many Tutsi as something 'natural' given the preceding Genocide. Very little effort is made to stop them even if they are unplanned. There seem to be a kind of winking and looking the other way on the part of the men on the ground….The killings are also probably considered as useful by some members of the RPF hierarchy in discouraging Hutu refugees abroad from coming back.[412]

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[408] The population in Rwandan prisons was estimated at 120,000 people, who allegedly had participated in the Genocide. This number is too high for the capacity of prisons and all kinds of facilities were used to host these inmates. The number is probably not too high compared to the people who really committed these crimes. The problem is that the circumstances of arrest and the procedures followed meant that there were many among these detainees who did not deserve to be there.

[409] Human Rights Watch. *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*. New York. Human Rights Watch. 1999, p 734 .

[410] Concerning this allegation, Human Rights Watch seems to endorse the findings of a UNHR mission to Rwanda, headed by Robert Gersony. The team had declared that in the course of their investigation in Rwanda, they became convinced that the RPF had engaged in clearly systematic murders and persecution of the Hutu population in certain parts of the country. See Human Rights Watch. *Leave None to Tell the Stor*y, p 727.

[411] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis,* p 325.

[412] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 325. Those who could be interested in discouraging the refugees from coming back may have included those who had usurped their property and the politicians who could see in them eventual voters in an opposition side. See also Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p 306.

The international community, appalled by the attitude of the fallen Hutu government and impressed with the ideology of the RPF, had not paid much attention to reports about acts of violence perpetrated on the Hutu population until September 1994 when reports concerning these crimes were taken seriously. Following the pressure on the new Rwandan government by the international community, the killings abated. The Kigali government acknowledged that some people had been killed, but it contested the extent of the massacre. They explained the cases of civilians' deaths as the unavoidable consequence of combat, or as spontaneous acts of vengeance by new soldiers with insufficient training[413]. Similar explanations were given concerning the slaughter of internally displaced people at Kibeho.

3.5.3 The case of the Kibeho massacre

Kibeho was a location which became renowned when crowds from all over the country and from abroad flocked to the Kibeho Parish to listen to three girls who affirmed that the Virgin Mary had visited and talked to them.[414] The name of the location was tarnished during the Genocide, when a crowd of Tutsi who had sought refuge in the church premises were mercilessly massacred inside the church building. Toward the end of the war this location fell under what was called the Safe Humanitarian Zone, protected by French troops of "Operation Turquoise". This zone, declared free from hostilities, became the haven for the internally displaced people fleeing from the areas that had fallen under the control of the RPF. The new Rwandan government had never been enthusiastic about the creation of this zone, which it perceived as an open door for the perpetrators of the Genocide to get away with their crimes.[415]

Upon the departure of the French soldiers, the Rwandan government took over the control of this zone, which they perceived as harbouring criminals.[416] It did not take long before they decided to destroy the camps in which there were more than 100,000 people.

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[413] Human Rights Watch. *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p 733.
[414] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology*, p 132.
[415] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p 76.
[416] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p 76.

The operation was conducted in a heavy-handed way, leading to many casualties as some saw in it as another way to make the Hutu pay for their 'crimes'. [417] The destruction of displaced camps should have served as a warning to Hutu refugees then living in camps in Congo who were considered to be from the same stock as those dislodged from Kibeho. But refugees in Congo probably thought that they were in a better and safer position and did not believe Kagame, who was then the minister of defense, when he repeatedly made it clear that their camps were not out of his reach.

3.5.4 Reaction to the threat posed by the proximity of refugee camps

Among millions of Hutu people in Congo refugee camps were members of the fallen governments, elements of the defeated army, members of the militia and many other people who had been active in the Genocide. These categories of people were rightly perceived as constituting a threat to security in Rwanda. The majority of people in the camps were normal civilians who, for various reasons, thought that it was not safe for them in the new Rwanda. In the eyes of the Kigali government, these camps had become havens for perpetrators of the Genocide who should pay for their crimes. The few innocent civilians living with them were "held in hostage" by those criminals who prevented them from returning home.[418]

This position of the government was not totally groundless, because since late 1994 a phenomenon of infiltration into Rwandan territory had started. Members of the defeated army and the militia were entering Rwanda from Congo and they became a serious threat to security. They destabilized local administration and committed murders, most of the time threatening the lives of the survivors of the Genocide.[419] The people in the north-west of Rwanda paid heavily when the Rwandan Army reacted and undertook to fight and quench this infiltration. But heavier was the price paid by the refugees in Congo, when Kigali decided to attack not only their camps but also their host country.

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[417] The exact number of people who died in this massacre was never established, but eyewitnesses suggested that several thousands fell under heavy artillery fire from the RPF. See Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p 76.

[418] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p 147.

[419] Melvern, L.R. *A people betrayed*, p 223.

3.5.5 The Congo war and the ordeal of Hutu refugees

As far as the Rwandan government was concerned, the official reason presented for the invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1996 was to put an end to the threat posed by the presence of hostile forces in the camps. Unfortunately, the heavy artillery used to destroy the camps could not be directed at well-identified criminals. Most of the people who perished in the process were civilians, while the soldiers and the militias knew better how to save their own lives.

The attack on refugee camps in Goma forced a great number of trapped fugitives to cross the border and return to Rwanda. Most of the panicking mass of refugees opted to enter the Congo forest, providing justification for the Rwandan army to hunt them as far as to Atlantic Ocean. Those who did not succumb to the bombs and the fire power of machineguns were swallowed by the hostile conditions of the Congo forest. Rumours and reports of massacres of these refugees were many, although no conclusive investigation was conducted. The fact remains that many Hutu refugees perished in the Congo and the few survivors of this tragedy keep a bitter memory of the events in Kisangani and Tingi Tingi, where many of the survivors left unburied the bodies of their loved ones. Most resistant among those who survived the perils of this long walk tell moving stories of their journey from Goma to Gabon, through the hostile Congo forest and under fire from the Rwandan army.

After the Congo war and the return of a great number of refugees, the situation continued to stabilize in Rwanda, with fewer incidents reviving ethnic hatred. The decrease in open conflict, however, did not mean automatic normalization of social relations. The war and the Genocide had widened the rift in social relations, making the long route toward reconciliation and national unity very rough and ardeous.

3.5.6 The difficult work of reconciliation in the country

The post-Genocide government was aware of the daunting task of achieving reconciliation and rebuilding unity. Efforts of the post-Genocide government to bring about peace and reconciliation drew from the terms of the OAU-mediated Arusha Peace

Accords, signed in August 1993, a few months before the Genocide began. Among major issues agreed upon in terms of this accord included: power-sharing in all public institutions, transitional arrangements that would lead to elections, the repatriation of refugees and resettlement of internally displaced persons, the integrations of the armies and the establishment of the rule of law and a culture of human rights.[420]

After the Genocide the political environment that had surrounded the negotiations of the Arusha Accords had changed, so that their implementation took a different turn. Different political parties that had taken part in the formulation of this accord had lost their power, while the victorious RPF credited for stopping the Genocide had leeway to deliberate on the destiny of the nation. The Arusha Accords were implemented with serious modifications, some of which were the direct result of the victory of the RPF. The question of the integration of armies became obsolete, since there was only one army remaining, the victorious RPA. The ex-FAR were out of the equation, not only because they were defeated, but because they were the indicted perpetrators of the Genocide. The repatriation of refugees was automatic, because the regime that had opposed their return had now fallen. As for the internally displaced, whose number had greatly increased since the signature of the Arusha Accords, these people had ceased to be the innocent victims of the war and had become the presumed perpetrators of the Genocide. The most important issues remaining for the post-Genocide regime to handle were the issues of power sharing, the administration of justice and the establishment of the rule of law.

3.5.6.1 Power-sharing
The Genocide and the military victory of the RPF affected power-sharing, which was no longer done according to the stipulations of the Arusha Accords. The former ruling party, the MRND, which had been a principal player in the negotiations and to which the Accords reserved the position of presidency in the transitional government, was now indicted for being the engine of the Genocide, excluded from the post-Genocide unity government and banned. The next main opposition party, the MDR, which was entitled to the position of Prime Minister was not to survive for long. After successive resignations

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[420] Villa-Vicencio, *et al. Building Nations*. p 79.

of two Prime Ministers hailing from this party, the MDR was finally banned on indictment of divisionism. Although reasons were provided for each case of resignation and banning, some saw in these phenomena RPF's strategy to reduce to the minimum the access of the Hutu to power. This perception was reinforced when few Hutu who had joined the RPF were dismissed from their prominent positions one after another. These included Sendashonga, then minister of home affairs who resigned and went into exile where he was murdered. Bizimungu, who was the President of the republic, resigned and was later sent to jail. Kanyarengwe, who was the chairman of the RPF, was removed. Beside the withdrawal of such prominent and vocal Hutu from the Unity Government, the political parties which were active before the Genocide grew weaker, so that none of them could designate a candidate to challenge RPF's incumbent President Kagame in the presidential elections held in 2003. If today the Rwandan government is called a Unity Government, it is not because it is a multiparty government, but simply because it comprises Hutu and Tutsi members. To critics estimating that the Unity Government has simply collapsed, Kigali authorities respond that theirs is an inclusive government in which Hutu are in the majority. Another challenge for the post-Genocide regime is in the area of the administration of justice.

3.5.6.2 Transitional justice in post-Genocide Rwanda

In the aftermath of the Genocide, the demand for justice was more daunting than ever. It was as if the whole country was divided into victims calling for justice and presumed perpetrators awaiting trial and for their fate to be settled. The massive arrests that followed the Genocide sent more than 130,000 behind bars throughout the country, where all kinds of buildings were used as prisons. If arrests were easy to make, rendering justice was a different matter. Before the Genocide there were 758 judges, 70 prosecutors and 631 personnel in the judiciary. After the Genocide the figures had dropped to 244 judges, 12 prosecutors and 137 staff.[421]Under the then prevailing circumstances, criminal investigations would have taken years to process. The need to speed up justice, while making room for reconciliation, led to the decision to classify the Genocide crimes into three categories. To the first category belonged the crimes of planning, organising,

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[421] Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations*. p 86.

supervising and instigating Genocide. These crimes were referred to the International Criminal Tribunal at Arusha, Tanzania, and to national courts in Rwanda. Complicity in the Genocide belonged to the second category and was to be the competence of national courts and the Gacaca tribunals to judge. Crimes against assets belonged to the third category and were to be tried by the Gacaca tribunals.

3.5.6.2.1 The International Criminal Tribunal

The Interntional Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was created by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 955 of 8 November 1994. The resolution stipulated that the tribunal would be vested with the authority to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in connection with the Rwandan Genocide between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994.[422] Since it began its work on 26 June 1995, the tribunal faced a number of challenges[423] that hampered its progress and efficiency. In 2005, about ten years after its creation, the tribunal had made only sixty-nine arrests, processed twenty-five cases and handed down nineteen judgments.[424] This slow process has attracted serious critics, especially from disappointed Rwandans. The International Crisis Group, a group of observers reporting on the March 2001 local elections in Rwanda, lamented on the poor performance of the tribunal, in these words: Seven years on, it has still not been able to shed light on the design, mechanisms, chronology, organisation and financing of the Genocide, nor has it answered the key question: who committed the Genocide?[425] The International Criminal Tribunal was scheduled to complete its work by 2010, the date by which all pending cases will be eventually transferred to national courts for trial. It is clear that this tribunal has not done much to alleviate the load borne by national jurisdictions. The Gacaca tribunals are expected to be a better alternative.

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[422] Human Rights Watch/Africa. *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violene during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath*. New York: Human Rigths Watch. 1996, p 92.
[423] Beside logistical challenges, there are problems of tracing witnesses from remote parts of Rwanda, some of whom are not eady to speak fearing for their security, problems of translation from Kinyarwanda, implementation of procedural aspects of international criminal law, access to documentation in a war-ravaged country, obligation to ensure adequate defence teams for the accused and so on. See Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations,* p 88.
[424] Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations,* p 87.
[425] International Crisis Group. *Consensual Democracy in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Evaluating the March 2001 District Elections*. Quoted in Villa-Vicencio *et al. Building Nations,* p 87.

3.5.6.2.2 Justice and reconciliation through Gacaca

Gacaca is a traditional institution used to settle disputes between members of a community in Rwanda. A quarrel arising between two families called for the elders of the community to come together, hear the matter and resolve it, always prioritising reconciliation and harmony in the community. The discussions were normally held in an open space, with people sited on a patch of common grass called *Agacaca*. It was from this grass that the institution took its name. With the introduction of an established court system the traditional Gacaca was progressively less used and almost completely disappeared. Faced with the daunting task of trying thousands of cases of alleged Genocide crimes, the Rwandan government decided to revive the Gacaca system. On 30 August 1996 Gacaca was instituted by the law as a system of courts with power to deal with Genocide crimes of the second and third categories. The Gacaca system was instituted with the aim of reducing the overcrowded prisons and to avoid impunity. The idea was to bring back to the fore the reconciling aspect of the traditional form of this institution.

The Gacaca courts were established in 2001 and started to operate in May 2002.[426] These jurisdictions, operating at different levels of the state's administration, involve thousands of "judges" without relevant training and without remuneration. This situation raises hosts of questions, including the competence and ability of such tribunals to judge cases of gross violations of human rights and the question of knowing whether or not the process meets minimal trial requirements articulated in international law and verified by the Rwandan government.[427]   Villa-Vicencio has identified two camps with respect to public and professional assessment of the work of the Gacaca courts:

> Critics of the process, often made up of western legal commentators and human rights critics, tend to see the courts as lacking in due process as they are susceptible to community bias, have the potential to spawn revenge killings and in some instances could be a precursor to impunity. Others, largely government

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[426] Report of the National Unity and Reconciliation Summit. Kigali , October 26-28, 2002, p 134.
[427] Villa-Vicencio *et al. Building Nations,* p 91.

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officials and many community-based people, see the courts as making an important contribution to truth recovery, reconciliation and national healing.[428]

The Gacaca system has its challenges, limitations and abuses, but the idea behind this system of justice was not bad. It promised to be better than perpetuating imprisonment without trial under horrendous circumstances, with most prisoners serving more tha 10 years in jail without judgment, or alternatively allowing alleged offenders total impunity through prison release without further accountability.[429]

The success of the Gacaca system was dependent on Rwandans' commitment to justice and reconciliation. While justice remained the domain of the Gacaca and the established courts, the aspect of reconciliation was to be the focus of another platform, namely the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

3.5.6.3 National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

A special body, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, was created in March 1999 and was given the mission to promote unity and reconciliation within Rwandan society. The role of this commission included initiating programmes that promote national unity and reconciliation, co-ordinating and overseeing all other initiatives aiming at the promotion of national unity and monitoring the activities of government's organs, private institutions, political parties and of all the people in general, to insure that they do not jeopardize the policy of national unity and reconciliation.[430]

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission can be credited for providing many Rwandans with a forum to express their individual views about important issues pertaining to the future of the nation. From discussion organized by this commission it was pointed out that the major problems of the Rwandan society revolved around some issues that included the following:

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[428] Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations,* p 89.
[429] Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations,* p 91.
[430] Report of the National Unity and Reconciliation Summit, p 24.

The history of the country: The responsibility of the colonial power in antagonizing Rwandan people is highlighted. The complaint is directed against the way Rwandan history has been told and taught. What has been said about ethnic identity and social relations in the pre-colonial and colonial periods continuously fuelled bitterness, mistrust and conflict between the Hutu and the Tutsi. It is now recommended to rewrite the history of Rwanda and teach the present and coming generations a correct version of the history of the nation. The truth now to be upheld is that pre-colonial Rwanda was a harmonious society. The divisions were brought by a colonial power solely responsible for the oppression that the Hutu suffered under the monarchy.

Bad governance: Those who link the problem of the country with poor political leadership normally trace the problem back to the change that took place in 1959. They maintain that right from 1959 Rwanda entered a dark period of internal divisions that bred mass murders and refugees.[431] The indictment is directed against the two Hutu regimes that followed the monarchic and colonial regimes. The dictatorial and sectarian character of these two regimes is strongly condemned.

Bankruptcy of the judicial system resulting in the culture of impunity: This is part of the weaknesses attributed to the two post-monarchical regimes. Reference is especially made to the many injustices and abuses that the Tutsi have been victims of from the people who knew that they could always get away with it.

The problem of ignorance and poverty: It is stressed that poverty has often been among the causes and consequences of the lack of cohesion and harmony within Rwandan society. People whose basic physical needs are not met are vulnerable to all kinds of influences and manipulations. Ignorance has been a hindrance to discernment, leading the mass to blindly yield to the fantasy of the leaders.

The above assessment of the root causes of Rwandan social problems highlight the failures of the two regimes that preceded the current one. By coincidence, the indicted

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[431] Report of the National Unity and Reconciliation Summit, p 67.

regimes are those that are branded as Hutu regimes that lasted from 1959 to 1994. There are objections to this analysis of the Rwandan situation. Some find it biased against the Hutu social group. It presents the Tutsi as the historically innocent victims. Such sentiments of indignation have been expressed in reaction to the initiative known as the Detmold Confession.

In Detmold, Germany, a group of Rwandan Christians from Hutu and Tutsi backgrounds and some Europeans met in December 1996 to reflect on the Rwandan tragedy. This group came to the conclusion that reconciliation in Rwanda requires that each of the groups involved in the conflict recognize its share of responsibility in the crisis and humbly apologizes to those it harmed. This conviction led the participants to take the lead in repenting. Grouped into three categories, the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Europeans, each group repented on behalf of the category it represented. If the initiative was generally welcomed by many Rwandans, there were others who censured its content, especially the confession expressed by the Hutu and the Tutsi groups, which is reproduced below.

Confession of the Hutu group:

> We, Hutu Christians, present at Detmold, recognise that our group has oppressed the Tutsi in various ways since 1959. We confess to the massacre committed by the Hutu against the Tutsi group at different periods of Rwandan History, culminating in the Genocide of 1994. We are ashamed at the horrors and atrocities committed by the Hutu towards the Tutsi: torturing, raping, slitting pregnant women, hacking humans to pieces, burying people alive, hunting people with dogs as if they were animals, killing in churches and temples (previously known as places of refuge) massacring old people, children and sick in the hospital, forcing the people to kill their relatives, burning people alive, denying burial and thousands of other ways of cynically degrading and mockingly putting to death.

> We carry the terrible weight of this unspeakable crime and we accept to bear the consequences without resentment. We implore our Hutu brothers and sisters not to forget this terrible past when they judge the present reality in Rwanda.

> We humbly ask forgiveness of God and our Tutsi brothers and sisters for all the evil we have inflicted upon them. We commit ourselves to do whatever we can to restore our honour and dignity and to regain the lost humanity in their eyes.[432]

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[432] Gatwa, T. The Churches and Ethnic Ideology, p 232.

Confession of the Tutsi group:

> We, Tutsi Christians, present at Detmold, are happy and feel comforted by the confession and demand of forgiveness made by our brothers and sisters. We likewise ask God and the Hutu to forgive the repression and blind vengeance which members of our group have taken, surpassing all claims to legitimate self-defence. "*Inkoni ikubise mukeba uyirenza urugo*"(justifying evil on the pretext that it affects a rival, ends up by turning back on the person who justified it). We also ask God and our Hutu brothers and sisters forgiveness for certain arrogant and contemptuous attitude shown them throughout our history in the name of a ridiculous (sic) complex of ethnicity. [433]

This courageous initiative received commendation from many Rwandans, so that the number of signatories moved from the 24 initiators to several hundred, who later endorsed the confession and signed it. Those critical of the content of the confession lamented that it displayed an imbalance in the depth of repentance from the two groups. The issues raised against the confession, and pointed out by Gatwa, include the following:

- The confession identifying a whole group as killers and another as victims seemed to incriminate a whole group. This could endanger the lives of innocent people belonging to the incriminated group and obstruct justice;
- The repentant Hutu were naïve and underestimated the offences of the Tutsi;
- The confession was unbalanced, with "extremely moving details from the Hutu not counterbalanced by the Tutsi group";
- The confession was flawed by sheer cover-up of many injustices, including the grave oppression that led to the 1959 revolution;
- The repentant underestimated the systematic revenge conducted by the victorious army, the RPF, on the defenceless population.[434]

What all the above objections have in common is their apprehension of what the objectors perceive as unfair incrimination of one group, the Hutu, and a shallow emphasis on the responsibility of the other, the Tutsi.

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[433] Gatwa, T. The Churches and Ethnic Ideology, p 232.
[434] Gatwa, T. The Churches and Ethnic Ideology, p 233.

The Detmold Confession and reaction to it did not result from a national forum and may be judged not to reflect the opinion of the majority of Rwandans. But the views expressed at this level seem to echo the sentiments expressed in some other instances.

After the Genocide, very few among the Tutsi could resist the tendency to think of any Hutu as a criminal. To many, the 1994 Genocide was conclusive evidence that all Hutu are evil and that the Tutsi have always been the innocent victims of the wickedness of the Hutu. Even the most reasonable among the Tutsi would think that good Hutu are rather scarce.[435] Such blanket incrimination of the Hutu group creates in its members claiming their innocence a feeling of being victimized.

The perception that the Hutu are unfairly treated was expressed in relation to the definition of the "survivors of the Genocide" needing assistance and comfort. Differentiation was made between the Tutsi, real victims of the Genocide understood in its technical use and the Hutu who were massacred during the Genocide, sometimes in the same conditions as the Tutsi, the only difference being that they did not belong to the targeted group.[436] The practical result of this distinction is that:

- Hutu victims are not included in the official burial and memorial ceremonies of the victims of the Genocide;
- Hutu widows and orphans of the tragedies are not survivors of the Genocide and cannot claim assistance at the same level as their Tutsi neighbours;
- Tutsi alleged perpetrators of crimes against humanity during and after the Genocide are not prosecuted at the same level as the Hutu alleged offenders, neither before the Rwandan regular tribunals, nor the Gacaca tribunals, nor the Arusha International Tribunal.

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[435] A Christian leader, who is a friend of the writer, pointing at the openness of the post-Genocide regime, told the writer in January 2000 that the Rwandan Government was looking for "moderate" Hutu who can be entrusted with positions in the administration. This comment was shared with a Hutu friend who immediately lamented: So this means that Tutsi are presumed good while good Hutu have become a scarce commodity!

[436] Those who were massacred because of their sympathy with the Tutsi or who were mistakenly taken to be Tutsi are not considered victims of the Genocide, because they do not belong to the ethnic group that was targeted. Neither does the qualification apply to those victims of an avenging Tutsi.

There are very few among the Hutu who are convinced about the fairness of these measures. It is not easy to explain to a Hutu who lost his loved ones during, or even after, the Genocide that his/her pain is less than that of his Tutsi neighbour who lost loved ones during the Genocide. The crime that generated the loss may be different in terms of the law but the pain is always measured by the one who suffers it. The sentiment of victimisation, which is real among many Hutu, adding to the negative perception of Hutu as irredeemable slaughterers still prevailing among many Tutsi, works against the mutual trust between the Hutu and the Tutsi and undermines the efforts towards genuine reconciliation. Commenting on this situation, Pottier warns:

> The challenge in Rwanda today is complicated further in that the official discourse on the 1994 Genocide maintains in practice the ethnic division which the RPF-led government denounce in theory: only Tutsi are victims of Genocide; moderate Hutu who died in the massacre are victims of politicide. This distinction has implied moral hierarchy.[437]

The Detmold Confession is a small initiative and probably the signatories did not conceive it as an ambitious reconciliation project. Nevertheless, there is an aspect in this small initiative that is worth commending. Members of each of the two groups involved were sensitive enough to allow those they perceived as their oppressors to express their own grief and to listen to them. Throughout the history of Rwanda, members of each of the two main social groups focussed only on the sufferings they endured and failed to pay any attention to the suffering that they, or those identified with them, inflicted on those of the other group. Today there are many among the Hutu and among the Tutsi who are sincerely convinced that their group has always been the historically innocent victim, with the resulting implication that those of the other group have always been the historically oppressors. This perception is a hindrance to genuine reconciliation.

3.6 Summary

The Rwandan Genocide was a result and a culmination of a history of conflicts, the roots of which are traced back to the pre-colonial period. The causes and factors responsible for

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[437] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p 126.

this tragedy, as well as its consequences, are many and not all can be easily identified. The preceding survey of the history of social conflicts in Rwanda helped to identify some of these causes which are rooted in history. The struggle for the control of limited resources antagonised the elites from the Hutu and the Tutsi and created conflicts that had serious repercussion on the masses. Unresolved conflicts between the two groups kept recurring increasing mistrust, fear and hatred in the community until a stage was reached when the social atmosphere was ripe for the Genocide to occur. These negative feeling should have been overcome by the message of love preached by the church. Things did not work out that way. This is why people are justified in asking what went wrong with the church. This is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RWANDAN CHURCHES AND SOCIAL CRISES

4.0 Introduction

Throughout Rwandan history, Christians and church leaders have been part and parcel of social conflicts. Sometimes God's servants have been criticised for too much involvement in the politics that produced the conflicts. At other times they have been criticised for doing nothing to prevent or solve crises. This section undertakes to examine some of the challenges faced by the Rwandan church, its leaders and its members, in periods of conflict and to attempt an evaluation of some of their attitudes, ranging from too much involvement to too much silence. These attitudes varied during three main periods of Rwandan history namely, the colonial period, from independence to the 1990 war, from the 1990 war to the Genocide in 1994.

4.1 The church of the colonial period

The church of the colonial period was the church of the European missionaries who arrived in the country with the European colonisers. Beside the Roman Catholic Church, the Christian church comprised two Protestant missions. There was the Bethel Mission, started by German missionaries and whose work was taken over, after the defeat of the Germans, by the Belgian Society for Protestant Missions in Congo (SBMPC).[438] This later became the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda. There was also the Church Mission Society (CMS), pioneering the Anglican Church in Rwanda. These Protestant churches were not as prominent as the Roman Catholic Church and their involvement in social problems differed accordingly.

4.1.1 Active involvement of the Roman Catholic Church

While all these missionaries shared the biased view in favour of the Tutsi and readily supported the idea of racial supremacy, it was the Catholic Church that had the means and power to sponsor the translation of the supremacist ideology into social policies. As Sibomana recorded, the Catholic Church developed to become the biggest power in the country; as the biggest employer, the biggest property owner and the biggest provider of

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[438] From the French: Société Belge des Missions Protestante au Congo.

education and welfare, the ecclesiastic institution developed in perfect symbiosis with the colonial authorities.[439] This was a period during which the Roman Catholic Church was an institution too powerful to be ignored by any enterprise undertaken within Rwandan society.

The church worked alongside colonial powers to shape the socio-political atmosphere of Rwanda. As Gatwa, referring to the colonial period, has observed, the church and the state are two institutions that converge spatially and temporally. They may collaborate with or oppose each other, they may even oppose each other and at the same time collaborate.[440] The alliance between the colonial power and the Catholic Church of the time was enhanced by the religious affiliation of the members of the colonial administration, most of whom belonged to the Catholic political parties in Belgium. If the colonial powers are responsible for making policies that became the foundation of the ideology of race supremacy that aggravated the polarization of the society, Christian missionaries were their allies who played a key role in facilitating this regrettable orientation.

The active involvement of the church in socio-political matters during the colonial period was marked by the missionaries' collaboration with the colonial power in their preferential treatment of the Tutsi, to the detriment of the other social groups. This bias was manifested at first through ways that included the missionaries' subscription to, and propagation of, the Hamitic theory. The ideology asserting the superiority of the Tutsi as a race who were born to reign was reflected not only in the colonial civil service, a domain reserved for the Tutsi, who were credited with vivid intelligence and excellent spirit of assimilation, but also in the missionary schools, conceived to be training grounds for future leaders. The missionaries' bias in favour of the Tutsi resulted in their being the priority focus of evangelisation. The missionaries hoped that once these elite was

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[439] Sibomana A. *Hope for Rwanda: Conversation with Laure Guilbert and Herve Deuigne*. London: Pluto Press. 1999, p 89.
[440] Gatwa T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises*, p 59.

converted, the masses would easily follow.[441] The logical result of this policy was that the first indigenous church leaders were mainly Tutsi.

The preferential treatment reserved for the elite Tutsi that paralleled the discrimination against, and exploitation of, the mass of mostly Hutu peasants encouraged a certain superiority complex among some privileged Tutsi. Many of them liked the idea of their innate superiority and, whether they believed it or not, they exploited the occasion to enjoy the privileges and benefits attached. As Sibomana puts it, the Tutsi began to think of themselves as a superior people, whereas the Hutu were internalizing their inferior social and intellectual status. In any case, in the end, Rwandans became the people they had been taught they were.[442] At the same time this climate progressively generated bitterness among the oppressed, mostly Hutu, increasing the tension between the social groups.

Toward the end of the colonial period the traditional affinity between the Tutsi and the European missionaries regressed gradually, from 1945 onwards.[443] A new generation of missionaries in the leadership of the church were affirming their commitment to the obligation of social justice.[444] They became the sponsors of the emerging movement of Hutu revolutionaries who were raising their voices against social injustices, discrimination and marginalization. The motives suggested, explaining this *volte-face* of the Roman Catholic Church, can be summarized in two points:

Change in white clerical sympathies: It was observed that after the Second World War the leadership of the Church was in the hands of a new generation of missionaries, recruited from the blue-collar strata of Flemish-speaking Belgians. This new generation of missionaries was inspired by the ideals of democracy and committed to the obligation

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[441] These missionaries were the White Fathers, a congregation founded by Cardinal Lavigerie, whose known evangelistic strategy consisted of converting the leaders to facilitate the conversion of the masses.
[442] Sibomana A. *Hope for Rwanda*, p 89.
[443] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 100.
[444] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 107.

of social justice. They felt a certain affinity toward the masses and were inclined to support Hutu populism.[445]

Struggle for the control of the Rwandan Church: This is a struggle said to have opposed the native clergy to the European missionaries. At this time the native clergy, who were almost exclusively Tutsi, formed about half the total number of clergy in the Rwandan Church.[446] Confronted with ideas of social equality, democracy and independence, they were very much alert to the looming changes and they understood the possible implications of these new ideas to their traditional privileges. This awareness led them to join their voice with those who advocated the Belgian transfer of power. This stand may have sent a clear signal to the European clergy, who understood that they were not spared by the contestation of the colonial order.[447] The perceived risk of losing control of the church to the native clergy may have brought an end to their historic sympathy for the Tutsi.

The commitment of missionaries to the ideals of social justice may have been genuine, but more real was their preoccupation with the future of the church, its future relations with the state in the new socio-political atmosphere. Concerns of this order had called together the Catholic hierarchy from the Belgian colonies to meet in Leopoldville (today Kinshasa) in June 1956 to reflect on the future of church-state relations.[448] Anticipating the inevitable forthcoming changes, as the international community was paying more attention to the plight of the Hutu and their call for emancipation, these missionaries were anxious to retain their political influence. This encouraged them to support what they now presented as the just cause of the oppressed masses.[449] The moral and material support of the church went a long way in helping these Hutu to succeed in what they called the social revolution and their subsequent conquest of power.

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[445] Chretien, J.P. *The great lakes of Africa*, p 301. (See also Taylor, C.C. *Sacrifice as terror*, p 43).
[446] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda crisis*, p 43.
[447] Prunier, G. *The Rwanda crisis*, p 44.
[448] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 101.
[449] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 101.

The church support for the emancipation of the Hutu was a U-turn on the part of the same institution that had strongly supported the now-attacked regime. But this change resulted not necessarily from the church's awakening to its responsibility with respect to social justice. The *volte-face* of the Catholic Church was regarded by some as a strategic adjustment on the part of the missionaries in anticipation of the unavoidable forthcoming socio-political changes. This adjustment permitted the Catholic Church to keep its prominent place after the independence of the country.[450]

4.1.2 Absence of the Protestant churches in the colonial period

To the strong influence of the Catholic Church conversely corresponded the weakness of the Protestant churches. The colonial authorities from the predominantly Catholic state of Belgium were closer to the Catholic Church and more inclined to collaborate with it than with the Protestants hailing from the Protestant kingdom of England. Concerned about keeping the monopoly of influence in the affairs of the country, the Catholic Church was in favour of not encouraging the promotion of the Protestants.

Less funded and equipped than the Catholics, the Protestants acquired the reputation of a second-class religion. Their physical facilities could not compare with cathedrals, churches, schools and hospitals built by the Catholic Church. Incapable of providing to their members training comparable to what the Catholic Church was offering in their seminaries, the Protestant churches used indigenous clergy and church teachers with little or no formal training. Sidelined by the colonial authorities and looked down upon by the Catholic Church, the Protestants had no means of claiming their place in the management of the affairs of the country. They seem to have recognized their lack of authority and influence, so that they focussed on the work of evangelism, living politic to the politicians.[451] They remained absent in the pre-colonial period and this attitude did not change much even after independence.

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[450] Semujanga, J. *Origins of Rwandan Genocide*, p 79-81.
[451] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 102-103.

4.2 From independence to the war in 1990

The uprising of the 1950s brought changes in the socio-political atmosphere of the country. The Hutu activists managed to overthrow the Tutsi regime and to inherit the leadership of the country, at the time of recovering independence in July 1962. The events that occurred during this change of regime had lingering consequences throughout the period of the two successive Hutu regimes on power in Kigali. The unresolved antagonism between Hutu and Tutsi generated recurring conflicts that degenerated into the war in 1990. This is the period during which the contribution of the church remained wanting. While the First and the Second Republics were practising ethnic exclusivism, the attitude of the church ranged from complicit silence to explicit support.

4.2.1 Church and conflicts in the First Republic 1962-1973

The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches adopted different attitudes on issues that generated conflicts subsequent to the independence of the country. What they shared in common was their failure to formulate a theology relevant to the socio-political context of the time. Neither the Catholic Church's involvement in politics nor the Protestants' withdrawal from politics helped the situation.

4.2.1.1 The Roman Catholic Church in national politics

The ties between the Catholic Church and the Hutu politicians that had started when the latter were struggling for their emancipation continued after they took power. The White Fathers and the Hutu activists had been companions in the struggle and now it was time for both to reap the benefits. The Catholic Church continued to be an unconditional ally of the Kayibanda regime. This president and many of his officials were good Catholics, not only raised in the Catholic faith but also groomed by the missionaries with respect to their political responsibilities. This was meaningful to the Catholic Church, which enjoyed a preferential consideration during the First Republic, with many privileges that the other denominations were not welcome to claim.

The Church's support of the Kayibanda regime blinded the leaders of this institution to the abuses of the regime, especially its handling of the issue of ethnic relations. The

church concentrated on ensuring that the Hutu take power and forgot the fate of those from whom that power was taken. When the formely oppressed became the oppressors, this did not attract much attention from those whose first preoccupation was to see their chosen regime established. Gatwa has summarized the shortcomings of the Catholic Church during the period of the First Republic into three points:

- The absence of self-criticism and apology for the church's earlier blind support of the ruling class and the promotion of the ideology of race supremacy;
- The church's failure to support the plight of its former protégés when they became the new victims of the formely oppressed;
- The church's blind support for the new republican regime and its silence reguarding its abuses.[452]

It is this blind support that makes questionable the motives of the Catholic Church in siding with the Hutu. If they were driven by their commitment to the ideal of social justice, they should have used their moral authority and their relations with the regime to speak for the Tutsi now that they were in a position of weakness. This moral authority, which the Catholic Church enjoyed, but failed to use, was absent in the Protestant Churches.

4.2.1.2 The Protestants' silent presence in the First Republic

The Protestant missionaries, who did not share with their Roman Catholic counterparts the same motives for shifting allegiance from the Tutsi in favour of the Hutu, did not contribute much to the revolution. Instead, some of them, like those of the CMS, may have persisted in their belief that the Tutsi would always be the leaders because they have "an innate ability to rule".[453]

If the Protestant churches were not conspicuous in the campaign for the emancipation of the Hutu, they did not do much, either, in defending the Tutsi when the Hutu took power. During the violence that followed the events of 1959-1961, the intervention of these

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[452] Points outlined by Tharcisse Gatwa in Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 100.
[453] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 103.

churches was rather timid. The courage of the Presbyterian Church, not great enough to enable them to confront the political leaders, was limited to sensitising the members to overcome fear, hatred, discord and greed and to remain motivated by the concern to obey Christ alone, the only chief of all believers.[454] For the CMS their intervention was limited to the humanitarian aspect. Many Anglican Church premises were availed to Tutsi families fleeing the violence. From these places many of them were escorted to the borders of neighbouring countries that were willing to receive them. The Tutsi who did not go into exile were victims of discrimination throughout the period of the First Republic. Each time that those in exile launched their repeated attacks on the country, the Tutsi in the country paid the price as a target of violent reprisals. In all these cases of injustice, the church was, disappointingly, watching in silence.

The acquiescence of the Protestants was not necessarily a result of their support for the regime. The Protestant church was not an ally of the government, as was the case with the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, the Protestants were sidelined by this regime, whose top officials were all Catholics. During this period, the Protestant missionaries were leaving the church in the hands of an indigenous clergy, generally poorly trained and looked down upon by the Catholics and the government. It is probably the resulting inferiority complex that hindered them from raising their voices to denounce the injustices. In addition, the concern not to appear as going contrary to the political trend of the time may have been a factor in the appointment of the first native bishop of the Anglican Church. A Hutu candidate was preferred to two Tutsi candidates who were relatively better trained.[455] At this time, Tutsi occupied other prominent positions in the church, such as Archdeacons and Canons. Despite some changes in the relation between church and state in the Second Republic, the voice of the church did not become strong enough to influence change in the direction of improvement of social justice, especially with respect to the extremely sensitive domain of ethnic relations.

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[454] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 102.
[455] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 103.

4.2.2 Second Republic (1973-1990)

Although the regime of the Second Republic had not relied on the support of the church at the beginning, the new leaders were aware that that support was needed to consolidate their power. While maintaining the traditional pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Church in Rwanda, the new politicians proved to be more open to the Protestant churches. At the same time they attempted to keep the churches under their control, even the Catholic Church that had once controlled the state.

4.2.2.1 The Roman Catholic Church under control

Among the reasons presented to justify the putsch that brought Habyarimana to power on the 5 July 1973 was the issue of social relations that continued to deteriorate throughout the time of the First Republic. Posing as a promoter of peace and national unity, Habyarimana promised to put an end to ethnic and regional discrimination. While the Habyarimana regime can be credited for temporarily halting physical violence against the Tutsi,[456] the same cannot be said for his regime with respect to restoring national unity. In his endeavour to break the monopoly of power concentrated in the hands of politicians from one region in the south of the country, Habyarimana transferred this power to his native region in the north.[457] This development worsened the problem of sectionalism rather than solving it. The people from the south and the Tutsi, in particular, saw their access to education, public administration and political positions drastically restricted.[458] The regime adopted an obdurate resistance to the requests of Tutsi refugees in exile to return home.

Amidst all these social problems, the church remained compromisingly silent and the Habyarimana regime did not waste any time in exploiting the situation. Although he had seized power without the help of the Church, Habyarimana knew that it was in his interest to keep the church on his side. To achieve this goal, Habyarimana used many strategies, ranging from attraction, infiltration and, mostly, intimidation. By his outward commitment to the Catholic faith he acquired a reputation of being a good member of the

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[456] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers*, p 138,9.
[457] Melvern, L. R. *A People Betrayed*, p 42.
[458] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers*, p 139.

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Catholic Church.[459] This attitude attracted some support from the Church that was proud of having not only him but most of his officials as Roman Catholics. This insured that the Church maintained its prominent place in the country.

Habyarimana's identification with the Roman Catholic Church was not enough for the consolidation of his totalitarian regime. More aggressively, he infiltrated the church and attempted to make it an ally of his regime, so as to secure the same kind of support that the preceding regime had enjoyed from the same church. His personal friendship with the Archbishop of Kigali and especially the incorporation of this top leader of the church in the top organ of his single-party went a long way in helping him to achieve this goal.[460] In the Second Republic, Mgr Nsengiyumva was to Habyarimana what Mgr Perraudin had been to Kayibanda in the First Republic, difference being that this time around it was the head of state who had authority over the cleric and not the other way round, as it had been in the First Republic.

If, through diplomacy, Habyarimana succeeded, to some extent, in blinding the church to social problems inherent in his regime, this was just complementary to what he achieved through intimidation. After he seized power, a new constitution was designed that established a single party, the MRND, into which every Rwandan was automatically enrolled as an active member, a "*militant (e)*".[461] Even the bishops were expected to be active members of the MRND. Various mechanisms were developed that aimed at indoctrinating the population to ensure that they were kept under control.[462] Good performances were rewarded, while defiance attracted discipline.

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[459] Gatwa, T. The Churches and Ethnic Ideology, p 128.
[460] Gatwa, T. The Churches and Ethnic Ideology, p 129.
[461] From French, a gent was a *militant* and a lady a *militante*. The connotation of this term goes beyond passive membership to emphasize "activism".
[462] The most efficient channel of propaganda and indoctrination was what was called "*animation*". Presented as a cultural activity, this was a means by which the people were incited to compete, through various creative ways, in praising and glorifying the president and his party. These was done through songs, dances, slogans, poetry, drama, etc….

The MRND was the only legitimate political organization from which all the institutions originated.[463] Habyarimana's authority over all the institutions was coupled with the sacralisation of his person. He was called the "Father of the Nation", the symbol of peace and national unity. Armed with the prerogative to nominate to all senior positions in the administration, the army, government-funded projects and corporations, he commanded allegiance from all he had nominated and all those aspiring to those positions. None would wish to have his name on the black list of those who oppose the "Father of the Nation". People would rather compete to be positively known, if not by him, at least by his entourage or collaborators.

In this climate, with the head of state venerated and his party all-powerful, it took exceptional courage and boldness to dare oppose the ruling clique. In the Roman Catholic Church some lower ranked organs of the church attempted to speak out. These included the priests that run *Kinyamateka,* a church newspaper that played a very important role in social communication in Rwanda. Under the management of Father Sylvio Sindambiwe, the paper took a critical stand against Habyarimana's regime, denouncing its abuses. The top leaders of the church were not comfortable with the line the paper was taking. They forced Sindambiwe to resign in 1985. Father Sindambiwe escaped several assassination attempts, but was finally crushed by a truck in November 1989.

Father André Sibomana took over the management of the paper in 1988 and continued in the line of Sindambiwe. This placed him at odds with both the state and the church. The opposition of the church hierarchy did not deter him and he raised his voice so high as to be heard by the Pope himself. When Cardinal Etchegaray, the chairperson of the papal Justice Peace Commission, visited Rwanda in May 1993, Sibomana expressed his concern in the following words:

> Your eminence, let me be frank with you: in this context of human rights violations, the main moral authority in the country, namely the Roman Catholic

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[463] Both the Government and the Parliament emanated from the MRND. The Judiciary was said to be independent, but in reality was not. The nominations and dismissal of magistrates were suggested by the *Conseil Superieur de la Magistrature* (Superior Council of Magistrates) to the President of MRND, who took the final decision.

Church, should have made every effort to rectify the situation and revive the people's consciences. Instead, it has distinguished itself by its complicit silence and its absence in the most stricken places. The cry of distress of the people of God has not always been heard on time; and with a few exceptions, Roman Catholic officials have lost their credibility because of their complacent attitude toward the state.[464]

Sibomana escaped many assassination attempts before and during the Genocide. He continued to denounce human rights abuses even after the Genocide and he was at loggerheads with the post-Genocide authorities. When he fell sick in 1998 his doctor recommended his transfer abroad, but the authorities would not release his travel documents which had been confiscated earlier. He died on 9 March 1998.

These two priests/journalists and human rights activists were not alone among the Catholic clergy in their fight for social justice. Sibomana mentions other cases of initiatives from lower ranking individuals or organs whose bold opposition to social injustices were ignored or opposed by the top leaders of the church. These cases include Father Gabriel Maindron's article, published in *Dialogue,* in which he criticised the church for its lack of insight, its passive attitude, its complicity, hypocrisy and position of compromise. The Archbishop of Kigali took this critique personally and slammed the priest for attacking him. In the same vein, the priests of the Kabgayi diocese published a 40-page document attacking the passive attitude of the church in the face of increasing social injustice.[465] Initiatives such as these from some Catholic priests were very scarce among the Protestants.

4.2.2.2 Complacent Protestant churches

Unlike his predecessor, Habyarimana paid attention to the Protestant churches that, despite their being sidelined in the Kayibanda regime, had grown to represent a social force significant enough to be noticed. Under Habyarimana's regime, Protestants were progressively allowed access to some privileges that had been so far exclusively enjoyed by the Roman Catholic Church. They were permitted to broadcast church programmes

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[464] Sibomana A, *Hope for Rwanda*, p 122.
[465] Sibomana A, *Hope for Rwanda*, p 121.

and services on national radio, protestant bishops and legal representatives were granted diplomatic privileges in the state protocol, alongside their Catholic counterparts. Protestants could be nominated to top positions in the administration and, from time to time, there was a Protestant minister in Habyarimana's cabinet. Without necessarily breaking the pre-eminence of his Catholic church, Habyarimana was, in many ways, relatively favourably disposed towards the Protestants.

This positive attitude toward the Protestants may have encouraged the emancipated churches to focus on the benefits granted by the regime and to lose sight of its weaknesses. Few, if any, Protestant leaders paid attention to the moral responsibility of the Church the way Sibomana did. Protestant leaders were generally characterized by their blind support for the regime. This attitude can be illustrated by the following abstract of a congratulatory message sent by one Protestant denomination to president Habyarimana after he was re-elected as President of his party, the MRND:[466]

> Excellency, Father of the Nation, the synod rejoiced because of the supreme decision taken by the 6th Congress of the MRND to re-elect you as the President of the MRND for the next five years, thus we "militants" find in you a potential candidate in the presidential elections. We fully support the confidence manifested in you by the participants to the Congress and we also have confidence in you.
>
> Excellency, the President of the Republic and Founder-President of our Movement, to your policy of unity and peace, pillar of development with which you command our country with fidelity and integrity, we owe many good things which you helped us to realise; we are grateful to you. Thus the members of the Presbyterian Church will manifest their gratitude to you on the 19 of December by giving you a hundred percent vote.[467]

This blindness to the socio-political realities of Rwanda was characteristic of all the protestant churches. Although this uncritical submission to the regime is difficult to explain, some contributing factors can be highlighted. For anybody to be able to stand his ground and challenge the abuse of the MRND regime, she/he needed a number of

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[466] The MRND was the only party allowed in the country and Habyarimana was the only candidate. His election to chair the party made him the only candidate for the presidency of the country.
[467] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 141.

qualities that were not necessarily found in the Protestant hierarchy. These qualities included an analytical spirit capable of seeing beyond the propaganda of MRND and understanding the oppressive character of its policies, so as to formulate a relevant theological response to the situation; a sense of responsibility convincing him/her to be involved in changing the situation; courage and boldness enabling him/her to face the risk and eventually pay the supreme price.

During the Habyarimana regime the Protestant church was in the hands of leaders generally with a low level of training that would not help them to think through the situation and understand their responsibility. The training that most protestant bishops and legal representatives had received from the school of theology in Butare[468] could not compare, for example, to the theological training received by their Catholic counterparts in the Nyakibanda Senior Seminary and abroad. Most pastors had a limited understanding of the church's moral and social responsibility and its prophetic role towards the state. In addition to this inadequate understanding of the social role of the church, the low level of training also had an inhibiting effect on the level of the pastors' self-confidence. They were conscious of being looked down upon by the state and the Catholics and this inhibited their boldness to speak out with authority and challenge the regime. Content with the work of evangelism and pastoral ministry in the church, many of them would even clearly distance themselves from anything that touched on politics which they regarded as a dirty and risky game.[469] The few who were attracted to politics subscribed to the ideology of the MRND and remained under its grip. These are generally those of

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[468] The school of theology of Butare started in 1970 and trained pastors from all the main Protestant churches. Almost all the senior leaders received all their theological training from this school, before it was upgraded to become a faculty of theology in 1990.

[469] Gatwa contends that this attitude of withdrawal is a consequence of what he calls the "born again theology" preached by the "fundamentalists". It should be noted, however, that very few, if any, among the church leaders at this time was to be counted among these "fundamentalists". In contrast with the situation of the years 1930s when the emphasis on being "born again" was the teaching of the Church and involved the leaders, from the years 1970s these teachings were revived among the youth by the Scripture Union. Apart from the Pentecostal churches, no Protestant church formally adopted these teachings. Prevalent among the youth, these teachings were more tolerated than promoted by the churches. In many cases enthusiastic youths were at loggerheads with the church leaders. The emphasis on being "born again" in itself was not necessarily incompatible with the social responsibility of the Church. In some other countries like Uganda, those professing to be "born again" were also known for their boldness in denouncing the oppressive character of the regimes in their countries. The apathy of the Protestant churches in Rwanda was not the result of their preoccupation with the "spiritual", but was due to their neglecting the "socio-political" and one does not necessarily imply the other.

the hierarchy mindful of Habyarimana's positive attitude toward the Protestants and not wishing to appear as ingrates or hoping to receive more favours. The concern to avoid confrontation with the regime continued to characterise the position of the church throughout the troubled period that had started with the war in 1990 and culminated in the Genocide in 1994.

4.2.3 From war to the Genocide

The year 1990 is remembered in Rwanda for the socio-political turmoil that marked it. Amidst rumours of a looming war, the country witnessed divisions and tension resulting from the activities of nascent political parties opposing the MRND regime, even before they were officially recognized. This internal tension and the external pressure obliged the church, both Catholic and Protestant, to break their silence and address the issues. The visit of Pope John Paul II provided the Catholic Church the opportunity to express its view on the prevailing socio-political climate.

4.2.3.1 The ambiguous stand of the Catholic Church

As socio-political tension increased throughout the country, pressure on civil societies, who were asking for a stand against human rights abuses, was mounting. The Catholic Church responded with a series of messages in the form of pastoral letters addressed to the Catholic community. From early 1990 until the beginning of the war in October, the conference of the Catholic Bishops published their pastoral letter centred on the theme "Christ our unity". The paper was divided into three parts focussing on "the unity of the Rwandan people" in February 1990[470], on "justice for all" in May 1990[471] and on "the centrality of the Word of God in the life of a believer" in August 1990.[472] The letters referred to issues relevant to the context, though sometime revealing the caution of the Church not to denounce the abuses of the regime but rather to defend it, as this abstract shows:

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[470] Conférence des Evêques Catholiques, *Christ est notre Unité. Première Partie: Unité*. Kigali, Pallotti Press, 1990, p 5.
[471] Conférence des Evêques Catholiques, *Christ est notre Unité. Deuxième Partie: Justice pour tout Homme*. Kigali, Pallotti Press, 1990, p 3.
[472] Conférence des Evêques Catholiques, *Christ est notre Unité. Troisième Partie: Kristu Bumwe Bwacu : Ijambo ry'Imana mu mibereho y'Umukristu*. Kigali, Pallotti Press, 1990, p 1.

We sometime hear people complaining that for reason of ethnic origin, they have been refused a job or a place in the schools, that they have been deprived of a privilege, or that the judicial system has not been impartial toward them. You are not unaware that the policies of ethnic balance at your workplace and in schools have been designed to correct the inequalities that favoured some to the detriment of others. The authorities do whatever possible to help the people of Rwanda to live peacefully together, they give us roads, newspapers, other sorts of avenues for encounter, the institutions of the MRND, the trade organizations and those for the promotion of women.[473]

The letters surveyed the problems of the time in Rwandan society, but failed to reach their roots. The Church spoke to the people, but omitted to speak to political leaders. At this time the church was preparing for the visit of the Pope. Many, and especially those who were not satisfied with the attitude of the leaders of the Rwandan church, greeted the Pope's visit with great expectation, as Sibomana reveals:

His visit was the object of great anticipation. The country was in a bad state, people were suffering, and we couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Naively we believed that the Pope's visit would change things…. Unfortunately, the outcome of the visit failed to meet our expectations. The Pope kept repeating: A thousand hills, a thousand problems, a thousand solutions. His speeches, which were very dense, seem to have been written in advance and did not correspond to what we wanted him to see during this visit. [474]

The Pope visited the country in September and only about one month later the war started. The message that continued to flow from the Catholic hierarchy tended to respond to new developments in successive political crises. In November 1990, one month after the beginning of the war, the pastoral letter circulated with the title "Blessed are the peacemakers".[475] It focussed on the pacification of the country. The theme of truth and tolerance of the letter of May 1992 seemed to consider the atmosphere of confrontation among political parties. In his message of advent 1993, the Bishop had in mind the implementation of the Arusha Accords. The letter called upon different categories of people (politicians, soldiers, magistrates) to bring their contribution for the

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[473] Conférence des Evêques Catholiques, *Lettre Pastorale*. Mai 1990, pp 5-6; p1 quoted in Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 195.
[474] Sibomana A, *Hope for Rwanda*, p 27.
[475] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 195.

creation of a new Rwandan society. Many other themes were covered in numerous pastoral letters that circulated between 1990 and 1994.[476]

Despite the relevance of the themes covered by these letters, they did not achieve much in terms of influencing the course of events. Many factors may have contributed to this failure. These are to be found from both the authors and the recipients of the letters. The insufficient attention paid by the people to the Church's message may reflect the (lack of) seriousness with which the people took their Christianity, as well as the measure of authority they usually recognized to the instruction they received from the Church. The majority of key players in politics and the army were Christians, members of the Church. Had they heeded the call addressed in these letters, the events could have taken a different turn.

The major weakness of the authors of the letters was that they were not able to convince their audience that they were unbiased and objective. Their pitfall was mainly their concern to maintain unquestioned in their loyalty to political authorities. Cautious not to be perceived as bad citizens, they would yield, for example, to the pressure to exhibit their patriotism by denouncing the aggression of which the country was victim. By so doing they lost the credibility before the RPF and its supporters. In their sensitisation of the people to obey and respect the authorities, they omitted to denounce the abuses of which many among their audience were victim. It was said that the church was made up of "crowds who come into church on Sunday and are easily manipulated, and some committed personalities that are easily neutralized".[477] If the hierarchy is among those few committed who allowed themselves to be "neutralised" by the state, then they had no power to protect the crowds from being "manipulated". Where the Catholic Church failed, the Protestants did not do better.

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[476] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 196.
[477] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 228.

4.2.3.2 The Protestants' response to the pre-Genocide crises

The generally low level of training continued to be among the major handicaps that prevented the Churches from having people of calibre who could engage a theological reflection appropriate to various social situations that the country experienced. This weakness rendered them prey to all kinds of propaganda, which they uncritically echoed. This is how, at the beginning of the war in 1990, the Protestants sided with the state without reservation and participated in the campaign destined to denounce the aggressors who had invaded the country. In the process, they were compelled to become defenders of the Habyarimana regime, praising its achievement that the war was about to destroy. The position of Protestant leaders on such crucial issues as the war, the refugee problem and human rights flagrantly lacked any fair critique of the Kigali regime.

The Protestant Council of Rwanda could have provided its member churches an appropriate forum for addressing critical issues affecting the society. The Council grouped together the main churches. The Anglicans, the Presbyterians, the Baptists and the Methodists were full members of the Council, while the Pentecostals and the Seventh Day Adventists were affiliate members, associating with the council only in some social programmes such as education. The focus of the Council seems to have been mainly on evangelism and pastoral work than on the social life of the people. Even some social developments projects, such as in education and health, seem to have been designed as a means for evangelism.

Amidst a growing climate of violence and political unrest, there was a trend within some members of the protestant churches advocating rethinking the expected prophetic role of the council. A commission was appointed in 1991 to discuss the guidelines for the Council's engagement in society. In 1992, a workshop was organized with the theme "The Protestant Council of Rwanda and its perspectives on development".[478] Each time suggestions were formulated, calling for the churches to engage more meaningfully in social matters. Some suggested the creation in the council of a secretariat for human rights, justice and peace. Many church leaders were not very enthusiastic with the idea of

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[478] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 205.

venturing into this sensitive area. Not many were ready to take a stand and, if need be, speak out against the policies and practices of the regime. In1993 a commission for justice, peace and reconciliation was created but, like the Bureau for Refugees, which had existed for years in the council, the commission did not achieve much.[479]

The political crisis was reaching an impasse, as Habyarimana refused to implement the Peace Agreement signed in Arusha. At this time the main opposition parties were split giving Habyarimana the pretext to delay the implementation of the Peace Agreement as long as he could not know which faction would be represented in the transitional coalition government. The Protestant churches joined the Catholic leaders and created what they called the "comité de contact".[480] Through this committee, co-chaired by the President of the Protestant Council and a Catholic bishop, the Churches attempted to mediate among political parties and among factions of political parties in order to unblock the process of the implementation of the peace Agreement. Even this laudable initiative achieved little. By this time polarisation had reached a level where a remedy was difficult. Many politicians who did not believe in the impartiality of the Church suggested that it should stay away from politics.[481] The Church had waited too long and its contribution was now too small to make any difference. More importantly, the Church had failed to prove its impartiality that could have qualified it to speak with authority for the voiceless and against injustice. Having been unable to work for the prevention of the Genocide, it was more difficult for the Church to stop the tragedy when it commenced.

4.3 Summary

The Rwandan Genocide was a reflection of the failure of Rwandans to build a harmonious society. Political leaders led the people astray and church leaders failed to make any difference. Similarly, the division of the kingdom of Israel recorded in 2 Kings 12:1-24, was a result and a culmination of social conflicts. The context of the Rwandan Genocide can help understand the roots and processes that brought about this ancient socio-political crisis. Therefore this study includes a historical analysis of the text of 2

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[479] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 205.
[480] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 206.
[481] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 208.

Kings 12:1-24 aiming at providing information with respect to the socio-cultural, economic, political or religious aspects reflected in the passages that may have corresponding or dynamically equivalent situations in the Rwandan context. Prior to the historical analysis, which will be described in Chapter Six, a literary analysis of the passage is necessary to look at the situation of conflict in Israel as it is narrated in the passage. This is the objective of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: LITERARY ANALYSIS OF 1 KINGS 12:1-24

5.0 Introduction

The event of the division of the kingdom of Israel is narrated in 1 Kings 12:1-24. Therefore this passage occupies a central place in the present work. The passage is part of a larger narrative running from the book of Deuteronomy to the books of Kings, a narrative that has been called the "Deuteronomistic history".[482] Scholars have voiced their various opinions on the process through which older traditions may have been used by one editor or multiple editors to compose this narrative. The present chapter does not enter into such redaction criticism debate, neither is it aimed at investigating the historicity of the events presented in the narrative. It will focus on the narrative provided in the final text and the way it describes the event of the division of the kingdom. While the analysis of the text will involve some historical-critical aspects, the focus remains on its literary examination, which considers its narrative form so as to pay attention to elements characteristic of a narrative, such as setting, plot, characters, time and place. This literary approach aims at pointing out issues involved in the narrative about the division of the kingdom of Israel, around which a dialogue with the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda can be carried out. The selected passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24 is examined in its larger literary context that contributes to its meaning.

5.1 Literary context of 1 Kings 12:1-24

The passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24 is part of a unified narrative contained in the books of Samuel and Kings. These books, now divided into four, seem to have been one book originally.[483] The division into four books may have resulted from the influence of the Septuagint, where they appear as one book, under the name 'Book of Kingdoms',[484] but

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[482] Qualification coming from Martin Noth who, in 1943, first recognized the unity of this corpus, rejecting the idea that the pentateuchal sources could be traced into this narrative and the idea that there were two different stages in the composition of Kings. (see Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament* Leicester, England: Appolos. 1995, 154).

[483] In his preface to the books of Samuel in the Vulgate, Eusebius has reported, quoting Origen and Jerome, that originally the two books of Samuel and the books of Kings were one single work. See Soggin, J. Alberto. *Introduction to Old Testament*. London: SCM Press. 1976, p 185.

[484] The change from "Kingdoms" into "Kings" is found in the Vulgate and has been followed by many English versions. See Harrisson, R. K. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: Tyndale. 1970. p 695.

divided into four parts. In the Hebrew Bible the four books were initially presented as a unity. In the traditional terminology of the Hebrew Bible, Samuel and Kings were included in the second part of the Hebrew Canon, the part called 'Former Prophets' (*rî`šônîm*), which included Joshua and Judges.[485] This corpus of 'historical books' contains a long narrative describing the situation of the people of Israel in the Promised Land. The passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24 is therefore located in the larger context of the Former Prophets and consequently it shares some of the characteristics of this narrative.

5.1.1 Location of 1 Kings 12:1-24 in the Former Prophets

The books of the Former Prophets that constitute a larger literary context of 1 Kings 12:1-24 were found to be connected in style and themes to ideas reflected in the Book of Deuteronomy. These common aspects include emphasis on the central Jerusalem cultus, the idea of prophecy fulfilled in human events, the concept of divine justice rewarding the faithful, the retribution of the ungodly and the condemnation of idolatry.[486] The observation of these aspects led Noth to argue that a single exilic author used older traditions to compose a theological "history" that runs through the six canonical books.[487] While there are scholars who dissented from Noth's view, many scholars now accept the hypothesis of a Deutoronomistic history, though sometimes with suggestions of different compositional hypotheses. Provan has pointed out that "the current debate about Deuteronomy and the historical books is not for the most part, then, about whether a Deuteronomistic history exists, but rather about its precise nature and date."[488] Provan may not be totally correct because there are among recent scholars those who do not subscribe to the Deteuronomistic theory.[489] However, most scholars generally admit to the reality of the shared basic themes in Deuteronomy and the historical books. The text

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[485] The Former Prophets (*rî`šônîm*) were distinguished from what was called the 'Later Prophets' (*`aḥᵃrōnîm*) that comprise what is known as 'Prophetic Books'. (These did not include Daniel, which was counted among the "writings") See Childs, B.S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1986, p 230.

[486] Long, B.O. *1Kings With an Introduction to Historical Literature* Grand Rapids, Michgan: William B. Eerdmans. 1984, p 15.

[487] Howard, Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament historical books*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993, p 179.

[488] Provan, I. W. *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate About the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 1988, 3.

[489] See Rösel, H. N. 'Does a Comprehensive "Leitmotiv" Exist in the Deuteronomistic History?' in T. Römer ed., *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (BETL 147; Leuven: University Press. 2000) pp. 195-211. referred to in Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*. London: T&T Clark. 2005,p 40.

of 1Kings 12:1-24, selected for the purpose of this work, is approached with the awareness that it is part of the Deuteronomistic history.

The material that makes up this corpus seem to have been woven together and united by the purpose of the author/editor(s) to report what he/they purported to be the events happening in Israel in the land of Canaan, that is, from the time of the conquest of Canaan to the time of the deportation in Babylon. The present work focuses on social relations among the tribes of Israel in Canaan. It considers the different types of political leadership that the people are reported to submit to in Canaan and the effects of successive political regimes on social relations in the pre-monarchical period, the transitional period from theocracy to monarchy and the period of the united monarchy.

The part of pre-monarchical period covered by the books of Joshua and Judges corresponds to the time when the people are said to be led by military deliverers appointed by Yahweh. These charismatic rulers include Joshua, who led the people to the conquest of Canaan. Joshua's leadership is portrayed as the continuation of that of Moses and his position as a commissioned leader of the people parallels Moses' position.[490] Appointed by Yahweh to complete the work that Moses had started, Joshua enjoys the same support that his mentor had enjoyed from Yahweh: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Joshua 1:5). His commission is confirmed by a theophany (Joshua 5:13-15) in a way that recalls Moses' burning bush (Exodus 3:6). The narrative in Joshua is the story of Yahweh's mighty act in enabling his people to conquer the land of Canaan. This conquest is accomplished under the leadership of Joshua who, after Moses' death, becomes Yahweh's representative among the people. In Joshua the people are represented as a cohesive entity under the central authority of Joshua. Although they are arranged hierarchically under tribal authority, the text continually reinforces the idea that the people are to find their primary identity as part of the unified whole, "all Israel"; tribal identity is to be secondary.[491]

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[490] Coats, G. W. "The Book of Joshua: Heroic Saga or Conquest Theme?" in Exum, J.C. ed. *The Historical Books: a Sheffield Reader*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1997, p 52.
[491] Rowlett, L. "Inclusion, Exclusion and Marginality in the Book of Joshua" in Exum, J.C. ed. *The Historical Books: a Sheffield Reader*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1997, p 65.

Joshua is followed by the book of Judges, in which Israel is described as a confederation of tribes led by the Judges, spirit-filled heroes directly raised by Yahweh to meet successive crises in Israel's affairs. The Judges lead campaigns to defend the conquered land from invading neighbours. Their leadership style is regarded as having been acceptable to, and understood by, the community, who presumably viewed it as a continuation of the functions exercised by Moses and Joshua.[492] In Judges, the inclination to the charismatic form of leadership is clearly affirmed, as the voices calling for the institution of dynastic kingship are resisted. Opposition to kingship is expressed in Judges, through Gideon's rejection of such a position, with the claim that the Lord is the only one to rule over Israel (Judges 8:23). Gideon's negative view of kingship is vindicated in Abimelech's narrative and in Jotham's parable (Judges 9). Abimelech wanting to be a king is presented as the antithesis of all that the judge of Israel should have been.[493]

The last five chapters of Judges break with the scheme of apostasy, oppression, cry and deliverance that served to organize the stories of the previous chapters providing a predictable pattern for the account that follows (Judges 2:6-3:6). [494] These last chapters provide a series of loosely connected narratives describing what can appear as inter-tribal degeneration. The comment, "In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6, 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), repeated four times in this part of the narrative, points to situations of anarchy that preceded the rise of the monarchy[495]. This comment provides a frame for the last part of Judges and a transition to the monarchical books of Samuel and Kings, which it introduces. [496]

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[492] Dumbrell, W. J. "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in his Own Eyes: The Purpose of the Book of Kings Reconsidered" in Exum, J.C. ed. *The Historical Books: a Sheffield Reader*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1997, p 76.
[493] Dumbrell, W. J. "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel", p 78.
[494] Mullen, Jr, E. T. *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*. Atlanta, Georgia:Scholars Press. 1993, p 163.
[495] Dumbrell has argued against the view that this comment conveys a negative assessment of the period of Judges. For him, the point that the narrator has made is that the ideal of Israel had been preserved throughout the period of Judges and this preservation has not depended upon social of governmental forms of any type. What had preserved Israel had been the constant interventions of Israel's deity. (See Dumbrell, W. J. "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel", p 72-96). Dumbrell may be right in seeing in the

The books of Samuel and Kings focus on the period of the monarchy, beginning with suggested conditions that called for the institution of a monarchical regime in Israel and ending with the circumstances considered to have brought an end to it. The material in Samuel and Kings were united into a continuous account of the history of Israel, so that the division of this account into four parts (1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Samuel) appears to be arbitrary.[497] However, although the account is continuous through the four books, peculiarities can be noted for each of the books of Samuel and Kings.

The book of Samuel describes the transition from theocracy to monarchy. It tells the story of three key individuals in this transition, namely Samuel, Israel's last judge, Saul, her first king, and David, the founder of a dynasty that would endure for over three centuries.[498] At the time of Samuel's birth, the institution of judgeship seems to have already evolved. Eli, the judge then in office, is also a priest. This makes his office different from that of the judges who led Israel before him. While the earlier judges were raised in response to a crisis, Eli's office was rooted in Yahweh's election prior to Israel's arriving in the land having any need of deliverers (1 Samuel 2:27-29). In addition, the future of Eli's house had been divinely sanctioned, whereas in the case of the judges their duties did not extend to the future (1 Samuel 2:30, 35).[499] Eli and his house were called to lead and serve the people, but their office became thoroughly corrupted. The account of the corruption of the house of Eli already pointed to the weakness of any dynastic style of leadership. At the end of Eli's rule, Samuel, a charismatic leader appointed by Yahweh, takes over the leadership of Israel instead of the corrupted sons of his predecessor.

Samuel inherited Eli's combined offices of priest and Judge, to which was added that of prophet. The transition of leadership from Eli to Samuel was therefore not simply from

narrator's comment a rather positive evaluation of the period of Judges. This position does not alter the fact that the comment clearly points to the contrast between the socio-political situations narrated in the last part of Judges contrasting them with the situation to be soon described in the books of Samuel and Kings.

[496] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*. London: T&T Clark. 2005, p 8.
[497] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary*. London: SCM Press, p 1.
[498] Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p 135.
[499] Spina, F. A. "Eli's Seat: The Transition from Priest to Prophet in 1 Samuel 1-4" in Exum, J.C. ed. *The Historical Books: a Sheffield Reader*, p 102).

one man to another, but also from one kind of leadership, namely priestly, to another kind, namely prophetic.[500] In the early part of the narrative Samuel rises as a prophet-priest (1 Samuel 1-4). It is after the arch narrative (1 Samuel 5-6) that he is portrayed as a judge (1 Samuel 7). In his office of judge, Samuel is not exactly the kind of charismatic deliverer raised by Yahweh in response to an immediate crisis. In fact, Samuel is portrayed less as a military leader than as an interpreter of Israel's law and an administrator of justice.[501] It is this aspect of judgeship that his sons are said to have inherited from him (1 Samuel 8:1-3). Samuel's institutionalized judgeship could not provide the military leadership, however temporary, of the charismatic judgeship. It became inevitable, then, that the judgeship be displaced.[502] The arch narrative points to the constant danger from the Philistines, while the account of the corrupted sons of Samuel indicates the absence of the "charismatic-deliverer" kind of judgeship at the end of Samuel's rule. These are two elements that work in the narrative to prepare for the people's request for a king who would lead them in battle (1 Samuel 8).

The people's expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership of Samuel's house is the motive for their requesting a king. In Samuel's objection to this request he provides a negative description of the monarchy, a description probably inspired by the oriental type of kingship of the time. The people, however, seem to be requesting neither an oriental kingship like that described by Samuel nor the destruction of the covenanted tribal league; rather they want a king who will continue Israel's traditions but who will remain a military commander, able to defeat their enemies.[503] This is exactly what Saul does after his appointment. In putting down the Ammonite threat he acts as the military king that the people demanded and thus wins more support from them (1 Samuel 11:1-15). Saul ruled as a military king and he achieved some remarkable successes, as summarized in 1 Samuel 14:47, 48.[504]

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[500] Spina, F. A. "Eli's Seat", p 103).
[501] Preston, T. R. "The Heroism of Saul: Patterns of Meanings in the Narrative of the Early Kingship" in Exum, J.C. ed. *The Historical Books: A Sheffield Reader*, p 125.
[502] Preston, T. R. "The Heroism of Saul", p 126.
[503] Preston, T. R. "The Heroism of Saul", p 126.
[504] Hayes, A. D. H. "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy" in Hayes, H. J. and J. M. Miller. eds. *Israel and Judean History*, p 327.

Samuel's final discourse (2 Samuel 12) marks the end of the period of judges and the beginning of the monarchical era. This speech provides a summary of the events from exodus, the entrance into the land, the time of the judges and the origin of the monarchy. It provides some clues for the understanding of subsequent history, especially by alluding to the possible failure of kingship and the end of the people.[505] This failure already appears in the story of Saul. On the eve of his downfall, Saul is portrayed as a king concerned about establishing a dynasty, distracted by his conflict with David, his rival, and no longer focusing on his main duty to fight Israel's enemies. Nevertheless, Saul dies on the battlefield as a military king, performing the duties he had been appointed to do. Despite his repeated disapproval by Samuel, he is not reproached for behaving like the kind of king that Samuel had warned the people against. The narrative does not report any dissatisfaction of the people about his conduct. The decline of Saul's rule is presented in the narrative in parallel with David's rise.

David's story is reported in three narrative cycles. The story of his rise (1 Samuel 16 -2 Samuel 5) relates the beginning of his career, his relation with the house of Saul and his early success that put him at loggerheads with Saul and propels him to the throne. The apex of David's reign (2 Samuel 6-8) includes the arch narrative and Nathan's oracle promising to David a dynasty that will be established forever. The last part is the succession narrative (2 Samuel 9-1 Kings 2).[506] This is the story of David's decline.

David's public rise and his ultimate success in achieving the throne are firmly based on his early military victories. His battle with Goliath and the subsequent refrain on the lips of women, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands", highlight David's credentials, making him a suitable candidate for a military king. It is his military skills and experience that made him relevant to the northern tribes when they went to ask him to be their military leader. In the early part of the first book of Samuel (2 Samuel 2-10), David is a military king who not only fights and defeats Israel's enemies but also conquers more territory and expands Israel's kingdom. However, alongside these

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[505] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History.*, p 8.
[506] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*, p 9.

achievements, the narrative notes some other preoccupations on the part of David. He builds himself a great palace with the help of Hiram, king of Tyre (2 Samuel 5:11, 12); he takes more concubines and wives from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:13-16); then a prophecy announces that his throne shall be established forever (2 Samuel 7:1-27). This description brings David's kingship closer to oriental despotism.[507] David's shift of focus away from his duty as a military king is openly expressed in the story of his affair with Bathsheba. At the time when kings go to war, David sends Joab and his servants, but he remains in Jerusalem and eventually has an affair with the wife of his servant (2 Samuel 11:1-5). Preston interprets David's behaviour in this affair as capitulation to the oriental despot view of kingship. In Preston's estimate:

> David has in essence abandoned the concept of king as a military leader, upholder of the covenant, and sustainer of the covenanted tribal league. His seduction and seizure of Bathsheba violates several laws of the covenant; but it is primarily the act of an oriental despot, the kind of king Samuel railed against earlier in the narrative.[508]

The Bathsheba affair marks the beginning of the story of David's fall reported in the remaining part of the book of Samuel. The turmoil in David's family is reported as the fulfilment of Nathan's punitive prophecy pronounced against him (2 Samuel 12: 10-11). At the end of David's reign, kingship in Israel had taken the shape of the despotic kind earlier described by Samuel. With Solomon taking over from his father, Israel had become a kingdom like any other nation. In the book of Kings, charismatic leadership disappears, giving way to dynastic kingship, which the people still attempt to resist.

The books of Kings continue the "history" of the monarchy in Israel, from the transition of power from David to his son Solomon, through to the release of Jehoiachin, Judah's last king, from Babylonian captivity. The long narrative of Kings reports three crises that marked the history of Israel. Beside the division of the kingdom, which is the focus of the present study, the two other crises are the fall of Samaria and the fall of Jerusalem. These

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[507] Preston, T. R. "The Heroism of Saul", p 126.
[508] Preston, T. R. "The Heroism of Saul", p 137.

three crises have often been used as references in the delineation of the structure of Kings.

5.1.2 Structure of Kings

Divergence of opinion over the book of Kings is not so much over its inner divisions as it is over its compositional history. Those who follow Noth in his argument for a single redaction hypothesis consider Deuteronomy-Kings as a self-contained literary unit which was composed by a single author, the "Deuteronomist," writing after the fall of Jerusalem.[509] This view allows that a single continuous narrative may have attracted subsequent fragmentary additions, but which are neither continuous narratives nor lengthy redactional layers.[510] Advocates of multiple redactions range from those who postulate two or three authors/editors, to those who postulate many more.[511] Attempts were undertaken to identify different redactions in the Deuteronomistic history, but scholars reach diverging conclusions.[512] Supporters of the double redaction hypothesis generally think that the first redaction was composed in the reign of Josiah and the second during the Exile.[513] In this light, the book of Kings has been understood as a pre-exilic history of the monarchy, revised in the light of the Judean exile, after 587 B.C.[514] The dividing point for the two editions is placed by some at 2 Kings 24:7.[515] Others suggest that the first edition ended at 2 Kings 23:28, but did not include 2 Kings 23: 26-27.[516] "Regnal formulae",[517] as well as change of themes, are among the main indicators suggesting the change of writer.[518] The present study looks at the whole narrative of Kings as a continuous literary unit.

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[509] Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p 154.
[510] Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p 154.
[511] Howard, Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books,* p 180.
[512] See Eynikel, E. *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History*. Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1996.
[513] Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p 153.
[514] Long, B.O. *1Kings with an Introduction to Historical Literature*. p 14.
[515] Hinson, D. F. *Old Testament Introduction 2: The Books of the Old Testament*. London: SPCK. 1974.
[516] Harrisson, R. K. *Introduction to the Old Testament.* London: Tyndale. 1970.
[517] Reference to the pattern found in the book of Kings of introduction of kings at the beginning of their reign and their evaluation at the end. For a comprehensive discussion of these formulae, see Eynikel, E. *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History*. Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1996.
[518] It is noted that the first editor clearly believed that David's kingdom would survive against all attacks and that Jerusalem would remain independent (1 Kings 11:36; 2 Kings 8:19). He wrote that the Temple was still standing as it was originally built (1 Kings 8:8). The second editor, however, (2 Kings 24:8-25-30)

In respect to the inner structure of Kings, most scholars such as Montgomery,[519] Gray,[520] and Soggin,[521] divide the book of Kings into four parts, as follows:

- Epilogue to the 'succession narrative' (1 Kings 1 and 2);
- The history of the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 3-11);
- The history of the divided kingdom down to the fall Samaria (1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17);
- The history of the kingdom of Judah down to the second fall of Jerusalem and the final deportation (2 Kings 18-25).

The first section is not really regarded as a major section of the Book of Kings, but rather as the continuation of the 'succession narrative' in 2 Samuel. This can be gathered, for example, from Gray's following comment:

> The note in I Kings 2: 46, 'So was the kingdom established in the hands of Solomon', suggests that this was the end of a certain self-contained block of traditions, and its obvious connection with the court history of David in II Samuel 9-20 suggests that it belongs to the same source which is generally designated in studies of Samuel as the Court History.[522]

Others, like Childs,[523] Cogan,[524] and Römer,[525] simply incorporate the first part (1 Kings 1-2) into the history of the reign of Solomon, so as to have only three divisions in Kings. The present work considers 1 Kings 1-2 as a part of the succession narrative that reports Solomon's accession. It joins those who incorporate this succession part in the first

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described how Jerusalem and the Temple were captured and destroyed. He is believed to have adapted some of the earlier parts of the book in order to prepare the reader for the bad news at the end, where God is shown to plan punishment for Judah (from Hinson, D. F. *Old Testament Introduction 2,* p 43).

[519] Montgomery, J. A. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings.* London: T&T Clark International. 2004, p 42.

[520] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary.* p 14-33.

[521] Soggin, J. A. *Introduction to the Old Testament.* London: SCM. 1980, p 198.

[522] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary,* p 14.

[523] Childs, B. S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture,* p 288.

[524] Cogan, M. *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* New York: Doubleday. 2001, p 164.

[525] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History,* pp 9-10.

section of Kings, presenting the account of Solomon's reign. This option allows for the division of Kings into three parts only, each ending with a crisis. The division of the kingdom, the fall of Samaria and the fall of Jerusalem are events said to have resulted from the unfaithfulness of Israel's kings. The divine retributive justice characteristic of the Deuteronomistic history is thus reflected in these crises, including the event of the division of the kingdom, which is the subject of this study. The Deuteronomistic historian seems to have organized the material in Kings in a way that shows that these three serious tragedies that befell the people of Israel should not be understood as an indication of Yahweh's failure nor his unfaithfulness, but as a result of the disobedience of his people and their kings. The suggested purpose of this composition was captured in the following analysis:

> That exilic viewpoint was designed to make sure the exiles stopped blaming God for their defeats and instead confessed their own responsibility for failure. It also was geared to providing the only ray of hope possible in the middle of exile: God's unswerving faithfulness to David, even through the past reigns of faithless kings. Just as God's promise of discipline for sin was certain, so also was his promise of blessing. It was up to the people of God to decide if they would repent from their careless attitude toward God during the captivity and faithfully wait for his promised restoration of David's royal line. [526]

The Deuteronomistic interpretation of history appears throughout each of the three sections. In each part the narrator presents his material in a way that prepares the reader to understand the crisis ahead. This Deuteronomic strategy is apparent in following survey of the three sections.

5.1.2.1 From the rise of Solomon to the division of the kingdom (1 Kings 1-11)

The first section of Kings (1 Kings 11: 41-43) narrates the events related to the united monarchy under King Solomon. Solomon's story can be divided in two parts. The first part portrays him as a wise king. Despite the court intrigues that bring Solomon to the throne (1 Kings 1:1-53) and a number of executions paving the way to the consolidation of his power (1 Kings 2: 1-46), Solomon's story opens with emphasis on his wisdom. In

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[526]Hughes, Robert B.; Laney, J. Carl: *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 128.

his dream at Gibeon, an event that makes up for the absence of divine election at the beginning, Yahweh grants him a wise heart (1 Kings 3:4-15). The report of this event is followed by a description of Solomon's organization of the kingdom (1 Kings 4), his reputation for wisdom (1 Kings 5) and then the account of the construction and the inauguration of the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kings 5-8). These achievements confirm the accomplishment of the divine promise in 1 Kings 3:4-15. The Temple achieved during the reign of Solomon occupies a central role throughout the book of kings. Jeroboam will be condemned for creating sanctuaries in Dan and Bethel which appear as illegitimate concurrence with the temple of Jerusalem. All subsequent northern kings will be systematically blamed for what is designated as the sin of Jeroboam. The southern kings will be evaluated on the basis of their loyalty to the Jerusalem temple.[527] This mostly positive view of Solomon ends with his long speech (1 Kings 8), in which he ascertains that Yahweh has realised all his promises to David. Yet, while inaugurating the temple, Solomon foresees its destruction and the exile of the people[528] (1 Kings 8:44-49).

Despite the positive characterization of Solomon, the narrator does not totally cover his weaknesses. The court intrigues that bring him to power depart from the pattern of charismatic rulers raised by Yahweh. The narrator mentions the executions for which Solomon is responsible, his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 3:1) and his sacrifice at the high places (1 King 3:2), all which are brought to the knowledge of the reader. Beyond a wise king (1 Kings 2:3-28) who loves the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David (1 Kings 3:3) and the beloved of the Lord who rules with divine wisdom (1 Kings 3-4), the reader is shown a despot of the kind Samuel warned the people against.

Among realisations counted for Solomon as a display of his wisdom (1 Kings 4: 29-34) are his administrative policies, that deliberately ignored the ancient organization of the tribal league,[529] and by which he took power from the elders to give it to his own officials

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[527] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*, p 98.
[528] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*, p 10.
[529] Wittenberg, G. H. *King Solomon and the Theologians*. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of Natal. 1988, p 11.

(1 Kings 4:1-19)[530] as well as his heavy collections imposed on the people (1 Kings 4:20-28). The account about his devotion to Yahweh is followed by a description of his further success (1 Kings 9), popularity and splendour (1 Kings 10), but a careful reader will easily notice that this glory and splendour is achieved at the expense of the people who were subjected to hard labour and taxation. Solomon's attitude towards the people (1 Kings 5:13-18) epitomizes the negative aspect of the monarchy that reportedly made it displeasing to Yahweh (1 Sam 8:10-18).

In the second part of Solomon's story (1 Kings 9-11) his weaknesses are even more openly recognized as such. In this part, the Solomon who loved the Lord by walking in the statutes of his father David gives way to the Solomon who loved many foreign women who turned his heart towards other gods (1 Kings 11:1-8). His attitude towards material possessions is highlighted at length in 1 Kings 10: 14-29 which exposes the king's deviation from the disposition of Deuteronomy 17:14-17.[531] As a consequence of his apostasy, Solomon loses the favour of the Lord. The decline of his reign, described in 1 Kings 11, appears as the fulfilment of the stipulations of the Davidic covenant (1 Samuel 7:14-16). At his death, he will leave behind a divided kingdom, with the greater part of it being given to his servant (1 Kings: 11: 9-13). The similarities in both language and content with the rejection of Saul (1 Samuel 15:28) is obvious, for these events constitute an important element of the patterns that were created by the narrator within his representation of Israel's past.[532] God's judgment against Solomon is carried out through a socio-political crisis reported in the selected passage of this study, 1 Kings 12:1-24.

5.1.2.2 From the division to the fall of Samaria (1 Kings 12- 2 Kings 17)
The second section of the book of Kings provides what the author(s)/editor(s) purport(s) to be the history of the divided monarchy, down to the destruction of the northern Kingdom in 721. This section (1 Kings 12- 2 Kings 17) relates a parallel story of the two

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[530] Halpern, B. "Sectionalism and Schism." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974) 519-532, p 530.
[531] Brindle, W.A. " The Causes of the Division of the Kingdom" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. July-September 1984 (223-233), p 230.
[532] Mullen, Jr, E. T. *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, p 259.

kingdoms in accordance with a fixed scheme. Among the fixed ingredients of the scheme are the synchronism of the kings of the two kingdoms and the evaluation of their reigns. A pattern that is recurrent in this account is the verdict rendered on each king, based on an evaluation of his loyalty to Yahweh and to the "True Religion". This evaluation appears in the concluding formula which, together with the introductory formula, constitutes a framework that gives the book its distinctive literary character.[533] All the northern kings, regardless of their eventual political importance, are generally censured on the grounds of their religious syncretism, the norm being Deuteronomic orthodoxy.[534] The "sin of Jeroboam" is a motif that continues to appear in their evaluation until 2 Kings 23:15, when Josiah destroys the altar in Bethel, thus putting an end to Jeroboam's cultic innovation.[535] According to the narrative, the destruction of Samaria and the subsequent Assyrian deportation is to be understood as grounded in Yahweh's purpose in judging the kings' disloyalty to his Torah and their negligence of his repeated warning through the prophets (2 Kings 17).

The indictment reserved for southern kings is less harsh. Although their imperfections are mentioned, a number of them are qualifiedly approved. While the tendency is for northern kings always to do evil, albeit different degrees of evil, the kings of Judah always do what is right in the eyes of Yahweh, albeit with qualifications and exceptions, which is why the fate of Israel ultimately hastens upon them.[536] The Deuteronomistic concern to highlight Yahweh's faithfulness to his covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:4-17), implied in the prophecy of Ahijah before the division (1 Kings 11:26-40), is expressed, after the division, through the report of the uninterrupted dynastic succession to the throne in the southern kingdom of Judah, and at the fall of Samaria, through the preservation of Jerusalem, the city of David.

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[533] Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p 160.
[534] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary*, p 25.
[535] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*, p 102.
[536] Kratz, R. G. *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*. London: T&T Clark. 2000, p 161.

5.1.2.3 From the fall of Samaria to the fall of Jerusalem

The last section (2 Kings 18-25) continues with the history of the Kingdom of Judah, from the time of the destruction of Samaria to the fall of Jerusalem and subsequent final deportation. The narrative is about seven kings, of whom three are key to the Deuteronomistic interpretation of history. The account characterises Hezekiah and Josiah as good kings, fearing and trusting Yahweh. Hezekiah is credited for abolishing the illegitimate cults and cult places and Josiah for undertaking a tremendous reorganization of the cult, making Jerusalem the only legitimate sanctuary.[537] Because of Hezekiah's loyalty he is protected against the threatening Assyrian invasion (2 Kings 18:3-8). With Hezekiah's story, the author(s)/editor(s) buttressed the point that loyalty to Yahweh results in security and prosperity. As for Josiah, his total devotion to the Torah makes him a model king. As Brueggemann has noted, Josiah is the one who embodies the central mandates of Moses to Joshua at the beginning of this "history", [538] a mandate expressed in these words:

> Only be strong and very courageous. Being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:7-9).

Conversely, Manasseh and the rest are evildoers who attract final judgment upon the kingdom of Judah. The account of Manasseh's disregard of Yahweh's Torah and the resulting destruction of Jerusalem illustrates the contention that disloyalty to Yahweh is a direct cause of socio-political debacle. Manasseh's reign in Judah is reported as a paradigm of disobedience and a point of reference in the evaluation of those who came to the throne after him, as it was in the case of the reign of Jeroboam I in Israel. Both are the opposite of David and Josiah. As was the case with Israel at the fall of Samaria,

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[537] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*, p 11.
[538] Brueggemann, W. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p 155.

Jerusalem's destruction is presented not as a mere result of the Babylonians' geopolitical and military actions, but as a direct judgment from Yahweh (2 Kings 24).

Acknowledging the Deuteronomistic theological interpretation that pervades the account presented in the book of Kings does not necessarily imply making any judgment about the historicity of facts behind the event interpreted. Both facts and interpretations are important for the purpose of understanding how the people of the Old Testament lived and what they believed about their Yahweh. The present chapter focuses on the account of the division of the kingdom, paying attention to socio-political situations described in the biblical narrative and perceived as being behind the division. In the next chapter an attempt will be made to analyze the socio-historical situation lying at the background of this crisis. Attention is now focused on the event of the division of the Kingdom of Israel as reported in 1 Kings 12, which is the subject of a detailed literary analysis.

5.2 Analysis of 1 Kings 12:1-24

The analysis of this selected passage considers its narrative character. Elements of the narratives that receive attention include its setting, inner structure, plot and characters.

5.2.1 Setting of 1 Kings 12:1-24

Critics have designated the unit as a story with folkloristic artistry that makes it a folktale.[539] The story is often believed to originate from a circle of Solomon's advisors intending to assert that the division of the Kingdom resulted from Rehoboam's rejection of their experienced advice.[540] It is noted, however, that the story could as well emanate from northern Israel.[541] This view accounts better for the story's positive characterisation of Jeroboam and its siding with the cause of the northern tribes, underlining Rehoboam's responsibility in the division of the kingdom of Israel.

From a more literary perspective, the story is the continuation of the immediately preceding account about Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11:26-40. It reports the return of the rebel

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[539] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 136.
[540] Cogan, M. *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* p 351.
[541] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 137.

who, in the preceding account, had gone into exile and, more importantly, the passage reports the event of the division as a fulfilment of Ahijah's prophecy reported in the preceding account (1 Kings 12:15). The story is situated in the transitional period between the reign of Solomon and his successor Rehoboam and the transition from the united monarchy to the divided monarchy. It is, of course, an introduction to the socio-political change in the history of Israel reported in the accounts that follow.

5.2.2 Inner structure of 1 Kings 12:1-24

From a historical-critical perspective this passage has been viewed as comprising one main unit, to which additional stories have been added. The length of the main unit has been differently identified by scholars. There are some who see the end of the main unit at verse 17[542], others at verse 19[543] and others at verse 20. [544] The text of 1 Kings 12:1-20 has been regarded as a self-contained unit, intended to narrate the rise of Jeroboam in fulfilment of the prophecy.[545] The remaining part (1 Kings 12:21-24) reports a series of scenes with events reportedly subsequent to the rebellion of the northern tribes. The great part of this section is regarded by many as a late addition to the Jeroboam tradition.[546]

The literary approach adopted in the present work considers the passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24 as one unit, regardless of the subdivision suggested by historical critics. The unit reporting the event of the division comprises a prologue (1-3a), the heart of the narrative (3b-17) and an epilogue (18-24). This epilogue continues and completes the story of the main unit, reporting a number of events directly linked with the event of the division, including the role assigned to Yahweh in predetermining the course of history. As Long has observed, this last part follows on, and depends for its sense upon, the story of

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[542] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 133. Long notes the appendix-like character of verses 17-20 and sides with those who believe that this part does not have much in common with the preceding verses 1-16.
[543] Cogan, M. *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* p 245.
[544] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary,* p308; Montgomery, J. A. *A critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings,* p 251.
[545] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 136.
[546] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary,* p 308; Long, B. O. *1 Kings*, p138; Cogan, M. *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 354.

Jeroboam's rise and the kingdom's dissolution.[547] That is why it is joined to the preceding unit to form one plot object of our analysis.

5.2.3 Plot

The scenes in this passage are arranged in a way that shows a straightforward movement of the plot. After the protagonists are brought together in the prologue, the plot moves with the introduction of the crisis, as Rehoboam meets the people for the first time. Attempts to resolve the crisis result in further complication, as the king's advisors are divided. The crisis reaches its paroxysm in the king's second meeting with the people, before it is finally resolved with an unexpected ending, as the epilogue confirms. The following exposition of the text is guided by this movement of the plot.

5.2.4 Exposition of 1 Kings 12:1-24

The present section analyses successive scenes of the narrative, paying attention to its main characters. The aim is to look at issues involved in this event of the division of the kingdom of Israel, as reported in this passage, around which a dialogue with the context of ethnic conflict in Rwanda can be established. The analysis follows the scenes as arranged in the narrative.

5.2.4.1 Movement to Shechem: verses 1-3a

The unit opens with a movement to Shechem, the venue for an expected important event. Rehoboam travelled from Jerusalem, the Israelites had come from all the parts of Israel and Jeroboam had come from Egypt. Although the announced purpose of the meeting is the coronation of Rehoboam, this introduction of the protagonists allows the reader to foresee a situation of possible conflict.

5.2.4.1.1 Rehoboam

Rehoboam is presented at the beginning of the story without much introduction. If not for the mention of his name in the preceding concluding formula marking the end the account of the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 11:43), he would appear unknown to the

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[547] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 139.

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reader. It is this concluding formula that informs the reader that Rehoboam inherited his father's throne. In the absence of details about the process of Rehoboam's selection to succeed his father, Rehoboam is presented as the only legitimate successor of Solomon. In fact he is the only son of Solomon known by name. The reader is thus made to see him as the already chosen king and apparently already approved in Jerusalem and in Judah. He is king already, although he still needs to travel to Shechem for the coronation ceremony.

A question arises from the beginning about Rehoboam's need to travel to Shechem. The purpose of this trip, as indicated in the narrative, is his coronation, because all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. The reader will begin to have an idea about the need for this ceremony to be held at Shechem and not in Jerusalem, the capital city, as he/she discovers the identity of the people referred to as "all Israel" that the king is going to meet there.

5.2.4.1.1 All Israel

It is reported that all Israel went to Shechem. "All Israel" is the English rendering of כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל whose literary understanding would imply that the whole people of Israel gathered at Shechem. The phrase could also be taken as a hyperbole, a figure of speech using exaggeration simply to indicate that many Israelites were there. "All Israel" was used a number of times to designate the whole people as the bearer of political, military or ceremonial authority. The other terms used in the same sense are "the people of Israel", "the men of Israel", "the assembly", "the people", or simply "Israel".[548] In the present context the expression cannot be taken literally and it is not a hyperbole. "All Israel" refers more probably to representatives of the people.

The people gathering at Shechem are also referred to as כָּל־קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל "the whole assembly of Israel" (v3). The Hebrew word used here for assembly is קָהָל. The term could be used to designate an assembly specially convoked, for war or invasion, for example, as

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[548] Tadmor, H. "Traditional institutions and the monarchy: Social and political tensions in the time of David and Solomon" In Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*. Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha. 1982. p 242.

it appears in Numbers 22: 4; Judges 20:2, 21:5-8; 1 Samuel 17:47; Ezekiel 16:40, or used with reference to the whole community of the people of Israel, as in Deuteronomy 23: 2 Numbers 16:3, 20:4; 1 Chronicles 28:8; Nehemiah 13:1, or more generally in the sense of "company", in reference to a multitude of people such as in Genesis 35:11, 28:3, 48:4.[549] It was suggested that the term could refer to a congregation as an organized body, a societal institution with regulatory responsibilities.[550] In the pre-monarchical period such power belonged to the 'Elders", who were heads of local communities. It seems that with the establishment of the monarchy the authority of the elders was weakened to the degree that the king's power increased, but appeal could still be made to them in a time of national emergency.[551] The agenda of the meeting, as well as the venue, give a hint to the identity of people referred to in this passage.

The venue of the meeting is שְׁכֶם .This word, meaning "shoulder", may refer to the location of this city at the eastern pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, placed as a neck between the shoulders.[552] Shechem was a site known for its early cultic importance. It had a significant record in Israelite tradition and held a special place among the northern tribes.[553] Events associated with Shechem that made it an important tribal place include: the covenant ceremony (Joshua 24); the story about Abimelech's attempt to establish his kingdom (Judges 9); the altar on Mount Ebal, just above Shechem and the stones with terms of the covenant instructed by Moses (Deuteuronomy.27) and implemented by Joshua (Joshua 8); the blessings and curses ritual (Deuteronomy 11); the narratives about the patriarchs Abraham (Genesis 12:6-7) and Jacob (Genesis 33:18-29). The northern tribes may not have approved of its being overshadowed by Jerusalem by the concentration of the cult in Jerusalem under David and Solomon. It was not by accident that Shechem was made the first capital of the northern kingdom after the secession. The northern tribes are to be understood to be the ones pushing for the meeting to be held at Shechem. The matter at stake was similar to that which, some years earlier,

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[549]Brown, Francis ; Driver, Samuel Rolles ; Briggs, Charles Augustus: *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, 2000, S. 874.
[550] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 347.
[551] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 242.
[552] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary*, p 303.
[553] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 346.

had brought the elders of the same people to Hebron, where they concluded a covenant with David (2 Samuel 5:1-3). It is logical to understand that this time, again, those who gathered at Shechem were mainly, if not exclusively, the elders representative of the northern tribes of Israel. The reported purpose of the assembly suggests this understanding.

The purpose of people's going to Shechem is expressed by the phrase לְהַמְלִיךְ אֹתוֹ *"to make him king"*. The causative form of the Hiphil indicates that the people are to perform the action of making Rehoboam king, while the infinitive specifies that this is the purpose of their coming to Shechem. The need for this ceremony has been explained against the traditional right of the people of making king the prince whom God had chosen, anointing him and paying homage to him.[554] That the people of Israel were involved in the king-making process is attested in the stories about the kings who reigned before Rehoboam. Rehoboam's situation seems not to be identical to any of the three Israelite kings who preceded him, however.

In the case of Saul, it is reported that all the tribes of Israel acclaimed a king chosen by Yahweh at their request (1 Samuel 8:1-21). In all the recorded traditions concerning the rise of Saul, he is portrayed in a position of strength, so that he does not go after the people; they are the ones who need him (1 Samuel 10:17-26). Although Saul arose to power when Israelite society was far from being united[555], he is not reported as a seeking separate coronation from different camps.

Closest to Rehoboam's situation is the case of David, who did not reign over the northern tribes until he had made a covenant with them. But in David's case there was a rival king whom the northern tribes had initially followed and David was not their king until he won their allegiance. Yet, even in this situation, as the narrator indicates, it was the people

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[554] Keil, C.F. and F.Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans. 1986, p 192.

[555] Merill, E. H. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament In Israel.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 1992, p 318; Heaton, E.W. *The Hebrew Kingdoms.* Oxford, U.K. Oxford University Press. 1968. p 1; De Vaux, R. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions.* London: Darton, Longman and Todd. 1961, p 95. These scholars assert that by the close of the era of the judges the Judah-Israel polarization was a *fait accompli* so that King Saul reigned rather over a dual monarchy than a united monarchy.

who needed David and came to look for him at his palace. Another explanation of Rehoboam's need to travel to Shechem is the argument that David's kingship had been dual – over Judah and over Israel – and it had to be ratified by elders of both regions.[556] Yet a ceremony of this kind is not mentioned in connection with Solomon's coronation.

The report about the coronation of Solomon in the succession narrative mentions only the event happening in Jerusalem. The biblical account does not mention anything like the king's need to seek a separate approval of the people outside Judah. [557] According to the biblical depiction, Solomon hardly made any public appearances before ascending to the throne. We hear nothing of possible negotiations with political bodies or representatives of various regions.[558] Even the tradition suggesting that Solomon went through the process of popular acclamation (1 Chronicles 29:22) mentions that this ceremony concerned the whole people, not separate tribes. It was argued that Solomon dispensed with the formality of negotiating the allegiance of the northern tribes, due to his elevation to co-regency with David, while the Hebron covenant had been still valid with David in his lifetime.[559] In any case, the succession narrative does not mention any incident related to Solomon's relation to the northern tribes. It is as if his coronation was smooth from that side. However, the apparent acquiescence of the northern tribes may not necessarily indicate that at this time they did not have serious complaints against the house of David. It may simply be that they were not strong enough to successfully challenge it. Their situation may be seen as analogous to that of the Hutu in Rwanda, in their submission to Tutsi regimes that oppressed them in the pre-colonial and colonial period, or that of the Tutsi voting for Hutu post-colonial regimes that discriminated against them.

Although the purpose of the assembly at Shechem is said to be the coronation of Rehoboam, the king's need to journey to Shechem arouses some suspicions in the mind of the reader with respect to the allegiance of the northern tribes to the new king. Keil,

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[556] Raymond, E. *et al*. eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Bangalore: Theological Publications in India. 2005. p 169.
[557] Carson, D. A. *et.al*. *New Bible Commentary*, p 351.
[558] Dietrich,W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literaure. 2007, p 184.
[559] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary,* p 304.

following Kimchi, saw in the choice of Shechem for the venue of their meeting an indication that the northern tribes sought an opportunity for transferring the government to Jeroboam. Instead of going to Jerusalem, they preferred Shechem which belonged to Ephraim, whilst Jeroboam was an Ephraimite.[560] This view concurs with the suggestion that the Shechem assembly had a mutinous character. Montgomery objects to such claims, arguing that if that was the case, the king should have taken proper military precautions.[561] For Gray, the gathering at Shechem was analogous to the situation in which Abner, on behalf of the tribes of the north, through their elders, approached David at Hebron (2 Samuel 3:17-21) to offer him kingship over the northern tribes.[562] Here he comes close to those who contend that Rehoboam, as a new king, needed to renew the covenant with representative of the tribes. Objecting to this view, Tadmor states:

> The conclusion of a covenant between the king and the people is actually mentioned only twice in the history of the united and the divided Monarchy. Once at the founding of the Davidic dynasty, when David – already king of Judah – was crowned at Hebron as king of all Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-3), and again at the restoration of the dynasty when the infant Jehoash was crowned after the Davidides had been almost decimated by Athaliah (2 Kings 11:17). Both cases were exceptional, since they both signified the beginning of a dynasty. We have no evidence, I submit, that a renewal of the covenant was necessary when the crown passed in a normal manner from father to son or when the people through the act of acclaiming יְחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ "long live the king" were inevitably supposed to confirm the royal heir upon accession to the throne.[563]

Montgomery's view that the discontented northern tribes had now the opportunity of making their bargain with the new king is better confirmed in the narrative than his contention that the hereditary rights of the Davidic dynasty were not yet established.[564] It can be observed that, from the rise of the monarchy, Israelite princes such as Jonathan, Ishbosheth, Mephiboshet, Absolom, Adonijah and Solomon are reported, each at a certain point in time, behaving as if their dynastic rights to inherit their fathers' thrones were granted. On the other hand, however, the people repeatedly showed their bias in favour of

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[560] Keil, C.F. and F.Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament,* p 192.
[561] Montgomery, J. A. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 249.
[562] Gray, J. *I&II Kings: A Commentary,* p 304.
[563] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 253.
[564] Montgomery, J. A. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 250.

the charismatic type of leadership, either by objecting to automatic dynastic succession that implied departure from the charismatic style of leadership, as in the case of Eli's sons and Samuel's sons, or by supporting military kings such as Saul and David. Solomon had ascended to power through court intrigues and had reigned as an Assyrian monarch.[565] The people did not want to see in the reign of Rehoboam a repeat of what his father's rule had been. Montgomery was of the opinion that the people wanted to negotiate a better deal before they could acclaim the new king.

Tadmor has suggested that Rehoboam's pilgrimage to Shechem was an expression of good will on his part, an act of appeasement in an attempt to calm the growing dissatisfaction.[566] But the narrator is not overt about Rehoboam's pre-knowledge of the people's discontent. What the narrative does suggest is that the northern tribes were not bound by the apparent approval that Rehoboam may have enjoyed in Jerusalem and in Judah and the legitimacy of his rule over the north required the acquiescence of the northern tribes. Their consent was to be expressed through a coronation ceremony. The people's intention to negotiate a deal transpires through their precaution to send for Jeroboam whom they made part of the negotiating team.

5.2.4.1.3 Jeroboam

Jeroboam was introduced in the preceding account concerning the end of the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 11:26-38). Ahijah's prophecy in this passage constitutes a prophetic announcement of the division of the kingdom and provides the ideological groundwork for understanding the event, as well as the consequences of the division.[567] In this story, Jeroboam is described as one of the adversaries that God raised against Solomon, punishing him for his apostasy. Ahijah's prophecy promising Jeroboam the throne in Israel made him a rival and enemy of David's house, so that he was obliged to flee for his life and stay in exile in Egypt. Having been promised the throne, he was persecuted by the incumbent king, just as David suffered under Saul.

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[565] Römer, T. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History*, p 102.
[566] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 253.
[567] Mullen, Jr, E. T. *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, p 258.

The text reports, in verse 2, that Jeroboam received the news and he remained in Egypt. The verb used here וַיֵּשֶׁב from יָשַׁב means, he sat, he remained, or he dwelt. This suggests that the news reached him while he was in Egypt. The Hebrew verb כִּשְׁמֹעַ "when he heard" is not provided with a direct object. The English translations supply the pronoun "this" or "it", implying that the news that reached Jeroboam was about the Shechem assembly mentioned in verse 1. This reading does not match with the rest of the narrative that makes Jeroboam a participant at the Shechem assembly from the beginning. Since Jeroboam was at Shechem at the beginning of the meeting, the news that reached him while he was still in Egypt cannot be about the meeting, but probably about the death of Solomon. Upon hearing this news, he returned home. It is from home that he was called to come to the assembly (verse 3a). This reading is obtained by using the verb שׁוּב, meaning "he turned back", or "he returned", instead of יָשַׁב meaning "he sat", "he dwelt" "he remained" used in this text.[568] Jeroboam has now surreptitiously returned from exile to his homeland – a cloud on the distant horizon – or an agent waiting for the moment to ripen. For the reader who knows about Ahijah's prophecy, the ambiguity of Jeroboam's intentions in coming to Shechem conveys mystery and arouses expectations, but the narrator reveals nothing more at this point.[569]

In the present account, Jeroboam is introduced alongside the assembly of Israel, but he is not just part of the crowd. He is singled out and identified by his name, so as to highlight the importance of his presence at the event. Jeroboam is well known to the people as a northern leader under whom they worked when he supervised their labour (1 Kings 11:28). They know him as a גִּבּוֹר חַיִל i "man of valour", the same description used for Gideon the Judge (Judges 6:12) and Naaman the Aramean commander (2 Kings 5:1). Jeroboam is described as a man endowed with qualities that the people had been looking for in their early charismatic deliverers. His former position as a supervisor of the hated labour had not affected his relations with the people, who still trust him enough to make him a member of the delegation charged with the mission to negotiate with the king.

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[568] This is the option retained in the version of this story reported in the tradition of 2 Chronicles 10: 2 and in the Septuagint 11:43.
[569] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 134.

Once the protagonists are introduced, the setting is established and a conflict can be expected.

5.2.4.2 The king meets the northern tribes: 3b-5

The first scene at Shechem brings the characters together. Besides Jeroboam, the attention of the narrator is first on the congregation of Israel. It is to be noted that, despite the attention drawn to Jeroboam at the beginning of the story, he quickly gives way to the people, who are the real protagonists. It is the congregation that takes the lead and speaks first. They are the protagonists who speak and Rehoboam, the antagonist, responds. Opening the discussions, they lay down the terms on which Rehoboam can be crowned and rule over them. They feel that they have been oppressed by the previous regime under Solomon. This complaint reminds the reader of Samuel's warning about the monarchy (1 Samuel 8:11- 18). The people are crying out as Samuel said they would do, asking the king to lighten the service required from them, a service which, to them, is a yoke.

The word ע ֹל meaning yoke, normally referring to cattle, is usually used figuratively to mean servitude. This kind of service has been defined as the obligation to perform periodically certain services for one's landlord or for the state.[570] Its use with reference to burdens and service imposed by a superior is attested in such passages as Genesis 27:40; Deuteronomy 28:48; Isaiah 14:25; 47:6; Jeremy 27:8; Ezekiel 34:27.[571] In this case, what was referred to as a yoke is evidently both taxes and enforced labour imposed on the people by Solomon's economic and social policies, previously mentioned (1Kings 4:1-28; 5:13-18). The representatives of the northern tribes feel that their people have suffered under the Jerusalem regime and condition their loyalty to the end of the oppression. It is around this question of service and loyalty that the tension is built. The people have presented their request, but the king has no answer for them. They need to wait three days before they can know the king's position. The conflict created is

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[570] Mendelson. "Sate Slavery in Ancient Palestine,"BASOR 85 (1943) 14-27, quoted in Soggin J. A. "Compulsory Labor under David and Solomon" in Ishida, T. *Studies in the period of David and Solomon*, p 175.
[571] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 347.

therefore not solved immediately. With the adjournment of the meeting, the scene is closed, the "curtains" are drawn but the plot continues as the people are told to wait for three days.

It is sometimes suggested to interpret the phrase "לְכוּ עֹד שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים" (literally: depart for three days) in the sense of "a short time", just like the English "a couple of days". The phrase is thought to have that meaning in such verses as Genesis 22:4; 34:25; 1 Kings 3:18; 2 Kings 20:5, 8; Esther 5:1.[572]   There is no reason, however, to prefer the rendering "a short time",[573] especially as it is said that the people knew exactly when to come back without needing to be re-invited. The tradition followed in 2 Chronicles explains that they were asked not to "depart for three days" but to "come back in three days", which they did. Meanwhile, the king finds it necessary to consult his advisors. The negotiations are adjourned, the protagonists separate, the tension is relieved, but the conflict is not solved. The narrative introduces the next scene.

5.2.4.3 The king consults with his advisers: 6-11

In the next scene, a new setting is introduced. The people who have expressed their feelings and presented their request are now withdrawn, waiting for the king to come up with a response to unblock the situation. The narrator and his readers follow Rehoboam, whose attitude is expected to determine the outcome of the conflict. The focus is now principally on Rehoboam. Having remained passive in the first scene, not much is known about him thus far. In the second scene he is going to act and interact with people and respond to the challenge, allowing the narrator to display his character.

Rehoboam did not negotiate with the concerned people; he prefers to discuss the matter with his chosen advisors. The verb וַיִּוָּעַץ is the Niphal form of יָעַץ, meaning "advise", "counsel". It conveys the idea of "consult together" or "exchange counsel" and is here to be rendered with "he consulted" or "he took counsel". The same rendering is understood in its use elsewhere as in 2 Kings 6:8; 1 Chronicles 13:1; 2 Chronicles 10: 6, 8; 2

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[572] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 347.
[573] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 347.

Chronicles 32:3; Isaiah 40:14 and generally the advice is being sought from people who are in a position to express a valuable opinion, but just an opinion.[574] This is different from taking a matter to a body for deliberation and decision.

The advice is sought first from the "*elders*". The Hebrew word הַזְּקֵנִים can be interpreted as "the elders" or "the old men" and can refer to age or to status. It has been suggested that these people could be understood to be an "advisory council", with roots reaching to the pre-monarchical period; that they were "patriarchal notables" who "served in an advisory capacity".[575] In the pre-monarchical period reference is often made to elders who intervene at a time of crisis. The elders of Gilead appointed Jephtah to lead the campaign against the Ammonites (Judges 11). It was also the elders of Israel who made a covenant with David in Hebron (2 Samuel 5:1-3). In this story, the elders are not called upon to make a decision. Besides being described as those who had served Rehoboam's father Solomon, the elders are contrasted with הַיְלָדִים ; "the youngsters". The emphasis is on their age, experience[576] and wisdom. The narrator's interest is obviously not in their current function. His point seems to be that there was wisdom available for Rehoboam, if he had been wise enough to make good use of it. The elders' view on the matter was that the king should heed the request and become a servant of the people.

The noun עֶבֶד, translated "servant" can also mean "slave" and the Qal form of its cognate verb עָבַד means to "serve" or to "be a slave". It is not necessary to understand the advice as meaning that the king should forget about his status and his authority to submit to the orders of the people. The king is advised to serve the people simply by kindly answering them and speaking good words to them (וְדִבַּרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם דְּבָרִים טוֹבִים). He is advised to consider the welfare of the people. The phrase דְּבָרִים טוֹבִים is sometimes understood as implying more than just good words and should rather be interpreted as "good

[574] Wallace, R S. *Readings in Kings*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans. 1995, p 79.
[575] Malamat, A. "Origins of State Craft in the Israelite Monarchy". *BA* 3: 163-98, p 171-81, quoted in Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 347.
[576] Walvoord, J. F. and Roy B. Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor. 1985. p 511.

conditions". The elders are advising the king to grant relief to the people.[577] From their experience, they know that there is another way of ruling the people, by serving them instead of enslaving them. They knew the old times, when charismatic leaders were appointed to deliver the people. Through the voice of the wise elders the narrator seems to address his critique against a monarchical regime that enslaves the people instead of serving them.

The elders' position is interesting. These are the people understood to have served the regime now indicted by the northern tribes. They can be perceived as people who were, in some way, involved in the conception or implementation of policies now questioned by the people or had benefited from the people's heavy service. The fact that Rehoboam could approach them for advice implies that they were not among those who were complaining. In the Rwandan context of tribal politics, such people are likely to be members of the king's own tribe, region or political organization. Yet here they choose to support the plight of the oppressed people, regardless of where they come from, or the social group they belong to. Unfortunately, as was observed with many peaceful Rwandans in times of socio-political polarization, despite all their wisdom and good will, the peaceful wise do not have the power to impose their view. The king simply ignores their advice.

The verb וַיַּעֲזֹ֑ב is the Qal imperfect form of עָזַב meaning "leave", forsake"or "loose". In the context of this account, the forsaking is by "failing to follow, obey advice, wisdom" as in Proverbs 2:13, 4:2, 6; 10:17; 15:10; 27:10. This points to the foolishness of the king, who fails to make good use of the wisdom that could have brought harmony in his kingdom. Rehoboam is not pleased with the advice from the elders. Although Rehoboam has not yet announced his position, the narrator considers that the king's decision to seek further advice implies his rejection of the advice already received from the elders. He turns to the youngsters.

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[577] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 349.

The word הַיְלָדִים is the plural form of יֶלֶד meaning "child", "boy", "son" or "youth". In the context of this story it refers to young men who grew up with Rehoboam. It was suggested to understand הַיְלָדִים as a technical term referring to a special group of youngsters raised at court, the sons of officials and courtiers.[578] All that is said is that these were young men who grew up with Rehoboam and were obviously his contemporaries. According to 1 Kings 14: 21, Rehoboam was 41 when he acceded to the throne.[579] Those of the second group of advisors were about that age. Compared to the elders, who had served his father, they could be called young men, but certainly not boys.[580] In the writer's view they deserve this latter description probably because their advice is so naive.[581] They are Rehoboam's age-mates and the only regime they knew was that of Solomon. They are therefore contrasted with the experienced elders, who knew about the charismatic style of leadership where it was the leaders who served the people and not the other way round. The inexperienced youth, who knew only the privileged life of the monarchy, advised Rehoboam to sound even harsher than his father. The youths' advice is expressed in a pithy remark, with the ring of a known proverb or, at least, makes use of imagery that usually accompanies proverbial sayings[582]: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins".

The phrase "my little finger" found in many English versions is the rendering of the Hebrew קְטָנִּי (literary "my little"). It has for cognate the verb קָטֹן meaning "be small" or "be insignificant". Used as an adjective קָטָן means "small", "young"or "insignificant". Without the word "finger" supplied in this phrase the phrase could simply read "my little thing". It was even suggested to read "my penis"![583] This rendering would make the king's answer more arrogant and insulting. To clarify the meaning of the riddle the king is advised to add not only that the yoke will be heavier but that discipline will be harsher.

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[578] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* p 348.
[579] The Septuagint in its additional narration about the division of the kingdom states in 1Kings 12:24a that Rehoboam was 16 years old when he succeeded his father to the throne.
[580] It was suggested that the writer found these young advisors deserving to be called children because of their naïve advice. See Carson, D. A. *et al*. *New Bible Commentary*, p 352.
[581]Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. 1 Kings 12:1.
[582] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 349.
[583] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 349.

I will discipline you with "*scorpions*" (verse11). The noun עַקְרַבִּים "scorpions" is from the singular עַקְרָב Here it refers to a barbed whip with its barbs likened to the sting of a scorpion. The contrast between the שׁוֹטִים (whip, scourge) used by Solomon and the scorpions עַקְרַבִּים to be used by his son indicates the extent to which Rehoboam is advised to worsen the situation of the people.

Rehoboam's consultation of his advisors is reported as a dialogue. Dialogue and quotations contribute to characterization and to the development of the plot.[584] In the present account the dialogue between Rehoboam and his advisors is replete with repetitions that enhance the style, the flavour and the impact of the narrative.[585] The request of the people expressed in the first scene (verse 4) is repeated in Rehoboam's query to the youth (verse 9) and in the youth's advice to Rehoboam (verse 10).The main expressions used in the youth's advice (verse 11) are repeated in Rehoboam's answer to the people (verse 14) and these two verses repeat the key words used in the people's request (verse 4). Each time the narrator takes up a phrase or motif of a precedent verse to which he sometimes makes some additions as the action develops. The effect of all this repetition is to recapitulate continuously the very first scene. It is a constant presence in our hearing the deliberations with Rehoboam's camp. [586] The dialogue and the quotations are also used in characterization, as shall be seen below.

5.2.4.4 The king's answer to the people: 12-15

This scene brings the protagonists back together. On the appointed day Jeroboam and all the people are present. This time the narrator's focus is on Jeroboam and the people. It is they who set the scene in motion, while Rehoboam is left to react to their firm initiative. Jeroboam and the people have not changed anything in their initial request. They have come to hear what Rehoboam has to say about it. The reader has an idea of what the answer is going to be because the narrator has helped him/her to follow the consultation process but the people do not know and the reader does not know how the people are

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[584] Chisholm Jr. R. B. *Interpreting the Historical Books*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel. 2006. p 57.
[585] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 135.
[586] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 136.

going to react to the king's answer. The tension had been relieved to some degree as the king promised to examine the people's request. There is now uncertainty for the people waiting for the answer and for the reader waiting to see the people's reaction to the king's address.

The king's address is harsh. The harshness of the answer is not only in the tone of the speech but also in the content of the address. The adjective קָשָׁה normally means "hard", or "severe". With reference to language it means "rough", "rude" or "severe". Here it is used to qualify the verb וַיַּעַן "and (the king) answered". The literal translation supplies "things" to make it "hard things" this adjective is also used adverbially after "speak" (Gen 42:7, 30) or after "answer" 1Samuel 20:10; 1Kings 14:6). The idea is that of a rude or rough language. Although Rehoboam acknowledged that the yoke imposed on the people by his father was heavy, his own intention is to make it even heavier. The metric form of his answer highlights its sarcasm:

> *My father made your yoke heavy,*
> *But I will add to your yoke:*
> *My father disciplined you with whips,*
> *But I will discipline you with scorpions.*

The rhythm of this poem appears better in its Hebrew form:

אָבִי הִכְבִּיד אֶת־עֻלְּכֶם

וַאֲנִי אוֹסִיף עַל־עֻלְּכֶם

אָבִי יִסַּר אֶתְכֶם בַּשּׁוֹטִים

וַאֲנִי אֲיַסֵּר אֶתְכֶם בָּעַקְרַבִּים

The king's language is rude enough, even with his omission of the ruder metaphoric expression suggested to him by his young advisers: "my little thing (or my penis) will be greater than my father's loins". Noticeable is the absence of any motivation whatsoever

to justify the need to increase both the corvée and the discipline. Rehoboam is characterized as a despot who does not indulge in dialogue with the people. Even when they initiate the dialogue, Rehoboam turns his back, preferring to exchange ideas with his advisors, but not with the people. Although he admits that the people were submitted to a heavy yoke under his father's regime he has no apology for that and is not willing to change anything. He is a monarch before whom the people have no other option but to submit.

For the narrator, Rehoboam's foolish answer does not simply result from bad advisers. It has a divine origin and has an ultimate purpose as he indicates in his comment. The "thing" was from the Lord. "This thing" is rendered from "סִבָּה" meaning "turn of affairs", "round about" or "turn-about". The crisis is described as a "סִבָּה" from Yahweh. Here it is to be understood as the "turn of affairs", an "unhappy development"[587]. It is Yahweh who is punishing disobedience and this is in fulfilment of prophecy. Like later, in the cases of the fall of Samaria and the destruction of Jerusalem, there is a divine purpose fulfilled by means of an "apparently" mere human action. This theology pervades the Deuteronomistic history. In each case, Yahweh intervenes to judge the disobedience of the king (or kings). In the present case, Yahweh's judgment had been pronounced through the prophet Ahijah against King Solomon. Ahijah's prophecy of judgment designated Jeroboam as the instrument by which the judgment would be carried out.

In this narrative, a twofold explanation is provided for the direct causes of the division of the kingdom. There is, on the one hand, Yahweh's overriding will enunciated in prophecy, a favourite theme for the Deuteronomistic historian and, on the other hand, Rehoboam's obstinacy, dramatically contrasted as his despotism over others' will for freedom.[588] The narrative also directs a critique against Solomon and, through him, against the whole dynastic monarchical style of leadership which enslaves the people

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[587] The negative connotation of this term is noticed in the Swahili language where the word "msiba" means "misfortune". Swahili is remotely related to Hebrew through Arabic.
[588] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 135.

instead of serving them. However, the narrative reserves a greater share of responsibility to Rehoboam for the division.

5.2.4.4.1 Rehoboam

Throughout the narrative, the overall characterization of Rehoboam is negative. His weaknesses as a leader are exposed from the first scene. Rehoboam has to travel all the way from Jerusalem to Shechem to be crowned king, but he has no control over the coronation ceremony. He wants to rule over the people, yet he has no answers to questions that the people ask. Instead of discussing issues with the concerned people he turns his back on them and at the end imposes his position on them. He works indecisively, reacting throughout to the firm initiative of the people. He takes a distance from the people and identifies himself with the privileged youth, as can be seen by his inclusive question "what shall *we* answer… (Verse 9)?" With this description, the narrator introduces Rehoboam as an incompetent despot.

More of Rehoboam's character is revealed in his dialogue and interaction with his advisors. The elders who advise him observe that Rehoboam's relations with the people would improve if he would accept being a servant. In him they saw an autocrat, not a servant of the people. In advising him to speak good words they may have noticed, as the narrative suggests, that he was rather arrogant and he later confirms it by his speech. The hortatory discourse of Rehoboam's young advisors reveals their level of influence on the king. They tell him what to do: "Thus you should speak to the people…thus you shall say to them…" (Verse 10). He is swayed by his young advisors who go as far as dictating to him word by word the answer to give to the people. Frequent repetitions in Rehoboam's dialogue with his advisors focuses and sharpens the characterisation of Rehoboam as arrogant, brash, politically naïve and insensitive.[589] Repetition has also a contrastive effect: the petitioners' solicitous courtesy etched against Rehoboam's possibly obscene, certainly derisive, dismissal.[590]

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[589] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 136.
[590] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 136.

Rehoboam is too naïve to worry about the people's capability to cause any harm to him and his regime. Insensitive to the conditions of his subjects he prefers intimidation over negotiation and dialogue. Rehoboam is portrayed as a fool who cannot appreciate the socio-political situation of his state so as to come up with an appropriate response. He is wrong in rejecting the council of his wiser advisors, in following and preferring the advice of the arrogant younger advisors and he is wrong in sending Adoram to the angry people. A poor diplomat, he went to his coronation but only managed to alienate his people, pushing them to crown his rival. At the end he carries the responsibility for the division of the kingdom. He cannot listen until Yahweh himself confronts him, urging him to refrain from a violent response to his defeat. Having failed to appreciate the implications of the people's discontent, Rehoboam opts for an attitude that does not bring the relief expected by the people. He does not resolve the crisis but, instead, he aggravates it.

The narrative exposes Rehoboam as an autocrat who exemplifies the negative aspects of the monarchy described by Samuel in 1 Samuel 8. He does not want to serve the people but wants the people to serve him and wants to enjoy economic privileges at their expense. Through him it is the dynastic-monarchical style of leadership which is criticized. The tendency for a small privileged group to enjoy economic privileges to the exclusion of the people is exposed. The people's reaction to Rehoboam's answer pushes the tension to paroxysm.

5.2.4.5 The people react to the king's intransigence 16-17
The last scene of the main unit of the narrative focuses on the disappointment and anger of the people. The narrative presents the people answering in unison. Their plural voice is contrasted with the singular voice of Rehoboam. The people understand that the king is not sensitive to their plight, but has resolved to perpetuate their oppression. He has failed to solve the crisis, but the people have their own solution namely, separation. Their answer to the king makes it clear that they do not want to have anything to do with him anymore. As if they wanted to pay back the sarcasm that characterized the king's answer

the people express their reaction through the lyric outcry the earlier rebels had used against the same Davidic dynasty:

What portion have we in David?
Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse:
To your tents, O Israel:

To which an additional line is added:

Now see to your own house, David.

From the Hebrew:

מַה־לָּנוּ חֵלֶק בְּדָוִד
וְלֹא־נַחֲלָה בְּבֶן־יִשַׁי
לֹא הֶלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַתָּה רְאֵה בֵיתְךָ דָּוִד

The rhetorical question "מַה־לָּנוּ חֵלֶק בְּדָוִד;" is generally translated "what share do we have in David?" The word חֵלֶק means "portion", "tract", "territory", and is often used for "share of booty" (Genesis 14:24; Numbers 31:36; 1 Samuel 30:24), or a portion of food (Leviticus 6:16; Deuteronomy 18:8). These terms are considered as highly significant in an agrarian society as terms for inheritance.[591] In the context of this chorus, the term would connote the idea of "vested interest". This is stressed further by the statement of the second verse of the chorus, paralleling the first one: "וְלֹא־נַחֲלָה בְּבֶן־יִשַׁי" The central word in the second statement is "נַחֲלָה" generally meaning "possession", "property"or "inheritance" (Numbers 18:23; Deuteronomy 10:9; Psalm 16:6; Ruth 4:6; Joshua 14:3, 19:51), but sometimes also meaning "share" or "portion" (Isaiah 54:17; Psalm 37:18;

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[591] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 249.

127:3). The people mean that there is no benefit to be expected from their clinging to the house of David. Rehoboam is seen here as the representative of his forefathers. The use of "בְּבֶן־יִשַׁי" (in the son of Jesse) instead of "בְּדָוִד" (in David) in the first line as the use of, "נַחֲלָה" (share) instead of "חֵלֶק" (portion) in the second line may be a form of repetition for emphasis, as often used in poetry. However, the fact that the people, in rejecting Rehoboam, make reference to his grandfather and great-grandfather, reveals not only their sensitivity to kinship ties but especially their rejection of not just Rehoboam but of the Davidic dynasty.

The people rebel against Rehoboam and reject the rule of his family. The negation of any benefit that the northern people could expect in return for their allegiance to the house of David is an argument to support the fact that they do not have any binding obligation towards that house. Therefore, the people who do not have anything to gain in the coronation of Rehoboam are justified in denying him this privilege; they can go "each to his own tent" and forget about this king who ignored them and took them for granted.

The Hebrew word translated as "tent" is "אֹהֶל". This term was sometimes used for "dwelling" or "home" (Psalm 91:10; Judges 19: 9; Daniel 11:45). It is not therefore necessary to understand that the people were urged to go to some tents temporarily erected to host the tribal representatives during the Shechem assembly.[592] The same slogan was used in the incident of Sheba's rebellion. At this time the term "אֹהֶל" could not refer to a temporary shelter because the context does not make room for that. Here the expression can be understood as a slogan telling the people that they can forget about the coronation ceremony and go home. The king is told that he should look after his own house.

The Qal imperative> "רְאֵה" is from the verb רָאָה "see" "look at" or "look after". It is used in Genesis 39:23 in the sense of "care for" or "attend to". A suggested ironic meaning may be: look who is left with you and over what sort of house you will rule, now that you

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[592] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 349.

will not rule over the house of Israel![593] The last line of the chorus "look at your house, O David", which is not found in the same chorus in the case of Sheba's revolt, seems to make it clear that the people are not rejecting Rehoboam only, but his entire lineage.

The secessionist chorus, with its tribal tone, displays shallow socio-political unity in the "United Kingdom of Israel". The people's reaction is not directed against Rehoboam only. Beyond and through him, the northerners revolt against his father and his grandfather, showing that they had never really been wholeheartedly committed to the hegemony of David's house. In fact, the repetition of the same slogan thrown at his grandfather somehow connects the two rebellions. Rehoboam's problem appears to be reminiscent of a conflict older than himself and even older than his father.s regime and which, according to the narrative, neither David nor Solomon's regime had totally calmed. Commenting on this chorus, Keil states:

> These words with which Sheba had once preached rebellion in the time of David (2 Samuel 20:1), gives expression to the deep-rooted aversion which was cherished by these tribes towards the Davidic monarchy, and that in so distinct and unvarnished a manner that we may clearly see that there were deeper causes for the secession than the pretended oppression of Solomon's government; that its real foundation was the ancient jealousy of the tribes which had been only suppressed for the time by David and Solomon but had not been entirely eradicated.[594]

In the first rebellion, against Rehoboam's grandfather David, the conflict arises from a dispute between the "men of Judah" and the "men of Israel". The former argue that their closer kinship with the king gives them some kind of pre-eminence, while the latter complain about being sidelined, despite being the majority (2 Samuel 19:41-43). The deeper causes of the conflicts alluded to in Keil's comment were recurrently expressed in tribal terms, but they were deeply economic. They had everything to do with the struggle for the control and the distribution of resources. King Saul, in his time, was overt about this in his earlier support-seeking argument: "Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundred?"

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[593] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* p 349.
[594] Keil, C.F. and F.Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament,* p 196.

(1 Samuel 22:8). Keil may not be necessarily right in qualifying the people's complaint against oppressive policies as a "pretext" and their historic jealousy as the "real cause" of the conflict. In the narrative, the wise advisers, who understand better the socio-political realities of the nation, vindicate the people. In the context of a scramble for the control of resources that follows tribal lines, as happened in Israel and in Rwanda, it is exclusion from privileges, real or the threat of it, that fuels jealousy, not the other way round.

At Shechem, the infuriated northerners declared that Rehoboam should see to his own house. Reference here is not to the house of Rehoboam but to the house of David. The reader, who is aware of the ideology in Nathan's prophecy about establishing David's house forever, understands that it is the Davidic dynasty which is referred to. The same people who submitted to David when they perceived him as a charismatic leader (2 Samuel 5:2) now dissociate themselves from a monarchical-dynastic regime of his house which exploits them instead of serving them. The narrative confirms and fulfils the predictive discourse of 1 Samuel 8, which strongly opposed the introduction of a monarchical regime in Israel.

The northerners insinuate that since Judah has enjoyed preferred treatment they had interest in clinging to the regime that favours them; as for northern Israel, they were free from any obligation to the house of David.[595]   In this conflict it is once again surmised that the people of Judah side with their king, without any sympathy for the exploited northerners. The message from the disappointed northerners seems to go like this: Stay with your historic supporters who have a share in the privileges offered by the regime and have nothing to do with us anymore! The people act as they say, opting for separation as the way to resolve the crisis. They departed to their tents without crowning Rehoboam. This is a twist in the plot.

The departure of the people to their tents (verse16) is paralleled by the departure of Rehoboam (implied in 17), who returns to Jerusalem to reign over Judah. This clause,

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[595] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 254.

"Israel departed to their tents" (verse 16), may be seen as proleptic,[596] being inserted here by the narrator who knew the end of the story he was telling. It is followed with a recapitulative statement in verse 17: "But Jeroboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah". All happens as the people said. They controlled the situation from the beginning. Rehoboam had no authority to impose his position on them and their position prevails.

The people who actually remain faithful to Rehoboam are here defined not explicitly by tribal identification but following their geographical location. They are said to be "the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah". This description makes room for the inclusion in this smaller kingdom of people who, though not belonging to the tribe of Judah, inhabit the territory of Judah. The narrator seems not to be interested in specifying the identity of the people who remained loyal to Rehoboam. His point is that the majority of the tribes rejected the Davidic dynasty and the rejection was final. As the protagonists separate, the tension that had mounted with Rehoboam's response is now relieved. But the conflict is not yet over. The epilogue that follows comprises a number of stories reported to have followed the failed negotiations.

5.2.4.6 Epilogue to narrative 17-24

A number of events are reported to have followed the rebellion of the northern tribes against the Jerusalem regime. The first one, which is also an expression of that rebellion, is the stoning of Adoram (18-19), the second is the coronation of Jeroboam (20) and the last one is Rehoboam's reprisal plans which were vetoed by Yahweh (21-24).

5.2.4.6.1 The stoning of Adoram (18-19)

Rehoboam appears to be ill-prepared for the reaction of the people. He had come to Shechem to be confirmed as king, but now the events were taking an unplanned course. He feels that he should intervene, but this time not in person but through a representative. The officer sent to try and calm the situation is named Adoram. A man of this name had held the same position under the reign of David (2 Samuel 20:24). Under King Solomon,

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[596] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* p 349.

the one occupying a similar function is called Adoniram (1 Kings 4:6), but the one sent by Rehoboam is Adoram (1 Kings 11:18), or Hadoram in the tradition followed in 2 Chronicles 10:18. These seem to be variants of the one same name.

The forced labour that Adoram is said to have been supervising is named מַס Though often translated "task-work", "forced labour" or even "selfdom", מַס is usually used to refer to occasional work that does not involve the status of permanent serfdom. This more degrading labour, to which Israelites could not be subjected, is referred to as מַס עֹבֵד. The levy that King Solomon imposed on the people of Israel is מַס (1 Kings 5:27), different from the מַס עֹבֵד he imposed on non-Israelites (1 Kings 9:21). The temporal character of this forced labour did not curb its oppressive weight on the Israelites. What the narrator says is that this was an exploitative forced labour.

The mandate given to Adoram is not clarified. Was he sent for a second round of negotiations? Was he charged to go and enforce the decision of the king to maintain and even increase both labour and discipline? It has been suggested that Adoram was actually sent to explain the distinction between the occasional corvée which might be levied on Israel and the perpetual liability of the non-Israelites.[597] There is no evidence to support this claim, however, especially as it is nowhere stated that Rehoboam ever agreed to make the yoke lighter.

Even if Rehoboam's aim was to negotiate with the rebel tribes and pacify the assembly, the choice of Adoram itself has been regarded as tactless[598] and a mark of lack of political sensitivity.[599] Placing affairs in the hands of the man who was in charge of forced labour was, at best, a highly provocative act.[600] In his position of commissioner of the corvée, Adoram is the one who had been implementing the oppressive policies and, in that capacity, he is likely to have been unpopular. In this narrative Adoram is simply a representative of structural oppression and the intervention of such a character in this

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[597] Gray, J. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. p 307.
[598] Gray, J. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. p 307.
[599] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 350.
[600]Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary*, S. 1 Ki 12:1.

narrative highlights Rehoboam's preoccupation with his economic lifestyle, which he does not want to lose. He is not there to negotiate, since throughout the story there is no place for negotiation with the people. The reception reserved to him by the people confirms this perception.

The stoning of Adoram is to be perceived as an expression of the people's resistance to oppression. It sent a clear message to the king that Adoram represented. It was not only his throne which was threatened but also his life was in danger. Rehoboam's reaction is described with the use of the verb הִתְאַמֵּץ a Hitpael form of אָמֵץ normally meaning "be stout", "be strong"," be bold"or "be alert". The Hitpael use is attested elsewhere with the sense of being determined (Ruth 1:18). In this account the verb may be rendered with "make oneself alert" or "make haste". It was argued that the verb does not indicate so much the haste with which Rehoboam mounted his chariot as his rallying of his faculties to do so.[601] Maybe it is better to agree that both aspects are included. In any case, Rehoboam's hasty return to Jerusalem is contrasted with the people's departure in dignity. He threatened to discipline the people, but it is they who discipline him and he flees in fear.

The king's hasty return to Jerusalem marks the end of his control over the northern territory. The rejection of Rehoboam is reported as a rebellion. The qal imperfect וַיִּפְשְׁעוּ from פָּשַׁע (to transgress, to revolt, to rebel) means that they rebelled. The verb is here used in the sense of violating a political obligation.[602] This may further indicate that, in rejecting Jeroboam, the people did not follow any existing constitutional avenue. They rebelled. The secession was a revolutionary act. According to the narrator, the rejection of Rehoboam was expressed and understood as a rebellion בְּבֵית דָוִד; "against the house of David". This may indicate that the reign of both Solomon and Rehoboam had always been regarded as a continuation of the reign of the house of David. The people rebelled not only against the obduracy of Rehoboam but also against the hegemony of the house of David. The extension of the rejection to the whole house of David and the emphatic

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[601] Gray, J. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. p 307.
[602] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 350.

link between David and Judah added both a tribalist and a dynastic connotation to the rejection. The narrator's own comment is that the rebellion was effective and had a long-lasting effect. The secession was materialized by the coronation of Jeroboam. This unplanned coronation is another twist in the plot.

5.2.4.6.2 The coronation of Jeroboam (verse 20)

The expression וַיְהִי often translated "and it come to pass" usually introduces an episode or scene by providing a background for the story to follow.[603] This introductory clause does not inform about how much time elapsed from the murder of Adoram to the coronation of Jeroboam. The juxtaposition of these events makes them form one story. The people's precaution to call Jeroboam and to associate him with the negotiation process and his coronation, subsequent to the failure of the negotiation, have been interpreted as an indication that the people came to Shechem with an alternative leader and that plotting had been involved in the rebellion.[604] Objecting to this view, however, Tadmor has this to say:

> There is no allusion in 1 Kings 12 that the assembly intended to displace the Davidites, less to establish a new dynasty. All we can conclude from this source is that the coronation of Jeroboam was subject to a condition – politely but firmly phrased – and which stands in stark contrast to Rehoboam's arrogant reply – that he should proclaim a reform alleviating the burden of the corvée.[605]

This episode shifts the focus from the people's rejection of Rehoboam to a report about the people's coronation of Jeroboam. The coronation of Jeroboam was not the object of the account of the Shechem assembly. It is reported as a corollary.[606] It is reported that, after Rehoboam's debacle, all Israel heard about the return of Jeroboam. The infinitive construct כִּשְׁמֹעַ can be translated "upon hearing", suggesting that the people acted after hearing. According to this tradition, the news about Jeroboam should have reached the people still assembled at Schechem, as it is implied in the statement they sent and summoned him to the assembly.

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[603] Chisholm Jr. *Interpreting the Historical books*, p 37.
[604] Walvoord, J. F.and R. B. Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p 511.
[605] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 254.
[606] Schenker, A. "Jeroboam and the Division of the Kingdom." p 227.

The Hiphil form in the sentence וַיַּמְלִיכוּ literally meaning "and they caused him to reign", is translated "and they made him king". The statement here confers to Jeroboam a passive role, unlike his characterisation in verses 2 and 3. In contrast with Rehoboam, who attempted to impose his rule on the people, Jeroboam is chosen by all Israel, summoned by them and crowned by them (verse 20). The people reject the autocratic, non-elected Rehoboam and crown the popularly elected Jeroboam. The coronation of Jeroboam sounds like a rejection of the monarchic-dynastic style of leadership and a reversion to the charismatic style of leadership.

It is hypothesised that in the coronation of Jeroboam, the assembly acted as a political body invested with legislative and judicial duties and that the scene in the text, confers legitimacy on Jeroboam.[607] To this it can be objected that the behaviour of the assembly could be legitimate only if, in the then existing politico-administrative structure, the assembly was a recognized organ invested with constitutional power to act as they reportedly did. Rehoboam's attitude shows that he was not mindful of any constitutional power held by the assembly. The event could rather be qualified as a revolution in some way analogous to the Hutu revolution in Rwanda in 1960, when they abolished the monarchy. They organized themselves to do away with a dictatorial and oppressive regime imposed on them and replace it with a regime they chose.

The account is emphatic in stressing that there was none that followed the house of David except the tribe of Judah only. The obvious translation of tribal kinship into political allegiance is easily understood in Rwanda and in most parts of Africa. This unswerving support of the regime is guaranteed only from those who enjoy its privileges and do not suffer its oppression. The emphasis brought by "only", or "alone" in this statement, referring to the "house of Judah" diverges from what is stated in verses 17, 21 and 23,

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[607] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p353 quoting Milgrom, J. "Priestly Terminology and the political and Social Structure of Pre-monarchic Israel". *JQR*. 1978. 69:65-81, p 65-76. Even if "the Shechem assembly was not an *ad hoc* meeting with Rehoboam but a tribal gathering based on the ancient assembly of sacral confederacy …"(so Gray, J. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. p 309). This would not confer any legitimacy on its decision if it was not a recognized body in the existing constitutional structure.

where it is implied that some other people not belonging to the tribe of Judah remained on the side of Judah. However, these details are not very important for the narrator, whose emphasis is not on the identity of those who remained loyal to Rehoboam. The narrator's point is that Rehoboam lost the north and was left alone. Everything happened as the people declared in their slogan (verse 16). With the coronation of Jeroboam, the problem of the people is solved, the tension is relieved, but the conflict is not totally solved, because Rehoboam has not surrendered. While the victorious people are left with their king, the narrator shifts his focus and follows Rehoboam in Jerusalem, the setting of the next scene.

5.2.4.6.3 Rehoboam's reprisal plans vetoed by Yahweh (21-24)

Rehoboam, who is the major loser, is not ready to easily accept the defeat. His next move proves that he is neither ready to lose his dynastic privileges, nor has he abandoned his dictatorial style of leadership. His intimidating speech having failed to yield the results he expected, he reverts to the use of military force. Once back in his capital city, Rehoboam organizes a military expedition to put down the rebellion. He assembled "all the house of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin". From the people who remained faithful to him Rehoboam was able to choose an important army of "one hundred and eighty thousand selected warriors". Even after the people had made it clear that they do not want him, Rehoboam, an obdurate dictator, still attempts to rule over them by force. His determination to subdue the northern tribes is shown in the size of the army he recruited in order to restore the kingdom to himself. However, despite the large size of Rehoboam's army, it became useless, because the intended expedition is frustrated by divine intervention through a man of God.

The intervention of God is a further vindication of the northern tribes. Having obtained a solution to their problem, they are withdrawn from the scene. In the face of the continued aggression of Rehoboam, God intervenes and continues the battle on their behalf and in their absence. The reader was already told that God was involved in this event from the beginning, directing the turn of affairs, albeit without openly interacting with the characters. This time he intervenes to defend the outcome of the conflict which he willed.

Through Shemaiah, his representative, God becomes Rehoboam's new antagonist on behalf of the people.

The "word of God" came unto the "man of God". This is a title normally given to a prophet, e.g. Elijah (1 Kings 17; 18); Elisha (2 Kings 4:9); the unnamed messenger of Yahweh (1 Kings 4:9). Outside the present context Shemaiah remains an obscure figure, not spoken about in the book of Kings. Montgomery has noted that the story reported here is almost *ad verbum* identical to a parallel tradition in 2 Chronicles 12, except that the latter ignored the earlier Ahijah narrative as quite anti-dynastic.[608] In the tradition of the Greek supplement (1 Kings 12:24a-z LXX), it is Shemaiah, not Ahijah, who brings to Jeroboam the prophetic message about the up-coming division of the kingdom. This version was said to be a late Judean adaptation of the story and Shemaiah was believed to have been a Judean prophet.[609] The identity of Shemaiah is not the preoccupation of the narrator. In this scene, Shemaiah is simply the messenger of God and his message is that Yahweh is opposed to Rehoboam's plans.

The prohibition is introduced by the verb לֹא־תַעֲלוּ "you shall not go up" or "you shall not set out". The verb עָלָה "to go up" or to "ascend" is often used to convey the idea of a hostile movement, an attack, as in Judges 1:4; 1 Samuel 7:7; 1 Kings 14:25. Here the prohibition is emphasised with the addition of an object, the verb> לֹא־תִלָּחֲמוּן repeating the interdiction "you shall not make war". The content of "the word of God" that came to Shemaiah was that there was no cause for fighting the northern tribes since God was responsible for the secession.

Despite the crisis, the northern and the southern tribes were still brothers. This perspective that overlooks tribal difference and abhors civil war is clearly in contradiction with the statement found later in 1 Kings 14:30, that "there was war all the time between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days". So it is suggested that verses 21-24 might have come "from the hand of someone living at a later time, when local differences had been

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608 Montgomery, J. A. *A critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 251.
609 Gray, J. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*, p 309.

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forgotten, and to whom civil war in Israel was intolerable. This may reflect the post-exilic period or perhaps the *rapprochement* of Judah and the Northern elements in the time of Josiah".[610] The abatement in the civil war may have resulted from Shishak's expedition in Rehoboam's fifth year (1 Kings 14:25-28), where Shemaiah appears again, giving to the historical situation a theological interpretation. Whatever the case, the narrative presents the northern and the southern tribes of Israel as brothers. Unfair and exploitative leadership is dividing them, but they are still brothers.

The message given to Shemaiah is to be addressed not only to Rehoboam, but also to the house of Judah, to the house of Benjamin and also to "the rest of the people". Judah and Benjamin are the two tribes that supported a dynastic-monarchical regime in Israel. The army recruited by Rehoboam to restore such regime was made of men from the two tribes. Shemaiah's message was to be addressed especially to them, so they may refrain from supporting a regime that God rejected. But Shemaiah's message was also addressed to the "rest of Israel". Since Israel was used throughout the narrative to refer to the northern tribes, these may be the same people addressed by Shemaiah. The message from God concerned all the people of God who, before him, were still brothers. God was not restricted to the dynastic-oriented tribes of the south nor had he rejected the rebellious tribes of the north. The king and the people should accept the development as ordained by God. The reader overhears the private word from God to the prophet and must assume that Shemaiah carried out his commission because the narrator immediately adds that the king and his forces obey.[611]

At this point the pattern now changes, Rehoboam is reported obeying the word of God and the intimation of the man of God to give up and go home. For having refused to listen to the people or his elders, Rehoboam has learned something, for he does now listen to the prophet. He could fight the people but not Yahweh. In the movement of the plot, Rehoboam, like the reader of this narrative, easily understands that Shemaiah's prophecy is in line with the earlier prophecy of Ahijah. In both prophecies, Jeroboam is not a mere

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[610] Gray, J. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*, p 308.
[611] Long, B. O. *1Kings*, p 138.

illegitimate usurper but somebody designated by Yahweh and enjoying his support. Rehoboam could no longer claim exclusive legitimacy. While the words of Rehoboam had failed to compel the people to submit to him, the word of God compelled everybody go home accepting the new situation. It is this word of God that brings the final resolution of he conflict. The division of the kingdom is complete, Jeroboam has become king and the situation is irreversible. The tension is over.

5.3 Summary

The fatal division of the kingdom of Israel into two nations is recounted as a divinely fated event resulting from Yahweh's judgment on Solomon's unfaithfulness. The sin explicitly reproached to Solomon is his apostasy that resulted from his marrying many foreign wives who turned his heart after their gods (1 Kings 11). It is important to note, however that Solomon's apostasy has an economic aspect. Most of Solomon's many wives resulted from his alliances in pursuit of economic advantages. The cost of the maintenance of his harem was supported by the labouring people. As for Rehoboam's foolish decision that became the immediate cause of the rupture, this is presented as means that God used to accomplish what he had already ordained. Schenker makes the same observation:

> Read in the overall context, 1 Kings 11-14, the MT shows a tension between the recounted episode in itself and its global contextual framework. The rejection of the Davidic dynasty by the tribes of Israel is actually explained by the intransigence of the king and the arrogance of his young counsellors. This is precisely the object of the narrative. The arrogance of power causes its own ruin. That is what this story wants to show. But in the MT the cause is different. Verse 15 states it in explicit terms. It is the effective prophetic word of Ahijah of Shilo (1 Kings 11:29-39), and behind it the Lord, who has decided to punish Solomon (1 Kings 11:11-13). Thus the hard-line rigidity of Rehoboam and the arrogance of his young ministers are not the cause of the rejection of David and his house by Israel. They are only its occasion.[612]

Schenker finds the real causes of the division of the Kingdom in the foolishness of Rehoboam and the arrogance of his advisors. While the attitude of Rehoboam and of his younger advisors remains the immediate cause of the unexpected resolution of the crisis,

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[612] Schenker, A. "Jeroboam and the Division of the Kingdom", p 228.

still they are not the cause of the crisis. The Shechem discussions focused on a socio-economic matter, the exploitative character of the monarchical regime. The issue was complicated by the obduracy of Rehoboam and those around him, who were enjoying the economic privileges of the regime and were not ready to lose those privileges, while the people were determined to obtain change. The narrative reflects a constant opposition between the dynastic-monarchical leadership, generally described as benefitting the elite while oppressing the people, and the more people-oriented charismatic leadership, generally preferred by the people. The long history of tribal antagonism that threatened for many years to split Israel[613] is to be understood in the context of this socio-economic and political scramble. While the present chapter has tried to place the focus on the account of the division in the text, the next chapter quite deliberately focuses on what we might reconstruct historically and sociologically behind the text regarding the conflict that culminated in the event reported in1 Kings 12:1-24.

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[613] Walvoord, J. F. and Roy, B. Z. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p 510.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERTRIBAL RELATIONS IN ISRAEL

6.0 Introduction

The analysis of the text of 1 Kings 12:1-24 in the preceding chapter has shown that the division of the Kingdom of Israel was reported as a crisis that resulted from the issue of the service imposed on the people of Israel by King Solomon, a service which they perceived as a yoke. In the immediate context of the passage it is the foolishness of Rehoboam and the arrogance of his young advisors that occasioned the crisis. The larger context of this passage provides the background for the people's complaint to the new king, confirming that Solomon's regime subjected the people to exploitative measures. This larger context reveals aspects of tribal discrimination, jealousy and competition that, though not explicitly pointed out by the narrator in direct connection with the crisis, could have negatively affected the relationship between the northern tribes and the Jerusalem regime. The narrator, more interested in the theological interpretation of the event of the division, seems to have not paid much attention to the socio-political aspects of the problem, so as to highlight their possible contribution to the crisis.

The crisis interpreted as a divine judgment is narrated as a socio-political event, the root causes of which could be found beyond those emphasised by the narrator. Since the problem of the corvée was there before Rehoboam took over the leadership, this chapter intends to go beyond the problem of Rehoboam's foolish arrogance to examine the socio-political aspects, involved in the crisis. As was observed, the larger context of Kings hints at these aspects but the narrator may not have adjudged them to be so important for the story he wanted to tell as to elaborate on them. The people's rebellion against the regime of what they called the "house of David", and the subsequent secession that followed tribal lines, are among some elements that give a tribalistic connotation to the crisis. The present chapter's aim is to seek to understand the reasons behind the peoples' rejection of the "house of David". This will require going beyond the account reported in the book of Kings to investigate the history of the social relations among the tribes that formed the nation from the pre-monarchical period. The scope of this chapter includes an

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examination of social relations among the tribes of Israel, before and during the monarchical periods.

6.1 Intertribal relation in the pre-monarchical period

The question of intertribal relationships arises from the time the tribes of Israel started to live together as one community. Therefore the discussion of the issue of socio-political relationships among the tribes includes the examination of the origin of Israel and its tribes and the way the different tribes related. According to biblical traditions, the pre-monarchical period extends from the time of the patriarchs to the time of the institution of the monarchy in Israel with the coronation of King Saul, the first king in Israel. These traditions provide elaborate details about the history of the people of Israel before their settlement in Canaan. However, many scholars, basing their argument on extra-biblical evidence, arrive at different conclusions about the early history of Israel. Some even question the existence of the "people of Israel" before the settlement in Canaan and suggest different opinions about the origin of the tribes of Israel. This section summarizes the most popularised theories about the origin of Israel and its tribes, followed by a discussion of their social relations.

6.1.1 Origin of Israel's tribes

While biblical traditions trace the origin of Israel and its tribes back to the period of the patriarchs, there are other views, which explain the early history of Israel differently. The earliest extra-biblical evidence refers to the possible existence of Israel not earlier than 1200B.C.E. An inscription known as the *Merenptah stele,* listing the towns destroyed by the Pharaoh Merenptah, about 1200 B.C.E., contains a statement referring to Israel in these words: "Israel is laid waste, its seed is not".[614] This means that there had been, around this time, an entity called Israel. Archaeologists have observed a widespread destruction that affected nearly all the important urban centres of the region during the period of transition from Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age. At some of the destroyed sites appeared a new and homogeneous type of construction including an expansion of

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[614] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1999, p 44.

mostly unwalled villages in the highlands.[615] These phenomena have been connected to the emergence of Israel into Canaan. To some scholars these facts could confirm the biblical account about Israel's conquest of Canaan.

Others, however, questioning the biblical tradition about the early history of Israel, explained the phenomena mentioned above differently. They suggested different hypotheses attempting to explain the emergence of Israel in Canaan. These different views of the history of Israel result in different explanations of the origin of Israel's tribes. An exhaustive discussion of these different hypotheses is beyond the scope of this study. Their brief description below intends to account for their varying views of early Israel's history, as much as these differences affect the understanding of the origin and interrelation of Israel's tribes. Four major hypotheses have been suggested to explain the emergence of Israel in Canaan, namely the Conquest Model, the Peaceful Infiltration Model, the Peasant Revolt Model and the Agricultural-Resettlement (or Symbiosis) Model.

6.1.1.1 The Conquest Model

The conquest hypothesis contends that the Israelites, coming from outside Canaan, entered the land, forcibly conquered the indigenous Canaanites who dwelt in its cities and occupied the land. This traditional version of the conquest, found in the biblical account, suggests that even long before their entry into Canaan the twelve tribes of Israelites constituted one people, descending from the same patriarchs. These people sojourned in Egypt where they were enslaved before being delivered by Yahweh through Moses who led them through the wilderness to the gates of the Promised Land. This is the view of biblical scholars who uphold the historical validity of biblical accounts.

Extra-biblical support for the conquest hypothesis came from the domain of archaeology. The renowned archaeologist William Foxwell Albright is known to have defended the

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[615] Coote, R, and Keith W.Whitelam. "The Emergence of Israel: Social Transformation and State Formation following the Decline of Late Bronze Age Trade" in Carter, C.E. and Carol L. Meyers. eds. *Community, Identity, and Ideology*: *Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible* Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns. 1996, p 346.

model from 1920s untill his death in 1971.[616] From this domain two main arguments were used to support the conquest model. Firstly, a widespread destruction of the Canaanite cities in the approximative period when Israel is believed to have entered the land was used as evidence supporting the biblical account of the conquest. Reasoning along this line, Bimson has argued:

> Such widespread destruction of fortified cities could only have been achieved through the concerted effort of a large body of people. It is therefore likely that the situation sketched in the biblical tradition – a large and fairly unified group of people migrating from Egypt to Canaan – should be given credence.[617]

Some material evidence of a homogeneous type of occupation at some of the destroyed sites was interpreted, by the supporters of the conquest theory, as indicating the cessation of the Canaanite culture in large parts of Canaan in the periods of 1230-1200 B.C.E. and for the introduction of Israelite culture in the same areas immediately thereafter.[618] But this view, which remained unquestioned until the twentieth century, was later judged unconvincing by many contemporary scholars, for whom biblical narratives of the conquest are incompatible with modern historiographic methods.[619] It is also argued that the kind of conquest described in biblical narratives lacks support from external evidences.

From the same domain of archaeology that had backed the conquest, arose arguments refuting the possibility of this model. A number of sites in Palestine believed to have suffered fire and destruction around the right time are not mentioned in the biblical account of the conquest, while a number of cities mentioned did not suffer destruction, according to archaeological record.[620] Cities such as Jericho, Ai, and Gibeon, that are key

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[616] Dever, W.G. *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans. 2003,p 41.

[617] Bimson, J. *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press. 1981, p 223. Quoted in Dever, W.G. *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* ,p 40.

[618] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of the Liberated Israel 1250-1050* B.C.E., London: SCM Press, 1979, p 194.

[619] Stager, Lawrence E. "Forging Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel" in Coogan, Michael D. *The Oxford History of the Biblical world*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p 127.

[620]Noll, K.L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction*. London: Sheffield Academic Press. 2001, p 159.

in the biblical account of the conquest, were later said to provide no archaeological evidence of occupation during the assumed period of the conquest. As for the widespread destruction observed in the region during the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, this is not convincing evidence to those who question the Conquest Model. They suggest a number of other possible causes of this phenomenon.[621] Most of those who reject the conquest theory argue that this destruction was a long and gradual process, taking over a century, rather than the result of one catastrophic event.[622]

The biblical account of the conquest is criticised for failing to monolithically support a conquest model. Attention is noted between the sweeping claims of the Numbers-Joshua account of the conquest and the version of the occupation of the land reported in the book of Judges.[623] While the Numbers-Joshua account suggests a systematic conquest of the whole Promised Land in a relatively short period of time by a unified Israel, under the leadership of Moses and Joshua, the Judges accounts gives the impression that settlement in the greater part of the land was without military activity or destruction of cities.[624] Where military force was involved this was in the form of scattered operations undertaken by individual tribes. Some find the kind of occupation described in the Book of Judges closer to the reality than the account in the Book of Joshua. According to Judges, the Israelites' conquest of Canaan was not completed easily, as opposed to claiming that the land was conquered in a lightning series of campaigns.[625] The idea of possible peaceful settlement seen in the books of Judges is in line with an alternative hypothesis explaining the emergence of Israel in Canaan, namely the Settlement or Immigration Model to which we now turn.

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[621] Robert Coote and Keith W.Whitelam suggest a combination of factors: internecine urban warfare; Egyptian imperial campaigns to the region; the arrival of the sea peoples on the coast and inland lowlands; domestic fires; earthquakes and immolation as a magical warding off of contagious diseases. (See Coote, R, and Keith W.Whitelam. "The Emergence of Israel", p 346.

[622] Levy, T.E. ed. *The Archaeology of the Society in the Holy Land*. London: Continuum. 2003,p 363

[623] Cline, E.H. *From Eden to Exile: Unraveling Mysteries of the Bible*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic. 2007, p 108.

[624] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh,* p 196. Gottwald notes that the five major narratives about the conquest of the Canaanite cities tell about the military activity in no more than three tribal areas: Benjamin (Josh 6-9), Judah (Josh 10) and Naphtali (Josh 11). A more inclusive account (Joshua 12:7-24) refers to the thirty-one defeated kings who ruled in cities from Arad to Kadesh, most of whom were taken by separate tribes after Joshua's death.

[625] Cline, E.H. *From Eden to Exile: Unraveling Mysteries of the Bible,* p 119.

6.1.1.2 The Immigration/Settlement Model

This alternative hypothesis was first proposed by the German scholar Albrecht Alt, in 1925.[626] In his theory, Alt agrees with the biblical view that Israelites arrived in Canaan as foreign migrants. But he differs from the biblical account in his perception of these migrants, not as constituents of one people unified by common ancestry, but as loosely connected bands of pastoral nomads from independent tribes. The attested existence of semi-nomadic groups in the area throughout history and the assumption that the earliest settlements of Israel were in the hill country are advantages of this theory.[627] Backers of this model reject the idea of conquest and submit that different tribes gradually infiltrated Canaan from the desert and settled there in a largely peaceful enterprise. Once in the land, for various reasons, these tribes banded together into a loose federation that eventually came to be called Israel.[628]

Separate units of traditions gathered from biblical narratives are often used to support the peaceful occupation of the land, treaty-making with the Canaanites inhabitants and even sometime with cases of outright intermarriage. The Immigration Model stresses the great length of time involved in Israelite settlement, extending from the patriarchs to the time of David.[629] Some variants of this model admit the possibility of military conflict, seen either in the form of limited invasion by exodus or other Israelites, or as a slow accumulating crisis as the immigrating Israelites finally came into open conflicts with the Canaanites.[630] The Model allows the possibility for at least some of the tribes that entered Canaan to be linked with the Patriarchs, the exodus and the wilderness wandering. It is easily reconciled with some biblical references to various foreign groups of people

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[626] Alt, A. "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine," in Alt.A. *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Repr. Sheffield) 133-69 (originally published as "Die Landnahme der Israeliten in Palastina," *Reformationsprogramm der Universität Leipzig*, 1925). Quoted in Hess, R.S. "Early Israel in Canaan", p 495.

[627] Hess, R.S. "Early Israel in Canaan; A Survey of Recent Evidences and Interpretations" in Long V.P. ed. *Israel's Past in Present Research; Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns. 1999,p 495.

[628] Howard, Jr. D. M. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Chicago: Moody Press. 1993, p 66.

[629] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 208.

[630] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 208.

joining Israel on its journey and after entrance to the land (Numbers 22-25; Judges 4:11; I Samuel15:6) and to instances of peaceful settlement in Canaan without account of a conquest (Joshua 8:30-35; 24:1-32).[631]

The Settlement Model is not exempt from censure. Contrasted with the Conquest Model, it has been criticised for its dependence on bits and pieces of materials drawn randomly from the text, without regard to the overall biblical perspective. This model is also said to fail to account for the so powerful unity of Israelite people that could scarcely have resulted from such fragmented beginnings.[632] The Model's description of the tribes that entered Canaan has been also criticized for its reliance on an obsolete concept of the pastoral nomads who subsisted on the meat and dairy products they produce and live in blissful solitude from the rest of the world.[633] This model is said to "require more pastoralists than can be reasonably posited".[634] Noll's argument points out the weakness of this model:

> Shepherds existed on the fringes of Palestine in all periods since the late Neolithic period but they were never numerous. Usually, pastoralists numbered no more than about 15 per cent the total population, and often were far fewer. How can an appeal to pastoralists settling down to become farmers account for the dramatic population increase in the Cisjordan Highlands during the Iron Age I?[635]

Against the Settlement Model, it was argued that it resulted from a misconception about Bedouin life. According to Dever, Bedouins typically have never been 'land-hungry hordes" and they do not usually infiltrate or settle on their own initiative unless they are compelled by circumstances such as drought, famine or adverse political conditions.[636] A search for a better explanation of the emergence of Israel in Canaan eventually produced what is called the Revolt Model.

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[631] Hess, R.S. "Early Israel in Canaan", p 495.
[632] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh,* p 208.
[633] Stager, L. , G. "Forging Identity: The Emergence of Israel", p 138.
[634] Noll, K.L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction*. p 160.
[635] Noll, K.L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction*. p 160.
[636] Dever, W.G. *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* p 52.

6.1.1.3 The Revolt Model

The Revolt Model was submitted as an attempt to explain the widespread layer of destruction discovered in Palestine dating from the late thirteenth and early twelfth centuries B.C.E. Rejecting the idea that this turmoil corresponds to the biblical narrative of the conquest of Canaan, advocates of this theory, such as Mendenhall and Gottwald, argue that this destruction was due to an internal peasant revolt that toppled the existing Canaanite power structure. These oppressed Canaanite peasants revolted against their masters, who dwelt in the large urban centres, and withdrew from the urban enclaves of the lowlands and valleys to seek their freedom elsewhere, beyond the control of the urban elites.[637]   In opposition to the settlement model, the revolt theory alleges that the people who became Israelites were not immigrants from outside Canaan. They were merely an underclass of former Canaanites who took a new identity and became Israel. Both Mendenhall and Gottwald propose, however, that a group of infiltrators from outside joined forces with these local Canaanites.[638]

The Revolt Model is said to deal with archaeological evidence for thirteenth century destructions much more flexibly than the Immigration and the Conquest Models tended to do.[639]   It allows the possibility to explain the destructions of the cities, which cannot be attributed to Israel, by many other possible agencies including, beside the invading Israelites, the revolting Canaanites under-classes, the Egyptians punitive operations to quell the spreading revolts or the neighbouring countries trying to take territories. Advocates of the model affirm that it provides an explanation to aspects of cultural changes observed from early Iron Age. For the revolt theorists:

> The typological evidence for a distinctive early Iron Age culture falling between Late Bronze Canaanite and later Philistine culture would attest to the developing Israelite and lower-class Canaanite symbiosis in a Yahwistic confederation. The fact that new kiln techniques seem to appear with Iron I may suggest that the potters were killed off or were driven out with their Canaanite lords, so that the

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[637] Stager, Lawrence E. "Forging Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel", p 139.
[638] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 55.
[639] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh,* p 217.

exodus Israelites and lower–class Canaanites Yahwistics had to develop their own procedure in pottery-making.[640]

Although the promoters of the Revolt Model reject the idea of the conquest, as narrated in biblical accounts, as well as the immigration hypothesis, they seem not to rule out the possibility for involvement of foreign elements in the revolting Canaanites. It is suggested, for example, that the oppressed peasant Canaanites who revolted were the uprooted property-less persons. Among contributing factors to their helplessness were their lack of rights as foreigners in the place where they lived. The origin of these migrants is linked to the Apiru,[641] who are sometimes thought to be an ethnic group of Semites with whom the Israelite patriarchs are connected.[642] On the other hand, advocates of the revolt model generally admit that a group of former slaves, escaped from Egypt, often referred to as the "exodus group", played an important role in the revolt. Mendenhall notes the presence of a small religious community named Israel with its beginnings in the escape from Egypt, and that spearheaded the revolt. He states:

> The appearance of the small religious community of Israel polarized the existing population all over the land: some joined, others, primarily the kings and their supporters, fought. Since the kings were defeated and forced out, this became the source of the tradition that all the Canaanites and the Amorites were either driven out or slain, for the only ones left there were the predominant majority in the area – now Israelites.[643]

According to this theory, the exodus group arrived in Canaan when the Canaanite society was not all one piece. There were cracks and strains and outright disaffection, especially among the oppressed lower classes looking for relief and seizing the opportunity to better their lot.[644] Yahwism, the religious movement brought by the exodus group, served as a catalyst for revolutionary change. The attraction of Israelite Yahwism for these oppressed Canaanites may be readily located in the central feature of the religion of the entering

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[640] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh,* p 217.
[641] Stager, Lawrence E. "Forging Identity", p 140.
[642] de Vaux, R. *The early History of Israel: From the Beginnings to the Exodus and the Covenant of Sinai*. London: Dalton Longman &Todd. 1978, p 216.
[643] Mendenhall, G.E. "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine" in Carter, C.E. and Carol L. Mayers. Eds. *Community, Identity, and Ideology*, p 164.
[644] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh,* p 214.

tribes: Yahwism cerebrated the activity of deliverance from socio-political bondage and it promised continuing deliverance whenever Yahweh's autonomous people were threatened.[645]

The new religious movement transcended tribal religion and created solidarity among pre-existent social units. The subjection of individuals and groups to a non-human Overlord by covenant and the solidarity of the newly formed community meant that they could and they did reject the religious, economic and political obligations to the existing networks of political organizations. By this process they became "Hebrews".[646] Entire groups having a clan or "tribal" organization joined the newly-formed community, identified themselves with the oppressed in Egypt, received deliverance from bondage and the original historic events with which all groups identified themselves took precedence over, and eventually excluded, the detailed historical traditions of particular groups who had joined later.[647] According to Mendenhall, Joshua 24 is reminiscent of an early moment when the emergent tribes were 'called upon to forsake their inherited tribal religion for the worship of Yahweh'.[648]

However, there are many objections to the revolt hypothesis. It has been criticised for its attempt to present the Apiru/'Hebrews' and Israelites as virtually synonymous terms. Some critics of the Revolt Model see it as a modern construct superimposed upon the biblical traditions, a wishful projection from contemporary attention to social and political revolution.[649] According to Miller, the theory upheld by this model that Israel emerged from Palestinian peasants' revolt finds no basis in biblical material. There is no slightest hint in the biblical traditions regarding the revolution which supposedly brought Israel into existence. On the contrary, the idea seems to have been ingrained through Israel's memory that the ancestors were tent dwellers who entered Palestine from

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[645] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh,* p 214.
[646] Mendenhall, G.E. "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine", p 160.
[647] Mendenhall, G.E. "*The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine*", p 159.
[648] Miller, M. J. "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan" in Hayes, J. H. and J, Maxwell Miller. eds. *Israel and Judean History*. London; SCM Press.1997, p 277.
[649] Miller, M. J. "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan", p 279.

elsewhere and that they were conscious of not being one with the people of the land.[650]
The emergence in Iron Age I of small agricultural communities and egalitarian villages
spreading out beyond the confines of premonarchic Israel make it unlikely that all these
newly founded settlements resulted from the Yahwistic revolution only.[651]

Among those who were not satisfied with the peasant revolt hypothesis was Niels Peter
Lemche.[652] Lemche supports the idea that Israel emerged from among indigenous
inhabitants of Canaan, but argues that its formation may have resulted from a long-term
development spanning the whole Late Bronze Age or longer.[653] The idea of a long-term
development has also been adopted by Coote and Whitelam,[654] who explain the
emergence of Israel in terms of gradual evolution and cultural continuity. For them the
transition observed in the Iron Age I highland settlements should be viewed as a process
lasting for half a century or longer. These changes can be understood as part of longer-
term trends in the history of the region. Israel's origin is therefore viewed as a pattern of
settlement and agriculture in the highlands that is analogous to the cyclical settlement in
the whole region. These cycles were influenced by a variety of factors that include
urbanism, interregional political and economic relations and local socio-political
structures.[655] The broader historical context of the changes in the Iron I settlement is
acknowledged in what is often called the Symbiosis Model.

6.1.1.4 Symbiosis Model
The Symbiosis Model is described as "a blend using sophisticated archaeological
research and the best aspects of the previous models."[656] This hypothesis upholds the
aspect of the Peasant Revolt Model, where the people of the Iron I highlands are viewed
as Canaanites and not invaders from outside. As in the Peaceful Settlement Model, the

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[650] Miller, M. J. "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan", p 279.
[651] Stager, L. G. "*Forging Identity: The Emergence of Israel*", p 140.
[652] Lemche, N.P. *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society Before the Monarchy*. Leiden: E.J. Brill 1985. quoted in McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 57.
[653] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 57.
[654] Coote, R. B. and Keith W. Whitelam. "The Emergence of Israel" pp 107-147.
[655] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 58.
[656] Noll, K.L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction*, p 160.

symbiosis theory acknowledges that some of the highlanders were local pastoral nomadic people who had settled and started farming. The Model proposes that Iron I highland people were "a blend of farmers from the lowlands and some ex-pastoralists who, together, settled into a new 'symbiotic' economic relationship in the highlands"[657] The explanation furnished by this Model is summarized by McNutt, as follows:

> The pastoralist "Israelites" had lived in close proximity to, and in symbiosis with, villages and cities (what is referred to in anthropological literature as "enclosed nomadism"). The origins of these pastoralists are traced to a period of urban collapse at the end of Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1600 – 1550 B.C.E.), when they migrated to the highlands and a substantial element of the population subsequently became retribalized throughout the Late Bronze Age, living on the margin of the settled areas or perhaps in their midst. As the Late Bronze Age declined, these highland pastoral nomads lost the trading market on which they had depended for agricultural products, the pastoralism constructed around symbiosis with the Late Bronze Age urban settlement system became impossible, and thus out of necessity, during the thirteenth through twelfth centuries B.C.E. they became sedentary farmers and established villages.[658]

Holders of this view diverge in some details such as the circumstances that led to the settlement in the highlands. Among the best-known advocate of this view is Finkelstein, who argues that the emergence of early Israel was an outcome of the collapse of the Canaanite culture, not its cause. Finkelstein explains that with the collapse of the Late Bronze Age city-states the pastoralists could no longer purchase needed grain from the economic network that had existed, but now they were forced to begin growing their own grain on a larger scale than previously.[659] Dever partly shares some of Finkelstein's views about the emergence of Israel. He has outlined in eight points his agreement with Finkelstein and in six points his disagreement with him.[660]

While the historicity of biblical traditions about the Israel's occupation is widely questioned, all the approaches based on extra-biblical evidence have not yet reached certainty and consensus. The one thing that can be said with confidence is that the

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[657] Noll, K.L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction*, p 161.
[658] McNutt, P..M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 60.
[659] Howard Jr. D..M. and Michael A. Grisanti. Eds.*Giving Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Texts*. Grand Rapids, Michgan: Kregel Publications. 2003, p 150.
[660] Dever, W.G. *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* p 153-4.

process by which Israel gained possession of the land of Canaan remains unclear. Referring to the currently existing models explaining the emergence of Israel in Palestine McNutt has observed:

> There is still, and is likely to continue to be, considerable debate concerning which, if any, is most representative of the processes that occurred in the transition from Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I in Palestine. But the general acknowledgment of the complexities associated both with the interpretive process and with the processes of social development brings us together to constituting a more accurate, even if less definitive, construct of early Israel.[661]

The puzzle regarding the origins of Israel may not necessarily be solved by one adequate model that will gain the unanimity of all scholars. Just as it was observed in the case of the origins of the Rwandan social groups, there are competing narratives, very often of our 'origins', and each is trying to say something significant, irrespective of which is historically 'true'. Probably each of the existing hypotheses has a contribution toward the elucidation of this complex phenomenon. Hess was apparently reasoning along this line when he pointed out aspects of Israel's origins which he believes are not invalidated by any of the hypotheses. Without venturing into a kind of synthetic model, Hess identified from the aspects suggested by different models those which, he thinks, are not proved wrong. He listed the following:

- That a group of slaves could have escaped from Egypt and made their way to Canaan;
- That a group of nomadic tribal people could have entered and settled in Canaan from east of the Jordan River;
- That people in the hill country could have found themselves involved in competition for natural resources, in rivalry with other migrating groups and with existing Canaanite "city-states" and that this could have involved skirmishes and "wars";
- That early Israel could have held to a faith in a deity known as Yahweh.
- That Israelites could have entered the land and been involved in the destruction of such cities as Hazor;
- That nomadic and other people forced to flee for economic or political reasons could have become Israelite at any time during its appearance and growth in Canaan;

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[661] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 63.

- That dissatisfied elements from Canaanite city-states could have become Israelites;
- That Egyptian "buffer groups" in Northern Palestine or *Hapiru* groups in Bashan, east of the Sea of Galilee, could have become Israelites;
- That Middle Bronze Age hill country settlers who had taken on an "enclosed nomadic" existence during the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.E.) could have "re-sedentarised" in the subsequent period and have become Israelites.[662]

Hess is careful not to affirm that any of the above scenario actually happened, but that each remains a possibility. What is agreed by all the approaches is the observation that the people of Israel were in Canaan during the Late Bronze Age. In all these hypotheses, Israel that emerged in Canaan was a tribal community. The issue of how the different tribes of this community related socially, economically, politically and religiously has not yet come to any kind of consensus. The next section discusses different views on the social structure and the social relations of Israel subsequent to its emergence and settlement in Canaan.

6.1.2 Social organisation and relations in Israel of the tribal period

In biblical traditions, the 'Israel' that entered and settled in Canaan was constituted by the twelve tribes descending from the Patriarch Jacob. The unity and solidarity of this community was grounded on their kinship relation, their shared experience in Egypt and in the wilderness and their covenant with Yahweh. Biblical scholars think that the new community that became Israel were of various origins and gained possession of their respective territories under different circumstances. For some scholars, the tribalisation process may have occurred largely after the settlement and in accordance with the topography of Palestine. The sense of kinship and mutual loyalty which these tribes came to share emerged gradually after the settlement, due to such factors as geographical proximity, similar lifestyles elicited by the physical features of the mountainous regions, shared sanctuaries, and the necessity for combined warfare during the pre-monarchical period and would also have been a significant ingredient in the emerging sense of inter-

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[662]Hess , R.S. "Early Israel in Canaan", p 511.

tribal kinship and loyalty.[663] Social organisation and social relations among the tribes are both aspects of the tribalisation process.

6.1.2.1 Social organisation of tribal Israel

The social structure of Israel was sometime seen as a tribal confederation, equated with the system of amphictyony. The term amphictyony was used for the first time in reference to Israel by the sociologist M. Weber, who described Israel during the tribal period as a warlike confederation with its social order guaranteed and its prosperity assured by Yahweh. He suggested that Israel was the name of a cultic league which may have had 'amphictyonic' rites.[664] The idea was later expanded by M. Noth[665]. Basing his analysis on the frequency of the figure twelve in the tribal list of the Old Testament, Noth drew an analogy between Israel's tribal system, organized around the worship of Yahweh, and the Greek and Italian tribal systems organized around sacral unions called amphictyonies in Greece and tribal leagues in Italy. In such unions, members grouped into twelve or six units were bound by an oath around a common sanctuary. Individual members preserved their autonomy and their representatives had the mandate to ensure that the members observed the oath. Noth suggested that Israel had a similar organization during the period of judges. According to Noth, Israel was a league of twelve tribes, with a common sanctuary situated first at Shechem, then at Bethel, Gilgal and finally at Shiloh. The account preserved in biblical traditions in Joshua 24 would refer to the occasion when at Shechem members of the league were united with each other by a pact, acknowledged their God Yahweh and were given a statute and ordinance.[666]

The amphictyony hypothesis, which became famous, was later rejected by many scholars such as de Vaux, who objected to the fact that the socio-political structure of pre-monarchical Israel never displayed any of the essential elements of an amphictyony, such as a central sanctuary, an amphictyonic council, amphictyonic law or any collective

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[663] Miller, M. J. "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan", p 280.
[664] de Vaux, R. *The Early History of Israel to the Period of Judges*. London: Dalton Logman &Todd. 1978, p 695.
[665] Noth, M. *Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels*, Stuttgart, 1930. *Geschichte*, pp 83-104 (*History*, pp. 85-108) quoted by de Vaux, R. *The Early History of Israel to the Period of Judges*, p 696.
[666] de Vaux, R. *The Early History of Israel to the Period of Judges*, p 696.

action to protect the amphictyoinic sanctuary.[667]   Lemche has thought along the same lines saying that there is no single concrete detail dating from the second millennium BCE which indicates that Israel was ever constituted as a permanent coalition, which could have been the basis of the conception of a united Israel. Nor is it possible to point to any single sanctuary which might have been employed as the centre of such a league…"[668] For Gottwald, the twelve tribes amphictyonic model is an erroneous over-refinement of some suggestive analogies between Greek/Italian amphictyonies and the Israelite religious confederation.[669]

While the amphictyonic character of pre-monarchic Israel's tribal confederation is widely rejected, it is generally noted that, from the time of the settlement in Canaan, Israel was a confederation of segmented tribes. At the basis of the social structure were self-sufficient socio-economic entities called the "בֵּית אָבוֹת" house of the fathers. These were grouped into associations of families, the "מִשְׁפָּחוֹת" that, in their turn made up the "שְׁבָטִים" or tribes.[670] The organization culminated in a confederation of tribes. Through the bodies of elders drawn from the בֵּית אָבוֹת and מִשְׁפָּחוֹת, village and regional decisions were made and the process was carried to the level of a council of elders for the entire שֵׁבֶט. Whether there existed a regular body of elders drawn from all the tribes in Israel is unclear, but given the fact that covenant linkages among the tribes would have required joint decisions by elders from different tribes, it seems likely that the modes for intertribal consultation by the elders were developed.[671] It is also suggested, however, that the Israelite tribes were regional alliances of essentially independent clans and that the real power resided with the clans, or a few of them, but not at tribal level.[672] The terms "alliances" or "confederation" used in the description of Israel's tribal period refer not only to the diversity of the people but more to the unity that characterized their relations, keeping them together and allowing them later to develop into a state.

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[667] de Vaux, R. *The Early History of Israel to the Period of Judges*, p 715.
[668] Lemche, N P. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press. 1988, p 106.
[669] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 356.
[670] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* pp 87-94.
[671] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 322.
[672] Van Gorcum, A. *The Tribes of Israel: An Investigation into Some of the Presuppositions of Martin Noth's Amphictionys Hypothesis*. Amsterdam: The Netherlands, 1976, p 156.

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6.1.2.2 Inter-tribal relations in pre-monarchical Israel

Pre-monarchic Israel is described as a segmented tribal society characterised by the typical absence of permanent, centralized power and absence of specialized institutions of law and order or political office.[673]   The biblical traditions concerning the pre-monarchical period refer to tribal leaders, the judges, whose status, role and duties are not well clarified. Although they are called 'judges" or said to have judged Israel, most of them are portrayed as military "deliverers". Some of them are said to have held office over "all Israel", others only over one or a group of a few tribes. In one case there is reference to a failed attempt to institute permanent leadership (Judges 6-8). The extent to which this construct reflects the reality of Iron Age I Israel is not easy to tell. Attempts to understand the situation that prevailed then is sometimes made in reference to what happens in contemporary tribal societies. In these 'comparative' societies, Weber has observed, leadership is confined to the status-bearing men of the community or clan/lineage and the family (often referred to as elders). Choice of leaders above the level of family tends to be based on an individual's reputation and such personal qualities as "charisma", persuasiveness and prowess as a warrior.[674]   For McNutt, memories of this type of leadership are possibly represented in the "judges" of the books of Judges and Samuel.[675]

Gottwald made a distinction between the elders drawn from the בֵית אָבוֹת and מִשְׁפָּחוֹת, who embodied the regularized diffusion of political functions in the society, and the political and military leaders who were assigned temporary assignments in crisis situations. He argues that the assignments of the latter carried a built-in tendency for strong leaders to usurp more than their share of assigned power and, particularly, to try to pass on their power to their sons (or conversely for their sons to try to claim or extend their power). [676] The biblical traditions about Gideon and his son Abimelec (Judges 8, 9) may illustrate

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[673] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* pp 99.
[674] Weber, M. *Ancient Judaism*. New York: Free Press. 1952. Quoted in McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* pp 99.
[675] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 100.
[676] Gottwald, N.K.*The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 322.

this tendency. In this way, chiefdoms attempted to make inroads into egalitarian Israel.[677] Gottwald estimates that Israel's dire need for military co-ordination predisposed the society to succumb to chiefdom centralisation and social stratification tendencies but Israel's basic thrust towards locating power in equivalent and equal extended families prevailed.[678] Among the factors that may have prevented chiefdoms to take root in early tribal Israel, Gottwald suggests the following:

- Ranking privileges which typify tribes with chiefdoms were fiercely resisted in Israel and the claim of certain families to greater wealth and honour than others ran against the grain of egalitarian levelling mechanisms guarded by the protective family associations;
- The concentration of economic surplus in particular families was checked and retarded by the obligation to share with other families through mutual aid;
- Since Israel's economy remained agricultural and pastoral, the opportunity for strong families to monopolize economy through trade or craft specialization was minimized;
- The ecological distribution of the major food sources deprived the chiefdom of its primary function of regularizing the distribution of resources.[679]

In Gottwald's view, Israel was a confederacy or league of tribes and the basic characteristic of this confederacy included a common concern for the Yahwistic cult, shared laws and ideology, a commitment to economic egalitarianism and readiness to organise military opposition against external forces such as the Canaanites and the Philistines.[680] Lemche agrees with the view that tribal alliances may have existed, though he feels that they would not necessarily have been stable and fixed.[681] For Lemche, individual tribes maintained a sense of social identity on the basis of shared interests in keeping the territory in their own hands. Tribal identity could have been based not only on kinship, but also on other factors such as actual or fictitious blood ties, common history, common economic interests, or common external enemies. In Lemche's view, as reported by McNutt, there is no concrete evidence indicating that Israel was ever

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[677] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 322.
[678] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 322.
[679] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 322.
[680] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 86. (commenting Gottwald's views).
[681] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 86. (commenting Lemche's views).

constituted as a permanent coalition of the kind implied in the "all Israel" construct of the Deuteronomistic tradition.[682]

Pre-monarchy Israel is perceived by most scholars to have been a confederation of tribes without centralised institutions. The tribes that made up the confederation are believed to have been regional leagues of essentially independent clans. Having secured their respective territories in Canaan, the different tribes may have progressively consolidated their union toward becoming one people. The understanding of many scholars is that the different tribes were not necessarily united by blood or kinship relations. The factors perceived by many to have contributed to this union are rather the kind such as those mentioned by Gottwald and Lemche, which include socio-political, religious, economic and security related preoccupations. The need to combine against their common enemies, the shared economic interests and the shared faith in Yahweh are mentioned as some of the unifying factors. The political structure of the time, described as that of a segmentary society, where the organization of power and leadership followed a lineage system and kinship units may have minimized the tendency to social stratification and its corollary of competition and eventual conflicts. De Vaux believes that these factors may have encouraged the tribes to develop a feeling of belonging together ethnically and sharing a common origin, which was expressed in term of kinship.[683] If this was the case, which is not impossible, then this example of early Israel may strengthen the view that the hypothetical different origin of the Rwandan "tribes" is not an irremediable obstacle to social unity.

Some have suggested that the pre-monarchic tribal league was the life-setting for the early traditions of Israel. Gottwald looks at Israel's traditions as an amalgam of diverse materials drawn from the several ingredient members of the league. These materials may have been worked up in cultic recitations as enlargements of a series of basic themes, demonstrating Yahweh's saving activity among his people Israel.[684] Mendenhall has hypothesised that the tradition that all tribes were linear descendants of a single ancestor

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[682] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 87.
[683] De Vaux, R. *The Early History of Israel*, p 747.
[684] Gottwald, N.K. *The Tribes of Yahweh*, p 205.

was an attempt to give expression to a unity which was created by the religious factor.[685] These assumptions imply that social unity can be created and developed when the concerned people are motivated to do so. The unity of Israel's tribes, however forged it may have been, was later translated into the formation of a state gathering all the tribes under one monarch. However, the rise of the monarchy was obviously accompanied with socio-political and economic changes that affected the relations among the tribes.

6.2 Social relations during the period of the united monarchy

Springing from a tribal federation of some kind, Israel developed into a national state. The process of this development is understood differently. The biblical traditions describe Israel's state in an embryonic form during the reign of King Saul that develops later into an empire under kings David and Solomon. Extra-biblical evidence points to a more complex process in the formation of Israel's state. Below is a survey of different views about the formation of Israel's state which will be followed by a discussion of social relations during the period of the united monarchy.

6.2.1 The emergence of Israel's state

The biblical traditions present two seemingly opposing views relating to the emergence of the monarchy in Israel. One is the story in which the elders of Israel take the initiative and request Samuel to appoint a king who would rule over them. This move appears to be motivated by a permanent threat of invasion from neighbouring countries such as the Ammonites (1 Samuel 10:27), the Amalekites (1 Samuel 30:1), Moab, Edom and Syria (1 Samuel 14: 47; 2 Samuel 8: 1-14), but especially from the Philistines (1Samuel 4). The tribes that could no longer manage their affairs under the leadership of a judge wanted to have a king to lead them in battle, like other nations. Samuel, here described as a judge and a priest, does not approve of the idea of the elders, neither does Yahweh who, nevertheless, instructs Samuel to give to the people what they want, warning them about the problems associated with a monarchical regime. In another opinion, it is Samuel the Seer who, under the inspiration of the "Spirit of God", takes the initiative to secretly

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[685] Mendenhall, G.E. "The Hebrews Conquest of Palestine", p 167.

anoint Saul. Later, after his victory over the Ammonites, Saul is acclaimed by the people, who accept him as king (1Samuel 9-11).

Biblical scholars perceive the emergence of the state in Iron Age I Israel as resulting from a more complex development than what is reported in biblical traditions found in 1Samuel 8:1-21. External military pressure, with internal stimuli stemming from socio-political conditions, combined to produce a new political form that could meet both kinds of pressure. The aspect of security is noticed in the people's demand for a king who would lead them into battle. A judge appointed by one or a few tribes had limited authority over other tribes that followed him only when their interests were at stake. Conversely, centralised political systems could not only offer their subjects protection from military threats, they could also co-ordinate and organise numbers of people, cutting across tribal or geographic divisions, and provide access to resources.[686] The monarchy was expected to provide the needed permanent leadership that could assemble the tribes in precarious situations.

The external pressure is thought to have come mainly from the Philistines, sometimes thought to have enjoyed the monopoly of iron technology.[687] On the contribution of the Philistine to the rise of Israel's state, Lemche, otherwise known for his rejection of the historical reliability of biblical traditions related to this period[688], seems to pay attention to the traditions preserved in the books of Samuel (1 Samuel 4: 13-14) about the Philistine entry in the hill country, for he comes to the conclusion that "When Saul emerged as a leader of Israelite tribes, there were Philistine governors at various points in the hill country north of Jerusalem. It must accordingly have looked at this point as if it was only a matter of time before the Israelite tribes had to succumb".[689] Further

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[686] Coogan, M.D. ed. *The Oxford History of Biblical World*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1998, p 241

[687] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 113. McNutt refers to this hypothesis but refutes it as being wrongly deduced from the passage of 1 Samuel 13:19-23, which makes no reference to iron.

[688] Howard Jr. D. M. and M. A. Grisanti. eds. *Giving the Sense*, p 161 (footnote 1). Lemche is classified among those labelled as "revisionists", see Dever, W.G. *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* p 139.

[689] Lemche, N. P. *Ancient Israel*, p 133.

commenting on the external pressure from the Philistines on the Israelite tribes, Lemche stated:

> Confronted with the Philistine threat the Israelite tribes had of necessity to face one of two alternatives: they could submit, or they could intensify their internal solidarity. Had they followed the first course, they would have been integrated into the Philistine states, and within a few years they would have lost both their tribal organization and their specific identity. In the other case, they would possibly be able to resist the political and military threat from without. There is in any event no doubt about which course the Israelites chose. As a result, they chose a king whose task it was to liberate the tribal society from external threats.[690]

The external threat to the security of the tribes was once acknowledged as the necessary and sufficient explanation for the rise of the monarchy. Today many biblical scholars no longer believe that it can be taken in isolation from other factors such as internal forces that are likely to have been at work within the society. Pointing to socio-economic factors responsible for the rise of the monarchy in Israel, Coote and Whitelam have observed that "the switch to the monarchy was a formal political redefinition of product distribution and labour arrangements carried through in order to regularise the intensification of productive relations and processes, to support the increased defence costs".[691]

Social-scientific studies grounded on anthropological theories suggest that the emergence of the monarchy was a process that involved evolutional stages which led to its establishment. Flanagan,[692] Frick,[693] Coote and Whitelam[694] are among those who opine that Israelite segmented tribal organization developed first into chiefdom in the process of its evolution toward statehood.[695] Flanagan concurred, submitting that "Saul's leadership as portrayed in the biblical construct is typical of a chiefdom, that the traditions about David's reign reflect the transition from a chiefdom to a state, and that full statehood did

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[690] Lemche, N. P. *Ancient Israel*, p 134.
[691] Coote, R. B. and Keith W. Whitelam. "The Emergence of Israel", p 360.
[692] Flanagan, J.W. "Chiefs in Israel". *JSOT* 20 (1981): 47-73. Referred to by McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 115.
[693] Frick, F. S. *The Formation of State in Ancient Israel*. SWBAS, 7. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988. Referred to by McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 115.
[694] Coote, R. B. and Keith W. Whitelam. "The Emergence of Israel", pp 353-371.
[695] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 114.

not develop until the reign of Solomon."[696] Schäfer-Lichtenberger[697] objected to the "chiefdom phase" hypothesis for which she substituted what she called the "early state". After a review of socio-scientific models of state formation that she perceived as being relevant to Iron Age Palestine, Schäfer-Lichtenberger distinguished three phases at the stage of early state, namely, the inchoative early state, the typical early state and the transitional early state. Each of these three phases has its distinctive characteristics with respect of the role of kinship in political activity, the level of centralisation of government, the type of economy, the level of social stratification and relationship between the social strata.[698] Schäfer-Lichtenberger concluded, on the basis of biblical texts, that Saul's reign was an inchoative state and David's was a transitional early state in some respects and an inchoative state in other respects.[699]

The foregoing sociological consideration is helpful for appreciation of the relations of the structural development described in the biblical traditions to the logic of an early state's development described in social sciences. Assuming that the editors of the traditions contained in the books of Samuel and Kings did not make them up, as the "minimalists" believe, but that they had access to materials from a variety of sources,[700] as is still the view of many biblical scholars.[701] It can be surmised, on the basis of both biblical traditions and sociological descriptions, that what is reported about Saul and David's regimes reflect the transitional stage, described by some as the "chiefdom" phase, and by others as the "inchoative state" phase, while traditions concerning Solomon and the kings coming after him may correspond to the time when socio-political structures had developed into full statehood. Most of those who, like Noll, argue that the biblical narratives are not descriptions of real past events may at least agree with Noll's opinion

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[696] Flanagan, J.W. "Chiefs in Israel". *JSOT* 20 (1981): 47-73. Quoted in McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 115.

[697] Schäfer-Lichtenberger, C. "Sociological and Biblical Views of the Early State." In Volkmar Fritz and Philip R. Davies. *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, pp 78-105.

[698] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* pp 140-141.

[699] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 144.

[700] According to McNutt these sources include independent traditions about Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, administrative documents from the united monarchy, the royal archives from the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the Jerusalem Temple archives, and cycles of prophetic tales. McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 144.

[701] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 144.

that the social and political world reflected in them was the real world of the Iron Age Palestinan highlands.[702] The characteristics associated with the different phases in the development of the state are to be taken into account in the examination of social relations during the period of the united monarchy.

6.2.2 Socio-political relation in the period of united monarchy

The early period of the state of Israel preceding the division of the kingdom is often referred to as the period of the united monarchy. Among scholars who reject the historicity of biblical traditions many generally deny that the united monarchy ever existed.[703] Even scholars who admit that there was once a united monarchy in Israel are not agreed on the extent to which the united monarchy was really united. The biblical accounts themselves reveal divisions in the united monarchy leading to the conclusion that the united monarchy was in fact nothing but separate kingdoms, sharing one king.[704] The issue of the unity of the kingdom is directly connected to the relations of the tribes of Israel, which are examined in this section. The discussion focuses on the relationships among the tribes during the successive reigns of the kings connected with this period, namely Saul, David and Solomon.

6.2.2.1 Socio-political relations at the time of Saul

From the biblical traditions about Saul's rise to power it appears that he first arose as the leader of a contingent of Israelites, most likely drawn from his own tribe, to respond to the threat posed by the Amorites to the city of Jabesh Gilead (1 Samuel:11). In this he is portrayed as not much different from the charismatic leaders who preceded him. However, some aspects of Saul's rule differentiated him from the charismatic deliverers of the period of judges. The permanence of his office and the expectations of his close servants affected the social relations among the tribes.

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[702] Noll, K.L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity: An Introduction*, p 214.
[703] See, for example, Thompson, T. L. "Historiography of Ancient Palestine and Early Jewish Historiography" and Lemche, P. N. "From Patronage Society to Patronage Society" in Volkmar F. and P. R. Davies. *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1996.
[704] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*. London: SCM Press. 1985, p 41.

6.2.2.1.1 The ambiguous character of Saul's office

Taking over from the judges, Saul first appeared as one who was to continue in their line. As in the cases of the judges, Saul's appointment was made urgent by the threat of imminent attacks from neighbouring nations. His first mission was to deliver the people and in this he enjoyed considerable support from the people across all the tribes. Saul arose when the Israelites were facing continuing oppression especially from the Philistines (1 Samuel 4-7). In spite of their repeated attacks, the Philistines appear not to have managed to occupy Israelite territory. Their aim may have been to weaken the Israelites, deprive them of the means of manufacturing weapons and prevent their expansion into the plains. The continuing threat to Israelite tribes was perceived as the reason why Saul's leadership was made permanent. [705]

Not everybody is convinced, however, that the preoccupation with security could have been the only reason behind the rise of the monarchy. It is argued that there have been many instances elsewhere of decentralised peoples uniting under a single military command without resorting to state organization. Thus, although the tribes designated Saul as commander-in-chief of their armed forces, there would have been no grant of further powers and no office of "king" to occupy once the military crisis passed.[706] If the constant threat may have necessitated the prolongation of Saul's military services, it seems that he did not achieve the stature of a king from the beginning. In Gottwald's estimation, Saul could not be called a king, since he had no detectable non-military powers beyond the capacity to reward followers with honours and possibly with modest land grants.[707] Questioning Saul's kingly position, Gottwald formulated the following arguments:

> There was no indication of taxation or conscription beyond the outlay of men and supplies for tribal levies, which, given the seriousness of the Philistine threat, were probably readily volunteered for the most part. There is no account of Saul's keeping records, nor is there evidence of his role as head of the judicial system or

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[705] Hayes, A. D. H. "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy." In Hayes J. H. and Maxwell Miller. Eds. *Israelite and Judean History*. London, SCM Press. 1977, p 325.

[706] Gottwald, N. K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 2001, p 173.

[707] Gottwald, N. K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* p 176.

as a pontiff of the religious cult. In keeping with his limited exercise of power, there was no discernible bureaucracy. In his function, Saul seems no more than a military chief.[708]

The nucleus of Saul's territory seems to have been his own tribe of Benjamin. But his early military success would have gradually rallied an expanding group of followers and created an area of control beyond Benjamin.[709] Other tribes, especially those from the north of Jerusalem, may have associated themselves with Saul's leadership for longer or shorter periods. The account concerning Abimelech's rule in Shechem could suggest that the northern tribes, who had earlier moved toward a centralised form of government were more disposed to accept Saul's rule. After Saul's death his son, Ishbaal, inherits a territory that includes, beside Benjamin, Gilead, Asher, Jezreel and Ephraim (2 Samuel 2:9).

Saul's influence in the south is less clear. A number of city-states still separated the territory of Judah in the south from the northern tribes. These cities inhibited communication between both sides. This separation remained until the time of David, who conquered these cities, including Jerusalem, and integrated them into his empire. However, Saul seems to have enjoyed some influence in Judah. He could pass through Judah to fight the Amalekites and neither David, as a Judean rebel, was out of Saul's reach, nor could David's parents feel safe in their territory (1 Samuel 22:1).

Saul is perceived by some as a chief whose powers went beyond those of a judge, without reaching the level of kingship. Even Gottwald, who saw in Saul no more than a military chief, has noted that the biblical traditions picture him and his supporters as assuming that his powers would devolve to his successors, which implies dynastic pretensions and thus aspiration to permanent rule.[710] In Schäfer-Lichtenberger's opinion, the fact that the political association over which Saul ruled survived him is proof that it was advanced beyond the era of chiefdoms. The political association would have dissolved immediately

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[708] Gottwald, N. K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* p 177.
[709] Coogan, M.D. ed. *The Oxford History of Biblical World*, p 243.
[710] Gottwald, N K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* p 177.

after Saul's emphatic defeat at Gilboa and his death, if his sovereignty was constituted as chiefdom.[711]

Saul's rise to power appears to have been followed by the appearance of a small standing military force and a rudimentary administrative apparatus, consisting of a group of specialists in whose hands were concentrated the society's resources.[712] Such an apparatus was to be sustained with regular delivery from the people. This group of leaders and helpers of leaders had to be fed by the rest of society and, from this situation, the leap from being the employees of the society to being employers of the society was not great.[713]

From a sociological perspective, Saul's rise to power is to be located within a process of state formation, which did not happen as sudden transition from tribe to state, but as a development that implied "eroding" tribalism in tandem with "creeping" or "incremental" statism.[714] Being part of this process, Saul's tenure seems to have undergone an "evolution" which evades his portrayal in a fixed type of leadership position. De Vaux refers to this development as a move from a charismatic leader, the "נָגִיד"[715] (1 Samuel 9; 16; 10:1), to becoming the "מֶלֶךְ", the king (1 Samuel 11:15)".[716] In Schäfer-Lichtenberger's "early state" theory, Saul is perceived as reigning over an "inchoative state", a phase of which one of the major characteristics is the dominance of kinship and community ties in its political structures.[717] The dominance of kinship in Israel's political structure under Saul's rule is reported in the biblical accounts, with cases which today can be seen as sheer nepotism.

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[711] Schäfer-Lichtenberger, C. "Sociological and Biblical Views of the Early State", p 98.
[712] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press. 1988, p 136.
[713] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*., p 136.
[714] Gottwald, N K. "The Participation of Free Agrarians in the Introduction of Monarchy to Ancient Israel: An Application of H. A. Landsberger's Framework for the Analysis of the Peasant Movement" Semeia 37 (1986), 77-106.
[715] "dyGinA"is here understood to mean "commander", although the meaning of the term underwent an evolution corresponding to stages in the development of Israel's socio-political organization. See Flanagan, J.W. "Chiefs in Israel" in Exum, J. C. ed. *The Historical Books*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1997, p 181.
[716] De Vaux, R. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, p 94.
[717] Schäfer-Lichtenberger, C. "Sociological and Biblical Views of the Early State", p 92.

6.2.2.1.2 Elements of nepotism during the reign of Saul

Although not much is said about Saul's administration, most of his known aides seem to have been recruited from his close relatives. In his military campaigns, using an army of militia, his second-in-command was his own son, Jonathan (1 Samuel 13:2). When he later decided to appoint a commander for his army, he gave the position to his cousin, Abner (1 Samuel 14:50-51). Even the young David who, for a time, was King Saul's bodyguard (1 Samuel 22:14), had first become the king's son-in-law. The practice of appointing relatives to significant positions is said to correspond to that of an inchoative state and the early patrimonial state.[718]

After Saul's death, his son, Ish-Boshet, was made king in his place. Only three officials who served this new king are mentioned by name. One was the army commander, Abner, Saul's cousin.The two others are Baanah and Recab, leaders of raiding bands, both being Ish-Boshet's tribesmen, from Benjamin (2 Samuel 4:1-3). Actually, although Ish-Boshet reportedly reigned over a confederation of tribes, his fighting troops seem to have been recruited preferably from his own tribe of Benjamin. In the war that pitted him against David, the war that was described as opposing the "house of David" to the "house of Saul", it is reported that David's men killed three hundred and sixty *Benjamites* (2 Samuel 2: 31). The influence of kinship in Israel's politics is seen in dynastic pretensions associated with succession to Saul's rule.

6.2.2.1.3 Dynastic aspirations during Saul's rule

Dynastic tendencies are reported to have been manifested, but resisted, throughout the period of Judges. With the rise of the monarchy, the concept of dynasty resurfaced as a normal corollary. Saul made it clear that he expected his son, Jonathan, to succeed him. He is reported investing time, energy and resources hunting David down, in a bid to eliminate a rival whose ever-mounting power and fame was a threat to the establishment

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[718] Schäfer-Lichtenberger, C. "Sociological and Biblical Views of the Early State", p 98.

of his house on the throne. [719] Gottwald submits that "Saul's "falling out" with David, in itself, did not indicate competition for dynastic kingship, but rather rivalry over who was the most skilled and loyalty-evoking military leader."[720] However, Gottwald acknowledges that the reported dynastic aspirations in Saul's time may reflect the intentions of leading citizens, drawn from his tribe of Benjamin and the adjacent tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, to consolidate and perpetuate the office.[721]

The competition for power seems not to have been limited to Saul and David as individuals, as Gottwald suggests. Saul is reported reminding his Benjamite tribesmen that he counted on their natural loyalty to him in his fight against the "son of Jesse", who was becoming a serious threat to his dynasty (1 Samuel 22:6-8). In Tsumura's understanding, by the rhetorical questions that Saul asked his fellow Benjamites in this episode, he tried to convey that "since the Benjamites will not have any hope of enriching themselves by feudal grants and appointments if the Judahite David should become king, they have no reason to support him."[722] Saul actually told his tribespeople that they had all to gain if the throne remained within their tribe and everything to lose if it passed to another tribe, so they should help him defend and keep it. Saul's argument, appealing to kinship as motivation for political support, connotes what can be perceived today as tribal politics.

At his death, Saul did not leave behind a united monarchy. The extent of his kingdom is reported to have included Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim and Benjamin (2 Samuel 2:9), and other tribes or parts of them, both in Galilee and in Judah, perhaps for shorter periods.[723] Saul ruled over a number of tribes which appear to have retained a great deal of their autonomy.[724] Apart from his military office, the authority that he exercised is not clearly described. Flanagan estimated that Saul was unable to establish a state of

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[719] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom" in Hayes, H.J. and Maxwell Miller. *Israel and Judean History*, p 330.

[720] Gottwald, N. K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* p 177.

[721] Gottwald, N. K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* p 177.

[722]Tsumura, D.T. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The First Book of Samuel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans. 2007. p 542.

[723] Hayes, A. D. H. "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy", p 329.

[724] De Vaux, R. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, p 95.

dependency through redistribution, which otherwise might have stabilized his leadership. The fact that his successor, Ishbosheth, was forced to lead from afar, probably with only a fraction of Saul's following, indicates, in Flanagan's view, the extent of Saul's failure.[725] Beside the autonomy of the tribes that made up Israel, the scramble for power and associated privileges resulted in the creation of boundaries between those who held power and wanted not to lose it, namely the Benjamites and associated northern tribes, and those considered a threat to the interests of the first group, that is, the Judah of David and the potential allied tribes. The rift between the two groups became more evident when, after Saul's death, Judah did not waste any time in appointing their own leader, David, breaking away from the rest of the northern tribes. The boundaries appearing during the reign of Saul survived him and continued to appear during the time of David and beyond.

6.2.2. Intertribal relations during the reign of David

David is often referred to as the founder of the Israelite kingdom. A great deal of achievement is attributed to him, which includes territorial unification and expansion, as well as political and economic consolidation. Under him, Israel came to be recognised as the nation holding the greatest political power in the ancient Near East.[726] With respect to social unity, however, he seems to have faced important challenges. The circumstances surrounding his rise to power affected the unity of the kingdom, as became evident in the two rebellions that were organized against his regime. The context of David's accession to the throne and the challenges that he faced are discussed in the sections that follow.

6.2.2.1 The rise of King David

David was still young when he became a servant of Saul. The biblical traditions about his rise to power are presented in varying versions. In one story, David is designated by Yahweh through Samuel to take over from the discarded Saul. Samuel goes to anoint David at his home in Bethlehem, where the young man was keeping the sheep of his

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[725] Flanagan, J. W. "Chiefs in Israel" in Carter, C.E. and Carol, L. Meyers. eds. *Community, Identity and Ideology*, p 328.
[726] Kaiser, W. C. Jr. *A History of Israel: From Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers. 1998, p 241.

father, Jesse (1 Samuel 16:1-13). David was preferred not only to Saul, whom he was called to replace, but also to his elder brothers. This version that makes David the preferred elect of Yahweh is perceived to be a product of the Deuteronomistic edition.[727] In another story, David begins his career as a famous warrior by defeating Goliath, the Philistine giant (1Samuel 17). But the mention, in 2 Samuel 21:19, of a Goliath killed not by David but by Elhanan has led some to suggest that David was attributed this mighty deed of the unknown Elhanan.[728] In a third version, David is invited to Saul's palace, where he becomes an armour-bearer, while his music helps to bring relief to his depressed master (1 Samuel 16:14-23). In Soggin's view, there are some materials relevant for the historian to be gathered from the different narratives about David's rise to power. These include the suggestions:

> that David was a Judahite who entered the service of the king while still quite young; that he became, through gallantry and valour, but also through great cunning, a military leader under Saul; that he soon fell into disgrace, either because of the pathological jealousy of the king or else because Saul realized David's budding ambitions for the throne; that he was compelled to flee from the royal court; that he enlisted a small but efficient personal army; …that at Saul's death he became king, first of Judah, then of Israel.[729]

Towards the end of Saul's rule, David seems to have grown into a rival to be reckoned with. The biblical account in the book of Samuel portrays David as a victim of Saul's pathological jealousy. The king, worried about the ever-mounting fame of the young David, sees in him a threat to his throne and his dynasty and undertakes to persecute him. The traditions that present David as unjustly persecuted while he is the one predestined by Yahweh to rule over Israel are not overt about the concrete actions he may have undertaken to realize this destiny. David seems not to have been totally passive in this competition for power and Saul's suspicions concerning David's ambitions were not necessarily groundless. In contrast to his portrait as somebody constantly refraining from laying his hand on his rival and from fighting his way to the throne, a different picture of him appears in his dialogue with Abigail. This wise woman clearly advises David to

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[727] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 333.
[728] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 334.
[729] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 335.

refrain from fighting his way to the throne, but rather to allow the Lord to accomplish that which he has spoken concerning him (1 Samuel 25:28-31). Preston sees, in this incident, David betraying his interest in being king and his resolve to take vengeance on those who thwart this ambition.[730]

Faced with the hostility of his master, David is said to have withdrawn from Saul's court to the southern hills of Judah, where he became the leader of all those who had any kind of grudge against Saul's regime. While he was at loggerheads with Saul, David endeavoured to maintain cordial relations with Judah so that, even from his exile, he would send gifts to the elders of Judah with whom he remained in contact (1 Samuel 30:26-31). This attitude can be perceived as part of David's campaign for the high position he was expecting to occupy one day. When later he felt that he was not out of Saul's reach in Judah, he sought and obtained protection from Saul's enemies, the Philistines. It is suggested that David's alliance with the Philistines was not necessarily out of desperation, as if he had exhausted all other means of self-preservation, but was part of his astute tactics.[731] Incidents related to Saul's jealousy are part of the story about the rise of David[732] and, as such, this story is likely to be biased in favour of David glossing over his share of responsibility. David's real ambitions and intentions become clear after Saul's death.

6.2.2.2 David's reign in Hebron: a tribal monarchy

Contrary to the traditions that presented David as a popular hero, divinely elected to take over Saul's throne, David clearly did not expect to be the first choice of the people of Israel to succeed Saul so he did not waste his time waiting for all Israel to crown him. Forgetting for a while about the northern tribes, he worked first on the people of Judah with whom he had kinship ties. He moved back to Hebron, to be crowned king over Judah. The biblical account gives limited details on the circumstances surrounding David's crowning at Hebron. It is reported that after he had consulted an oracle he went

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[730] Preston, R. T. "The heroism of Saul: Patterns of Meaning in the Narrative of the Early Kingship" in Exum, J. C. ed. *The Historical Books*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1997, p 134.

[731] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 345.
[732] Hayes, A. D. H. "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy, p 326.

up to Hebron and the men of Judah came to anoint him (2 Samuel 2:1-4). David's active role in conquering the throne at Hebron is not explicit. Soggin suspects that David had already occupied Hebron and the men of Judah in crowning him were not acting on their own free will but were recognizing and legitimatizing a *de facto* situation which was in fact now irreversible and which may have reduced somehow their power of decision-making.[733] This allegation is not clearly confirmed, but as the northern tribes did not spontaneously crown Ishbaal until later, when they were invited to do so by Abner, one can surmise that David found ways of encouraging or urging the elders of Judah to crown him, as he did later after the thwarted rebellion of Absalom.

Whatever arrangements David may have made to ascend to the throne in Judah, he needed to confer on his move a degree of legitimacy. This was brought by involvement of the elders. The appeal to the elders for legitimating David's kingship is perceived as an indication that the elders, probably leaders of various lineages, had the prerogative of electing the kings on behalf of the rest of the society.[734] Lemche sees in this power held by the elders as an indication that the introduction of the monarchy was not synonymous with the dissolution of the tribal society. To the contrary, he argues, the tribal society not only still existed but, in addition to being an important social factor, it played a political role of some importance, at least at the beginning of the monarchical period.[735]

As much as the continued influence of tribal society is observed in the crowning of David in Hebron as a military chieftain, aspects of movement away from the *status quo* could be noted in the north. On the death of Saul, the northern tribes apparently remained united around the house of their master. More consistent with tribal society would have been either for each tribe to remain autonomous or for the elders from the northern tribes to appoint a new military chief of the confederation and Abner was a good candidate for this position. Abner seems to have spent about five years trying to reorganize both the army and probably other aspects of public life, before allowing Ishbaal to inherit his father's throne. During this interregnum, Abner is thought to have functioned as a king in

[733] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 44.
[734] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*., p 137.
[735] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*., p 138.

everything but name,[736] because he was never appointed to that position. Abner may have harboured some ambitions for the highest position (2 Samuel 3:7-11), but, despite his influence and fame, he probably noticed that the people were in favour of the idea of the continuation of Saul's dynasty. The people's loyalty to a weak prince Ishbaal, who was preferred to a charismatic military chief, can be seen in the context of a step in the movement towards the perpetuation of a dynastic monarchy.

In assuming the crown over Judah, David seems to have exploited the indifference, or perhaps enjoyed the support of the Philistines, who should have been happy to see Israel divided.[737] But David's plan was not limited to assuming kingship over a tribal kingdom of Judah. His reign in Hebron was meant to be a springboard for military expeditions such as for the conquest of Jerusalem, and for laying diplomatic foundations materialised by alliances such as the one sealed by David's marriage with a princess of Geshur and possibly ties with Ammon (inferred from 2 Samuel 10:2). This strategy enabled him to outflank the northern tribes of Israel and thus facilitate the achievement of his second phase, namely, the conquest of northern Israel.[738] Malamat saw in David a man who was driven by the universal motivations which have steered all political figures to success: attainment of security, attainment of power, attainment of glory.

6.2.2.3 David king of Israel and Judah: a dual monarchy

David's intention to extend his rule to the north could already be noticed in the content of the letter that he addressed to the people of Jabesh-Gilead, praising them for giving a honourable burial to Saul and his sons (2 Samuel 2:5-7). At the end of this letter he exhorts these northern people to strengthen their hands and be valiant, reminding them that their master Saul is dead, and that the house of Judah has anointed him king over them. The intention is certainly to invite the people of the north to do something similar.[739]

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[736] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 347.
[737] Soggin, J. A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 349.
[738] Malamat, A. "The Kingdom of David and Solomon; Relations with Egypt" in Ishida, T. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*. 1982, p 192.
[739] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 346.

David's diplomatic approach to winning over the north seems not to have yielded the expected results. This may explain his resolve to resort to military means (2 Samuel 2:12-3:1). Northern Israel, still recovering from the defeat inflicted by the Philistines, was weak in the face of the mounting pressure from David's army. Abner's commitment to supporting his master's son was eroded by Ishbaal's accusation that Abner was seeking his own succession to the throne of Saul. In an apparent attempt to secure a safe and prominent position under the command of David, who was certain to emerge the victor over the inept Ishbaal, Abner is reported to have facilitated the transference of the throne to David, by convincing the elders of Israel and the whole house of Benjamin to submit to David (2 Samuel 3:17-19).[740] Meanwhile, David had secured for himself the capacity of legitimate successor to Saul's throne by claiming and receiving back his wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, so that after the death of Saul and his sons David was in the line of succession to the throne of his father-in-law.[741] In clinging to Michal, David cleverly employed optative affiliation as one ground upon which he could appeal to northern support.[742]

After the death of Abner and Ishbaal, the elders of the northern tribes seem to have had no other option but to submit to David. Their decision to anoint him is reported to have been based on a threefold motivation, namely, kinship: "indeed we are your bone and your flesh"; David's military success: "you are the one who led Israel out and brought them in" and appeal to the choice by the deity: "the Lord said to you, you shall shepherd my people" (2 Samuel 5:1-2). These good words, that portray David as a ruler desired and loved by the men of Israel, were surely not shared by many former followers of Saul who, like Meyers, rather saw David as a usurper. In Meyers' opinion, David was a widely successful usurper, but the later pro-Davidic narrative of the DH justifies his replacement

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[740] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 346.

[741] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 46.

[742] Flanagan, J. W. "Chiefs in Israel" in Carter, C.E. and Carol, L. Meyers. eds. *Community, Identity and Ideology*, p 324. Flanagan, following Jobling, argues that David's marriage to Michal and his insistence that she be returned before negotiations with Abner could begin must be viewed in the light of the intrigues and indeterminacy that was caused by the deaths and disabilities in Saul's house. The daughter's importance for David's rise within the north can hardly be overestimated. In ways similar to the case of Zalophehad's daughters, in Numbers 27 and 36, the issue was inheritance and succession rights of brotherless daughters. Flanagan, J. W. "Chiefs in Israel" in Carter, C.E. and Carol, L. Meyers. eds. *Community, Identity and Ideology*, p 323.

of Saul's line. Having established a loyal patronage among Judeans, the army and a priestly faction, David was well situated to move into the position of God's chosen one, once Saul had died.[743] Not much different from Meyers's view is Soggin's submission that David's success in conquering the throne was due to his ability to skilfully exploit his own position of strength, the chaos prevailing in the north and the benevolent neutrality of the Philistines towards him, by having himself successfully crowned king of Judah and then of Israel.[744]

David's accomplishment of having himself crowned king of both Judah and Israel is perhaps rightly perceived as one of his most important achievements.[745] However, uniting Israel and Judah under one monarch could not be equated with uniting the tribes, as Aharoni seems to suggest.[746] The unity of the kingdom had many challenges and some of them outlived David's reign. The unity of the kingdom of Israel under David had to reckon with the presence and interest of the Philistines. Formerly strategically allied to David, the Philistines may have viewed with favour or indifference David's rise to power in Hebron, as Soggin surmises. [747] However, they may not have felt comfortable seeing him extend his rule to the northern tribes. He was surely becoming too powerful a vassal. Their apparent attempt to stop him failed and it is after he defeated them twice that they were obliged to recognize his supremacy (2 Samuel 5:17-21; 23-25). It is probably after these Philistine campaigns that David captured Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-9). Jerusalem was a Jebusite city, a territory which was wedged between Judah and Benjamin and made communications difficult between the centre and the south.[748] The conquest of Jerusalem is viewed as David's main step taken to consolidate his power from within, after he had become free from external danger,[749] and its conversion into the royal capital as the first and most decisive action and a choice of genius.[750] The new capital was strategically well

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[743] Meyers, C. "Kinship and Kingship: the Early Monarchy" in Coogan, M.D. ed. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, p 266.
[744] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 50.
[745] Kaiser, W. C. Jr. *A History of Israel*, p 262.
[746] Aharoni, Y. *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel*. London: SCM Press. 1982, p 192.
[747] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 349.
[748] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 55.
[749] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic kingdom", p 350.
[750] Aharoni, Y. *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel*, p192.

located not only with respect to its defence against enemies, but also for its historical and topographical independence of tribal allotments that made it possible for it to belong fully to the crown. Located midway between Israel to the north and Judah to the south, the city offered a strategic political location and, of course, had not been involved in the recent struggles between Davidic Judah and Saulide Israel.[751]

David's conquest of Jerusalem could be seen as a step toward the unification of 'Israel'. However, the geographical unification seems not to have been followed with unity among the tribes. De Vaux has noted that, in acknowledging David as their king, the men of Israel did not rally to the kingdom, already established, of Judah, nor was Judah absorbed by the more populous Israel. Just as the men of Judah had anointed David king over the kingdom of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4), so the men of Israel anointed him king over Israel (2 Samuel 5:3).[752] The political union of Israel and Judah at this stage has been defined as a "personal union", meaning a form of government by which two or more nations, politically independent of one another, have the same sovereign, but each has its own administrative organization.[753] Disagreeing with this description, Malamat preferred to see this union as a *Realunion,* which is formed by two political entities joining together to become a single legal entity in its external aspect, while remaining composite internally. The unity is expressed, *inter alia*, in a united army and a united foreign policy.[754] All these views point to one thing: the united monarchy was not totally united.

The historical separation and independence of Israel and Judah remained a challenge to their unity, but this was not the only challenge that there was for David's united kingdom. Having vanquished the Philistines, who constituted Israel's immediate threat, and established his capital in Jerusalem, David embarked on a series of campaigns against neighbouring nations. According to biblical traditions, David was able, through conquest and alliances, to expand his kingdom, which he transformed into an empire. This empire comprised territories with differing status. In addition to Israel and Judah, there was

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[751] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 350.
[752] De Vaux, R. *Ancient Israel: its Life and Institutions*, p 95.
[753] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*. 1985, p 62.
[754] Malamat, A. "The Kingdom of David and Solomon; Relations with Egypt", p 194.

Jerusalem and Ziklag, belonging to the dynasty in a personal form, there were various territories conquered and cities annexed, as well as kingdoms that had accepted a vassal relationship. Such complex structure gave rise to equally complex and often contradictory situations.[755] The presence in these territories of people of ethnic and religious diversity and with a natural tendency to seek to regain independence, was likely to complicate their administration.

In Soggin's view, with the rather loose composition of David's kingdom, religion was the main uniting or dividing factor. Soggin postulates the probability of an attempt carried out by the government to create something like a national religion, which would bind together all subjects of the realm. It is against this background that Soggin sees David's decision to bring the ark to Jerusalem, his newly acquired "federal" capital, as well as his foiled plan to build a temple.[756] In the political field, David's reign is said to have brought a period of peace and prosperity after the early war-filled years. But some tensions and open rebellion reported in the succession narrative reveal that unity remained fragile, especially between the two Hebrew entities. Meyers has observed that state systems break down as a result of jealousies among leadership factions over the prerequisite of being at the top of a distribution system that clearly advantages the king and his courtiers.[757] This applied to Israel and Judah under David.

6.2.2.4 Cracks in the united monarchy

In succeeding to Saul's throne, David displaced many of the followers of Saul, whose privileges he jeopardized and who always perceived him as a usurper. There were certainly many Benjamites who agreed with Saul's conviction that the throne should remain within Benjamin and the northern allies (1 Samuel 22:7). They harboured bitter feelings toward the "usurper" of their privileges. If they kept quiet it was simply because they could not safely challenge him. When David was placed in a weaker position some of them used the opportunity to speak their minds. This is what was observed during the event of Absalom's *coup* and its offshoot, the rebellion of Sheba.

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[755] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 59.
[756] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 59.
[757] Meyers, C. "Kinship and Kingship: The Early Monarchy", p 266.

6.2.2.4.1 Absalom's revolt

Absalom is likely to have been David's eldest living son when he organised a plot against his father (2 Samuel 3: 2-5)[758] Absalom's attitude is not easily understandable, since he was the heir apparent and normally he did not need to attempt to take power by force. But given his earlier estrangement from his father after the murder of Amnon, it may seem that Joab's mediation had not totally healed the rift. It appears that Absalom had reason to suspect that he was not his father's favourite for the succession. He decided to force his way to the throne, following the pattern of now familiar *coup d'état,* whereby those who want to overthrow existing regimes find a weakness to put forward in justification for their irregular venture. The main weakness stressed in biblical sources that Absalom used to rally the people around his project was spotted in the legal administration, in which allegedly no official or king's representative was available to listen to the complaints of the people.

Absalom is portrayed as exploiting the grievances of the people, but not inventing their complaints, which may have been real. In Anderson's opinion, such complaints may have included issues concerning military duties, taxation, forced labour, or royal encroachment, in general, since, as Anderson observes, in other situations it would have been difficult for Absalom to give plausible opinion or judgments, day after day, in the absence of opposing legal parties and witnesses.[759] Absalom may have been feeding the ears of the complaining people with an innovative proposal of a relevant office while, in David's view, royal authority was far too important to be delegated to some other person. Therefore, for practical reasons, it was difficult to gain access to the king in order to obtain a hearing and to penetrate the "defences" of bureaucracy.[760] The same analysis of the situation is provided by Tadmor, who believes that David created a ramified bureaucratic system, a well-developed class of stewards, whose power derived from the king himself and not from any local, tribal-territorial factors. In so doing, the king was

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[758] The eldest son, Amnon, was dead and the silence about David's second son, Chileab, in the whole succession narrative may indicate that he was no longer alive, either.
[759] Anderson, A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*, p 194.
[760] Anderson, A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*, p 194.

now cut off from the people by a strong bureaucracy which, though impartially inclined to various tribes, gave much cause for unrest and anger, in that it prevented the people from reaching the king (the supreme judge) as easily as they had expected.[761]

The rebellion of Absalom, which Anderson considers to be the most serious revolt in Israel's history[762] may have involved a wide range of factors, going beyond the grievances concerning the administration of justice. With reference to the possible motives that encouraged the people to abandon David and to rally around Absalom, it was suggested that David's imperialistic policy and his behaviour in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah[763] may have provoked much disapproval in certain circles and that David's position was weak in Israel, where the charismatic and democratic kind of leadership had a stronger background than was the case in Judah. [764] Other motives suggested by various people as being behind the people's discontent with David include David's ruthlessness in war;[765] the struggle between pre-monarchical elements in Israel-Judah and the bureaucracy created by David;[766] and inter-tribal rivalries.[767]

Elaborating more on the aspect of tribal rivalries in this event, Tadmor has recorded that Judah and its traditional leadership played a major role in Absalom's conspiracy. He notes, especially, that Absalom's kingship was proclaimed at Hebron, the sacred city of Judah, his commander-in-chief was Amasa, a Judahite, and his advisor was Ahithofel, a

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[761] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy; Social and Political Tensions in the Time of David and Solomon", in Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 248.

[762] Anderson, A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*, p 195.

[763] Tadmor evokes the possibility that Ahitophel, one of the personalities who abandoned David to support Absalom, could be Bathsheba's grandfather. This would be so if the same Eliam, father of Bathsbeba (2 Samuel 11:13), is the Eliam, son of Ahithofel the Gilonite (1 Samuel 23:24). In this case, estimates Tadmor, Ahithophel may have joined Absalon in seeking revenge for his granddaughter's disgrace. See Tadmor, H. "Traditional institutions and the monarchy; social and political tensions in the time of David and Solomon", in Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the period of David and Solomon and other essays*, p 247.

[764] Jagersma. H. *A history of Israel in the Old Testament Period*. London: SCM Press. 1982, p 109.

[765] Weingreen, J. "The Rebellion of Absalom" VT 19 (1969) 263-66, quoted in Anderson, A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*, p 195.

[766] Cohen, M. A. "The Rebellions During the Reign of David: An Inquiry Into Social Dynamics in Israel". In *Studies in Jewish Bibliographies, History, and Literature in Honor of Edward Kiev*, ed. C. Berlin. New York: Ktav,1971, 91-112. Quoted in Anderson, A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*, p 195.

[767] Gordon, R. P. *I and II Samuel: A Commentary*. Exeter: Paternoster Press. 1986. quoted in Anderson, A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*, p 195.

Judahite.[768] In Tadmor's analysis, the people of Judah and its tribal institutions found much cause for disappointment in David's reign because, up until Absalom's revolt, David did not give them the special status they had hoped for. Tadmor suspects that, during their negotiations with David at Hebron (2 Samuel 5:3), the Elders of Israel may have imposed some conditions in the nature of precautions, limiting the privileges of Judah and its preferred status in the new structure.[769] In Tadmor's estimation, David took special pains to consolidate his kingship outside the scope of narrow tribal interests and he showed no special favour to the traditional institutions of Judah, from the capture of Jerusalem up to the revolt of Absalom. One tangible example was the establishment of his capital in Jerusalem. This city, that lay outside the tribal realms, had now supplanted Hebron.[770]

David may have tried to show no special favour to his tribe of Judah, but this was not enough for soothing those who thought that it was at their expense that he had acquired power. These included Mephibosheth, who is reported to have expected the house of Israel to give him back the kingdom of his father when David was forced into exile by Absalom's *coup* (2 Samuel 16:3). To Campbell's question concerning the grounds on which Mephibosheth could have thought that the kingdom would be given back to him,[771] Flanagan suggested that Mephibosheth could have assumed that David had been a stand-in, who led in place of his wife Michal, perhaps for one generation or until Micah (Mephibosheth's son) achieved his majority.[772] David's moderate treatment of Mephibosheth may have been encouraged by the king's awareness that this prince still had in his northern constituency a significant number of people who could back him.

More vocal among the Saulides was Shimei, who used the occasion of Absalom's revolt to express openly how his people viewed David's rise to power. Shimei cursed David, calling him bloodthirsty (2 Samuel 16:5-8). While the biblical traditions portray David's rise to power as brought about by Yahweh's support and achieved without bloodshed on

[768] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 247.
[769] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 248.
[770] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 248.
[771] Campbell, A.F. S.J. *2 Samuel*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans. 2005, p 149.
[772] Flanagan, J. W. "Chiefs in Israel, p 322,(brackets added).

David's part, Shimei gives utterance to a diametrically opposed view of David. To him, David is a man of blood; he has killed his way to power; he is now paying for the blood of the house of Saul. Campbell saw in these words, attributed to Shimei, an indication that a different view of the rise of David may have existed at the time.[773] The words of Shimei expressed the animosity between David's house and the house of Saul and the deep rift that existed between the two factions.

Shimei did not mention any names of those David may have killed, but he could be alluding to the death of Saul and his three sons in the battle with the Philistines, then David's allies; he could be referring to the death of Ishbaal, but especially the reference could be to David permitting the wholesale slaughter of Saul's family, in what was presented as a blood feud with the Gibeonites (2 Samuel 21:1-9). This massacre cost the lives of all surviving male heirs in Saul's house, except for Jonathan's son, the crippled Mephibosheth, and his son Michah (2 Samuel 21:7). In Flanagan's view, Shimei, a supporter of Saul's house, was alluding to this massacre when he cursed David for his complicity in the extermination of Saul's house. Viewed more widely, Shimei's accusation may imply that David clawed his way to power, aggregating superior military power until he was finally in a position to force the house of Saul from the throne of Israel.[774] This is the perception that is likely to have been shared by many northerners especially among the Benjamites and their allied northern tribes.

David was able to quell his son's rebellion, thanks to his personal troops, but the death of Absalom did not mean automatic restoration of his father to the throne. David still needed to placate the people who, for various reasons, had rallied around his rebellious son. David's first attention was to the people of his tribe. Tadmor thinks that, after the rebellion had been quelled David took stock of the situation and realized that he could not reign as a king over the united monarchy unless he used Judah as a power base.[775] It is reported that while all the tribes were discussing the way forward, after the death of Absalom, David sent messengers to elders of Judah (2 Samuel 19:11). The mission

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[773] Campbell, A.F. S.J. *2 Samuel*, p 150.
[774] Campbell, A.F. S.J. *2 Samuel*, p 151.
[775] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 249.

assigned to David's messenger was either to advise or to command the elders of Judah to go and meet him at the Jordan to welcome him as a king.[776] Tadmor suggests, rather, that the religious leaders were sent to negotiate the restoration of David to the throne. And for Tadmor, these negotiations included the issue of the preferred status of Judah, which was immediately raised in the crossing of the Jordan. David may have promised the Judahites certain advantages, perhaps preference in the nomination of officials, or alleviation of forced labour requirements.[777]

Whatever promise David may have made to his people of Judah is not revealed. What is clearly reported is that he appealed to his kinship with them to win them back. Kinship-based self-definition, once used by Saul in his attempt to protect his throne from the threatening camp of David, reappears in David's diplomatic attempt to recover his throne after Absalom's death. His argument is that, since these elders are his brethren, his bone and his flesh, they should not be the last in restoring him to his throne (2 Samuel 19: 11-12). Here David uses a tribal kind of "ammunition" to re-conquer his throne. He used the same argument to win back Amasa, former commander of the army under Absalom, whom he promised the position of commander of his own army in the place of Joab (2 Samuel 19:13). Kaiser sees in this tactic a move intended to serve as an olive branch and a sign that all who had supported Absalom would receive clemency.[778]

Clemency was used especially in David's approach to the people from the north who had expressed their grudges against him. David's reconciling attitude towards Shimei can be viewed in this light (2 Samuel 19:18-30). Perdue saw in David's forgiving attitude to Shimei a deceit motivated by his awareness that this Saulide had with him a thousand men from Benjamin (2 Samuel 19:17-24).[779] In Perdue's analysis, David recognised that it was not an auspicious time for dispatching his rival, but he also knew that one day a

[776] Jagersma. H. *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period,* p 109.
[777] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 249.
[778] Kaiser, W. C. Jr. *A History of Israel,* p 262.
[779] Perdue, L.G. "Is There Anyone Left of the House of Saul…? Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative" in Exum, J. C. ed. *The Historical Books*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 1997, p 181.

better, more convenient occasion would surely arise for settling old debts.[780] The treatment reserved to Mephibosheth is to be understood in the same way. David knew that the execution of Jonathan's son would only alienate the tribe of Saul, while by giving to Ziba half of his former master's land to repay his loyalty, the king reminded Mephibosheth that it was David who now had the real power in Israel [781]

The death of Absolom had placed David's opposition in a weaker position. David had once again proved the superiority of his military skills and strength. He was now in a position to influence the course of events. The people who had openly rejected him had no other alternative but to show at least outwardly, that they were now behind him. The ability of a not-so-popular king to get support from the people who seem to have had good reason to reject him or, at least, to remain indifferent about his fate, can find its parallel in many cases of contemporary veteran leaders in Africa and in Rwanda, in particular. Leaders in Rwanda have always been able to force a display of an alleged overwhelming popular support, expressed not only through "free and fair" elections, but even through streets demonstrations. Among those who went to meet David at Jordan, were many who, a few days earlier, had almost spontaneously supported the rebellion to topple him. Most of those who did not like David's rule showed their genuine feelings when he was on the run. Once he had shown that he could still "bite", they competed with each other to show him their support.

After Absalom's revolt, David was able to win back both the northern and the southern tribes, but not to unite them. Rather, his attitude toward their competitive claims soon became apparent to the point of igniting an open conflict and another rebellion. In David's restored kingship, the men of Judah argued that, on the basis of their kinship relation with David, they should have pre-eminence. The northern tribe would not tolerate this, arguing that pre-eminence be theirs, considering that they were in majority. The quarrel between the men of Israel and the men of Judah was marked by the use of the

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[780] Perdue, L.G. "Is there anyone left of the house of Saul…"?, p 181.
[781] Perdue, L.G. "Is there anyone left of the house of Saul…"?, p 181.

binary opposition "you" versus "others", a common feature of ethnic self-definition.[782] Fokkelman has recorded that the Israelite tribes addressed their complaints to David, but the response came from the men of Judah. He understands, then, the final comment "the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel" (2 Samuel 19:43) suggested that the Judeans' arguments seemed, to David, weightier than those of the Israelites.[783] In any case, it seems that the northern tribes, that initially intended to welcome David back were happy neither with the Judeans' behaviour nor with David's attitude. The extent of the offence was such as to justify the rejection of David's kingship over the northern tribes, expressed in what is known as the revolt of Sheba.

6.2.2.4.2 Unity in jeopardy: Sheba's revolt

Sheba was certainly among the Benjamites who perceived David as a usurper. Now that Sheba and his group were, probably reluctantly, compelled to submit to the rule they had rejected, they were discouraged by the provocative arrogance of their rival group. Flanagan believes that it was the long-standing feud between the two factions that fed the imagination of Sheba, as had been the case in Absalom's revolt.[784] Upset by the arrogance of the men of Judah, Sheba convinced or reminded the northern tribes that the "son of Jesse" had no legitimate claim to rule over them and that they were not bound to serve him. The northerners' early unifying statement "we have ten shares in the king…" (2 Samuel 19:43) was then easily reversed by Sheba's secessionist slogan:

> "We have no shares in David,
>
> no parts in Jesse's son!
>
> Every man to his tent O Israel!" (2 Samuel 20: 1)

Soggin finds in Sheba's cry an indication that the north had spontaneously entered the empire through the personal union and decided to leave when the original reasons for its

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[782] Brett, M. G. "Interpreting Ethnicity: Methods, Hermeneutics, Ethics". In Brett, M. G. ed. *Ethnicity and the Bible*. Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1996, p 10.

[783] Fokkelman, J. P. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel. Vol. 1. King David (II Samuel 9-20 & I Kings 1-2)*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981, p 316, quoted in Anderson. A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel*. Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher. p 239.

[784] Flanagan, J. W. "Chiefs in Israel", p 320.

involvement no longer existed.[785] Sheba's argument was convincing enough to turn the people against David (2 Samuel 20:2) and to rally his own followers from all the tribes (2 Samuel 20:14). David took Sheba's threat very seriously. He realized that the situation was far more dangerous than Absalom's revolt. His very right to rule the ten tribes of Israel was now being denied and his kingship, as king of Israel and Judah, was put to a severe test.[786] Absalom's revolt was directed against David's person, but Sheba's revolt was directed against his dynasty![787]

As in the case of Absalom, it was because of David's superior military power that he was able to put down Sheba's rebellion. It appears, so thinks Soggin, that it was David's mercenary army which was able to prevail over the popular troops of the north, thanks to its greater efficiency and ruthlessness.[788] If it was easier for David to gain back the allegiance of his fellow Judeans, convincing them to invite him back to the throne, it appears that he needed military power to maintain his rule over the northern tribes, who wanted, but failed, to reject him. Soggin, who believes in the existence of a historical kernel in these narratives about the rebellions, thinks that they demonstrate that among the Israelite population the ideal of a United Kingdom encompassing the whole of Israel and Judah, and ruled over by David, rested on rather feeble foundations.[789] The rebellion that shook David's reign was a political expression of economic concerns. As Coogan has observed, states systems are usually not contested by a groundswell of public complaint against monarchic hierarchies, policies, conscriptions, or even taxes. Rather they break down as a result of jealousies among leadership factions over the perquisites of being at the top of a distribution system that clearly advantages the king and his courtiers.[790] Saul tried to keep the support of his courtiers by reminding them that it was not the Son of Jesse who would guarantee economic advantages to any of them (1 Samuel 22:7). He was right, because David had his own people and courtiers to satisfy, as a priority.

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[785] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 153*, p 65.
[786] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy", p 250.
[787] Jagersma. H. *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period,* p 110.
[788] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 361.
[789] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 361.
[790] Coogan, M.D. ed. *The Oxford History of Biblical World*, p 266.

6.2.2.5. Tribalism and nepotism during the reign of David

As his predecessor had done, David preferably surrounded himself with people from his own tribe. Joab, the army commander, and his two brothers, Asahel and Abishai, were David's nephews, the sons of his sister Zeruiah. Jonathan, another top army officer, was the son of Shimeah, David's brother (2 Samuel 21:21). David's own sons were royal advisors (2 Samuel 8:15-16). Amasa, son of Jether, who was appointed by Absalom to be his commander-in-chief, was a close relative of David (2 Samuel 17:27). David stressed their close relationship when he later offered him the same position in a bid to obtain his support after Absalom's coup had aborted. King Solomon, who succeeded David, had an example to follow and among his twelve district governors, at least two, Ben-Abinadab, governor of Naphoth-Dor, and Ahimaz, governor of Naphtali, were his sons-in-law.

David's reliance on the people of his tribe was observed from the beginning of his rise to power. As King Saul began to track David down, the first people who decided to rally around David were his own brothers (1Samuel 22:2). The safest place for him to hide was in his tribal land of Judah (1Samuel 22:5). He was wise enough to maintain a relationship of close friendship with the elders of his tribe, to whom he sent presents (1 Samuel 30:26), knowing that he needed their support to ascend to the throne. Commenting on David's use of economic favours to attract support, MacNutt explained:

> As chief, David paid his debts to his loyal clients by redistribution of portions of the newly acquired territory. This in turn stimulated further differentiation in wealth because of limited access to such limited resources. Those who had fought with David, his clients, eventually developed the kind of values typical of agrarian elites, seeking to broaden their powers of taxation and control of the agricultural surpluses that had previously been redistributed among the freeholding peasants of early Iron Age.[791]

It is not by chance or mere coincidence that the people who decided to anoint David king were his own tribesmen from Judah, while all other the tribes followed Saul's son Ish-Boshet (2 Samuel 2:8-9).

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[791] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 123.

The practice of nepotism and the adherence to the dynastic principles were used as instruments of favouritism, discrimination and exclusion, especially during the monarchical period. While the dynastic principle intended to ensure that the power remained within the family, the clan and the tribe that held power, nepotism was a practice by which privileges were granted to members of those social groups that held political power. These practices were very attractive and regarded as mutually benefiting by the leaders, on the one hand, and their kins-peoples, on the other. The whole system worked as a series of related transactions, by which the leaders granted positions and privileges and secured loyalty and support from the people they could generally trust the most for their physical security or the security of their positions. Participation in the privileges of power made the kins-people of the leaders the stakeholders of the regime that they were motivated to defend, because it stood and fell with them. As much as nepotism and the dynastic privilege made their beneficiaries happy, they also made unhappy those excluded from the privileges or denied of their full rights. The more privileges were given to some, the more others suffered exclusion and more jealousy was aroused resulting in tribal conflicts

Apparently David was able to "keep the lid" on internal opposition that rendered precarious the unity in the kingdom that he passed on to his son.[792] The economic character of the challenge to the unity of the kingdom became more evident.

6.2.3 Intertribal relations under the reign of Solomon

Biblical traditions portray Solomon as a wise and great emperor, who expanded and solidified the empire of Israel that he inherited from his father. Achievements credited to him include his building works, especially the building of the Temple, his foreign policies and diplomatic contacts, by which he secured an unprecedented era of peace for his kingdom and his active involvement in the sphere of trade and economic affairs.[793] These achievements, however, seem not to have positively impacted on the unity of the

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[792] Gottwald, N K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* p 184.
[793] Donner, H. "The interdependence of internal affairs and foreign policy during the Davidic-Solomonic period (with special regard to the Phoenician coast)" in Ishida, T. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*.Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha. 1982, p 209.

kingdom of Israel. The tribes that apparently contributed little to his rise to power seem to have more endured his regime than enjoyed it. This is what can be construed from the incidents of the revolt of Jeroboam and the rejection of Rehoboam after Solomon's death. The following section examines the impact of Solomon's reign on the relations between Israel and Judah.

6.2.3.1 Solomon's rise to power

Solomon's rise to power, as reported in the book of Kings, departs from the pattern observed in the cases of Saul and David. In each of these previous cases, the king is said to be chosen by God and acclaimed by the tribes. The account of Solomon's ascension to the throne seems not to make any such claims. As in the case of Ishbaal, the circumstances surrounding Solomon's rise to power seem to imply that dynastic succession was expected at this stage of state development. But, unlike Ishbaal, Solomon's succession to his father David's position was not automatic, since there was his senior brother Adonijah, who aspired to the same position and apparently was privileged by his seniority. Adonijah may have worried about his succession, either because of David's prolonged silence about it or, more probably, because he was aware of a plot to give the throne to his younger brother. Having succeeded in rallying part of the court leaders to his side, he made the first move and organised his coronation ceremony. Unfortunately for him, the opposing group succeeded in persuading the old David to appoint Solomon as his successor designate and Adonijah's plan was frustrated. Once his throne was secured, Solomon's next move was to get rid of his opponents.

In the process of his accession to power, Solomon seems to have ignored both the traditional role of the people, who normally acclaimed the designated king and the dynastic principle that gave priority to the senior son among the eligible heirs.[794] Soggin may be right in stressing that Solomon ascended the throne independent of both traditional, charismatic-democratic designation through the people and the institutional-dynastic criterion of legitimacy which has always been the accepted procedural pattern in

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[794] Jagersma. H. *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period,* p 111.

hereditary monarchies.[795] As for divine election, which was another requirement for the appointment of kings in early Israel, the account of Solomon's dream at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4-15), where Yahweh appears to him, is perceived to have a Deuteronomic origin and to provide Solomon's kingship with divine approval, which was initially lacking.[796] The noted irregularities that marked Solomon's accession to the throne did not prevent him from achieving greatness. But this success did not outlive him.

Solomon's accession to power marked a new phase in the existence of the kingdom of Israel. David had followed an aggressive policy of territorial expansion. Under him, new territories had been constantly added to the Palestinian nucleus. When Solomon ascended to the throne, the process of growth of the empire had come to an end.[797] It was now necessary to preserve and consolidate as far as possible the existing conditions, to go over to the defensive, to organize and to amalgamate.[798] This is what Solomon spent his time doing and he is reported to have achieved the following: the establishment of districts, mainly for the purpose of levying taxes, the reorganization of the military forces, the fortification programme, forced labour, the development of trade and commerce, the erection of new buildings, the development of Jerusalem as a cultural center.[799]

6.2.3.2 Centralisation at the expense of traditional tribal structure

The consolidation of the kingdom and the increased centralisation of its administration were further steps in the transition from tribal society to a state. In Lemche's opinion, the consolidation of the state was to be achieved at the expense of the traditional political significance enjoyed by the tribal society.[800] For Lemche, the attempted administrative subdivision of northern Israel was presumably intended to reduce the political influence of the northern tribes, by replacing the local form of leadership with that of a centralized

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[795] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 365.
[796] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 366.
[797] Malamat has outlined five phases on David's path to his empire, starting from tribal kingdom, to national kingdom, to consolidated territorial state, to multinational state and finally to empire. See Malamat, A. "The Kingdom of David and Solomon; Relations with Egypt" in Ishida, T. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 192.
[798] Donner, H. "The Interdependence of Internal Affairs and Foreign Policy", p 209.
[799] Donner, H. "The Interdependence of Internal Affairs and Foreign Policy", p 209.
[800] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*, p 139.

administration. The undermining of the tribal society that took a definite shape under Solomon meant that Israel was to be transformed into a state like those which had previously existed and the king was to be the only authority in the country, while the population was to be reduced to the status of his slave.[801] This view is not shared by Meyers who contends that the elders and all the people of Israel had a voice in governance and that the Israelite monarchy was not a strongly authoritarian regime and certainly not an oriental despotism. It is unlikely, argues Meyers, that Solomon, in establishing his twelve officials, was setting up new administrative districts in order to break down existing tribal boundaries and thus tribal loyalties.[802]

Even Lemche, who maintains that the survival of the monarchy depended on its capacity to destroy the political significance of the tribal society, thought that this was to be a process that was to take some time, so that the introduction of the monarchy was not synonymous with the dissolution of tribal society.[803] The coexistence of the monarchy and the tribal system has been described by Soggin as:

> two sets of contrasting elements: one centripetal, emanating from the palace, with the strong trend to eliminate, or at least to curtail, local autonomies in favour of the central, royal government; the other, centrifugal, emanated from the traditional organs of local government, had strong 'democratic' tendencies, and was quite ready to accept the united kingdom concept so long as it gave peace and prosperity, law and order. Its sustainers were, however, equally willing to reject the concept of the combined states as soon as it showed trends to overrule local government and to introduce forms of taxation, of levies, and of *corvées,* which were considered oppressive and alien and therefore iniquitous.[804]

The monarchy under Solomon may have brought peace, law and order to the people of Israel, but they seem not to have approved the cost they were asked to pay for its consolidation and its prosperity. Aspects of the central administration that may have kindled the people's bitterness include the system of labour and taxation.

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[801] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*. 1988, p 139.
[802] Meyers, C. "Kinship and Kingship" , p 259.
[803] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*, p138.
[804] Soggin, J.A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", p 356.

6.2.3.3 Consolidation and its cost to the people

Solomon's reign was marked by huge building projects. Beside the temple and the king's palace, that remained the centrepiece of his building programmes, he undertook to refortify strategic cities such as Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Beth Horon Baalath and Tamar. Most of these cities were built along the main trade route through the kingdom. These monumental cities, together with their temples, military palaces, administrative chambers and oversized granaries, were built by the people subjected to the *corvée,* under the supervision of Adoram.[805] A glimpse at what these projects cost to the people is provided in the biblical account in 1Kings 5:13-18. To build fortresses, palaces and the temple, Solomon reportedly enlisted a crew of 30,000 men from all over Israel. He deployed them in teams of 10,000 each for a month at a time in Lebanon and two months off at home. Their task was to cut, haul and ship timber from Lebanon. Solomon recruited 80,000 stonecutters and 70,000 basket carriers as forced labour. The staff that kept this army of workers at their tasks numbered 3,600. These scores of thousands were fed from state stores or forced to bring food from home stores. Other work could be done only by skilled craftspeople from the cities of the Phoenician coast, who required payment and feeding.[806] Scholars can debate, as they do, the exact terminology to use in describing the work imposed on the people at this time, whether forced labour, *corvée* or slavery. One thing that seems to be clear is the involuntary character of this labour. This was a kind of work, observes Soggin, which individuals and communities alike were unrelated and had to be therefore forced, because its aims were unimportant or even unknown to them.[807]

The same people who were sweating to support Solomon's building projects were also sustaining his army. David had maintained an economical army, with a small chariot corps and most garrisons inherited from the Philistines. His voluntary tribal infantry supported itself through normal subsistence. Solomon's army was differently organized. It included a larger standing army of charioteers, mercenaries and a drafted infantry. According to biblical record, Solomon's chariots numbered 1,400 (requiring at least

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[805] Coote, R.B. *In Defense of Revolution*. Minneapolis: Fortress.1991. p 51.
[806] Coote, R.B. *In Defense of Revolution*. p 52.
[807] Soggin, J. A. "Compulsory Labor David and Solomon" in Ishida, T. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 260.

4,200 horses, at three horses per chariot); and horsemen, up to 12,000. All these personnel were supported on food provided by the people. Chariots cost 600 shekels each and trained horses, 150 shekels (1Kings 10:26-29). The expense of this army to the people is shown in the following description:

> Each vehicle required three horses, so chariot and team came to 1,050 shekels. Then there were the accessory costs; crews, maintenance personnel, weapons, spare parts, housing for personnel, storage areas and repair shops, stables and fodder. Frequent disassembly and lubrification with olive oil were essential. The corps thus consumed a large quantity of the basic foodstuffs of Palestine. The horses required months of training, then ongoing practice and grooming by skilled personnel. The chariot army all told required an outlay on the order of 1, 470.000 shekels, leaving aside the expense of upkeep and renewal.[808]

Beside the requirements for his building projects and his army, Solomon subjected his people to financing the opulence of his palace. According to the biblical record, each day Solomon and his men and their families ate thirty sacks of flour, sixty sacks of meal, thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, assorted antelope and fowl and unspecified quantities of wine and oil. To this should be added the annual payment in kind to Hiram for his timber: 20,000 cors of wheat and 20 cors of pressed oil.[809] The burden of maintaining Solomon's regime weighed heavily on the people who were required to pay heavy taxes and *corvée*. It was recorded that the people endured the cost of Solomon's opulence more than they enjoyed the benefits of his prosperity.

> During Solomon's days Jerusalem became increasingly affluent. The wealth of the world flowed to Solomon's court and was reflected in the glory of the capital city. But bureaucracy grew as well. The nation's wealth was no longer based on the land and what it produced. Increasingly the government controlled the wealth of the land, and taxes drained wealth from the people and funnelled expenditure through the central government. The glory was a superficial thing; prosperity was not for the people as much as it was at the expense of the people.[810]

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[808] Coote, R.B. *In Defense of Revolution*. p 52.
[809] Estimated to 3,640 kilolitres of wheat and 420 kilolitres of oil. See estimate in the footnote for 2Chr 2:10 (Life Applicaton Study Bible) that adds also 3,640 kilolitres of barley and the same quantity of wine.
[810] Richards, Larry ; Richards, Lawrence O.: *The Teacher's Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1987, S. 247.

A feeling that they were not receiving an equitable share in the benefits of their hard labour exacerbated the bitterness of these exploited people. Exploitation may have involved aspects of tribalism and sectionalism.

6.2.3.4 Sectionalism and tribalism in Solomon's administration

Aspects of tribalism and sectionalism in Solomon's administration were pointed out by Halpern, who contended that King Solomon's military, administrative and economic policies were dictated by sectional Judahite interests. Halpern looks at sectionalism as the main cause of the schism and suggests that partisan conflicts in the united monarchy are traceable back to the time of David, especially from the time of the revolt of Absalom. Among the issues mentioned to underline Solomon's sympathies with Judah at the expense of the northern tribes are his attitude toward the revolts in the territory and the sale of Cabul, but especially his administrative reforms.[811] Both issues are described below.

Solomon's policies that could attract northern antipathy were first, his administrative policy. All of Israel, exclusive of Judah, was divided into twelve districts, over which Solomon appointed governors. This arrangement may have allowed Solomon through the representative of his regime to control the *corvée*, taxation and military levy. Lemche refers to this as an administrative apparatus used to squeeze the population for both revenue and labour.[812] While Judeans favoured by the crown had no problem with the royal power, northern leaders grumbled that the wealth of the capital did not sufficiently extend to them. During David's reign and much of Solomon's, the law of spoil and tribute meant that the tax burden for the royal building projects were minimal, or perhaps even non-existent, if David's failure to complete a census is any indication.[813]

Solomon's administrative arrangement helped him not only to pursue his policy of "stripping the north to clothe the south", but also to seize control of all political and

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[811] Halpern, B. "Sectionalism and Schism." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974) 519-532
[812] Lemche, P. L. *Ancient Israel: A new History of Israelite Society*, p 139.
[813] Coogan, M. D. *The Oxford history of the biblical world*, p 267.

economic machinery, at the expense of northern tribal elders.[814] The challenging attitude of the tribal leaders at the time of Rehoboam's coronation at Shechem (1 Kings 12:1-5) is sometimes understood in this context. They united against a regime that ignored them and usurped their authority. Under the leadership of Ephraim, the northern tribes stood their ground and resisted a regime that had become not only exploitative and oppressive but also totalitarian and exclusivist. They rejected a regime that was frustrating their ambition of having a significant role to play in the leadership of the country and a significant share in the benefits.

Halpern notes a contrast between Solomon's treatment of the revolts in the earlier captured territories. He suggests that while Solomon did not waste any time in quelling the revolt led in the south by King Hadad of Edom (1 Kings 11:14-22), he seems not to have shown the same enthusiasm in defending the north from the revolt of Rezon, who went as far as seizing Damascus, then Solomon's provincial capital (1Kings 11: 23-25). In Halpern's opinion, Solomon's inability or unwillingness to deal properly with the Damascus insurrection may have been felt by the northern tribes as reflecting his preoccupation with, and predilection for, the affairs of Judahite defence.[815]   Also significant to the northern tribes was the alienation of the plain of Akko, the Cabul region, given by Solomon to Hiram of Tyre, in exchange for 120 talents of gold (1 Kings 9:10-14). It seems that the proceeds of this sale of a northern land were used for the fortification of the south. This discrimination may have been part of the reasons for the attempted coup by Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:27).

6.2.3.5 The revolt of Jeroboam

During the reign of David the challenge against his house's right to rule over Israel came mainly from the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe had once enjoyed the privilege of leadership under Saul's reign and was not ready to give up those privileges without a fight. But David had prevailed and his house was established, while the Benjamites grew weaker. In the time of Solomon, the tribe of Ephraim, that was reported to have been

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[814] Halpern, B. "Sectionalism and Schism", p 530
[815] Halpern, B. "Sectionalism and Schism", p 522.

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prominent in the times of Joshua and of the prophet Samuel, re-emerged. They took leadership of the northern tribes and led the opposition that successfully challenged the house of David. From a socio-political point of view, the division of the kingdom of Israel resulted from the mistakes of the house of David that provided a ground for his rival tribes to rebel against his leadership. The attitude of the men of Ephraim, such as Jeroboam and Ahijah, who led the opposition, became decisive in the division of the kingdom.

Jeroboam was one of Solomon's officials, who became his most challenging enemy. Impressed by Jeroboam's abilities while he was building the Millo at Jerusalem, Solomon had promoted him to the position of overseer of the labour force over the house of Joseph (Kings 11:27-28), often identified as the district of Ephraim,[816] and Manasseh.[817] Coote thinks that in this position Jeroboam was given sufficient power to enable Solomon to evade the established strongmen of the fractious territory of Joseph and still hold it.[818] Solomon may have found it wiser to assign the task of implementing his unpopular policies in Ephraim, a place where they were most likely to be resisted, to an influential local man. Strategies of this kind were often noted in Rwandan politics, where penetration into perceived hostile constituencies was attempted by putting forward selected influential individuals from the targeted communities.[819]

Contrary to what Solomon may have expected, Jeroboam's promotion did not make him subservient to the regime. He soon "raised his hand" against Solomon." This obscure expression has been understood as indicating an act of revolt or rebellion. Rabbinic exegesis circumscribed Jeroboam's rebellious act as inciting the public against Solomon, especially concerning the harsh levy of the king.[820] In the narrative, the revolt is

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[816] Kaiser, W. C. Jr. *A History of Israel: From Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*, p 285.
[817] Coote, R. *In Defense of Revolution: The Elohist History*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1991, p 64.
[818] Coote, R. *In defense of revolution: the elohist history*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1991, p 64.
[819] This strategy was noted in the appointment of Rukeba, perceived to be a Hutu, to the top leadership of UNAR, a monarchist party opposed by the Hutu; in Habyarimana's strategy of spotting southern individuals sent to represent his MRND party in the south of the country, where the party was very unpopular. The same strategy may explain the presence of carefully selected Hutu individuals at the top leadership of the RPF, a party perceived to be essentially Tutsi.
[820] Cogan, M. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p 338.

presented as initiated by Yahweh as a way of his judgment against Solomon. Jeroboam's attitude toward Solomon changed at the instigation of Ahijah, a prophet sent by Yahweh to initiate the implementation of this judgment. It seems, however, that the position given to Jeroboam put him in a better position to notice the regime's oppressive policies that his fellow northerners were subjected to and about which they later complained.

Jeroboam's identification and sympathy with the people of his tribe and his region may have prompted him to distance himself from the regime, which had become unpopular in the north. This can be deduced from his ability to maintain good relations with the exploited people. They were probably aware of his position against the forced labour he was sent to supervise. When the time came for the people to speak out against it they knew that they could count on him and they called him. On the other hand, Jeroboam may have wanted to use this socio-economic situation as an occasion or a pretext for fulfilling the ambition he may have always nourished to climb to the top, lead the secession and become king. As a mighty man of valour, he had the qualities that the tribal communities were looking for in a leader, similar to the pre-monarchical judges or the subsequent kings such as Saul or David. The involvement of the prophet Ahijah from Shilo has led to the interpretation that the religious group in Shilo may have backed the revolt against Solomon and this could result from rivalry between Shilo and Jerusalem.[821] Like Absalom, Jeroboam seems to have enjoyed enough popularity to inspire in him a desire to aspire for the top seat.

In one way or the other, the contemplated possibility of Jeroboam's becoming king at Solomon's expense may have reached the incumbent king, who then sought to kill his rival and thwart his plans. Jeroboam fled to Egypt and Solomon seems to have been able to keep the unrest under control, but without mending the rift. As Kaiser stated:

> For forty years Solomon ruled his people, but the seed of defection from the union had been established in his own day. Though he would die before the fruits of

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[821] Jagersma. H. *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period,* p 122.

some of his disastrous policies would come to fruition, the division of the kingdom was now beyond repair or remediation.[822]

Perhaps the remedy was still possible, had Solomon's son and successor, Rehoboam, been wiser. Unfortunately, as seen in the preceding chapter, unity and harmony were apparently not the priorities of the new king and his preferred advisors around him. Their failure to identify with the pain endured by the northerners and the concern not to lose the privileges that they had become accustomed to prevented them from correctly appreciating the socio-economic situation and its political implications. It was the short-sighted position of these Judahites in power that took the division of the kingdom beyond repair.

The division of the kingdom was "one of the most decisive and traumatic events in Israel's long history".[823] At the division, the Davidic Empire dissolved neither Israel nor Judah, being capable of holding its constituent states together. It was an opportunity for the countries previously conquered by David to claim their independence. "Israel and Judah, therefore, were left as two of the half-dozen or so minor kingdoms in Palestine, whose fortunes during the succeeding centuries were to be determined by greater powers from outside, namely Damascus, Syria, Egypt and Babylon".[824] The division became a remote cause for the deportation of God's people, an event that put an end to the enjoyment of one major aspect of God's promise to his chosen people, namely the promise of the land.

Although it was generally thought that the disagreement over the people's demand for the relaxation of the corvée was the main bone of contention that led to the division[825], this was just one aspect of the problem. Many more socio-economic issues contributed to fostering the alienation of the northern tribes from Judah, even before the Shechem crisis. This chapter has shown that the Shechem crisis had its roots in the early history of Israel.

[822] Kaiser, W. C. Jr. *A History of Israel: From Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*., p 285.

[823] Merill, Eugene H. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament in Israel.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 1992, p 315.

[824] Heaton, E.W. 1968. *The Hebrew Kingdoms.* Oxford, U.K. Oxford University Press. p 6.

[825] Cogan, M. *The Anchor Bible: 1 Kings*. New York: Doubleday. 1964, p 351

A tribalistc connotation noted in the dispute led some like Mercer [826] and Brindle[827] to argue that tribal jealousy was the primary cause of the division of the monarchy. Of course tribalistic tendencies were noticed in both the discriminatory attitude of the Jerusalem regime against the north and in the secessionist cry of the northerners against the pre-eminence of David and his "house":

> "We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse;
> To your tent, O Israel!
> Now look after your own house, David!" (1 Kings 12:16).

It is helpful to differentiate the root causes of the conflict from the way it was expressed. Israelite conflict, like the Rwandan conflict, took a tribal line, but was not rooted in tribal differences. The tribes separated not because of their tribal differences, but because of their failure to agree on the way to fairly share the resources available to them all.

The Deuteronomistic editor, believed to be responsible for this version of the narrative, explains the division underlining Solomon's idolatry as the main sin that called for Yahweh's judgment (1Kings 11: -13). He sinned against Yahweh by marrying many foreign women who led him to worship their gods. However, even for this editor, Solomon's sin may have been broader than idolatry alone. His attitude towards material possession (1Kings 10: 14-29) was contrary to God's will (Deuteronomy 17:14-17). His attitude towards the people (1Kings 5:13-18) epitomises the negative aspect of the monarchy that made it displeasing to Yahweh (1Sam 8:10-18). Solomon's sin consisted of both his disloyalty to Yahweh and his oppression of the people. Brindle (1974, 232) suggests that Solomon gradually entered into open violation of three divine rules Yahweh had given to govern the conduct of kings: (1) he multiplied military forces with chariots and horsemen (Deuteronomy 17:16; (2) he loved many foreign women (Deuteronomy 17:17); (3) he amassed silver and gold (Deuteronomy 17:17). Solomon's extravagance

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[826] Buconyori, E.A. ed. *Tribalism and Ethnicity*. Nairobi, Kenya: The AEA Theological and Christian Education Commission. 1977, pp 85-112.

[827] Brindle, W.A. "The Causes of the Division of the Kingdom" *Bibliotheca Sacra*. July-September 1984 (223-233), p 225.

resulted in moral deterioration and religious apostasy. He permitted the thinking and customs of other nations to influence his decisions and manner of living. Solomon specifically broke the covenant stipulations of Exodus 20:3-6, concerning going after other gods and Exodus 20: 22-23; Deuteronomy 4:15-15, 25-28; 5:7-9; 7:3-4 concerning intermarriage with unbelievers foreigners. Brindle seems to adopt the Deuteronomist view as he assert that Solomon's sin struck at the heart of theocracy and God's sovereignty and providence were at work in the various factors that contributed to the division of the kingdom.

In Brindle's analysis, if God was involved in the event of the division, but acted through already existing situations where human agents acted freely, so that all those who were involved in the causes and in the event of the division are responsible for their acts. Neither the division nor its immediate and remote causes were created by God to be imposed on the people. The people involved deliberately played an active role. In punishing Solomon, it is reported that the "Lord raised up" enemies against him. However as the narrative makes it plain, the Lord did not "create" Solomon's enemies, the House of David made them.

6.3 Summary

The division of the kingdom of Israel cannot simply be blamed on God. However, despite the pervading divine involvement in this event, Yahweh is not perceived as the main responsible agent for this unfortunate event. The responsibility of the human parties involved is highlighted, so that Yahweh is neither reproached for imposing this misfortune on his people nor for doing nothing to prevent it. From this perspective, the account of the division provides a useful framework for approaching the theological questions arising from the event of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994.

Rwanda is not a theocratic monarchy, but this does not make the problem of the Rwandan conflict solely susceptible to a socio-political analysis, the problem is also theological and so theological analysis is also appropriate. Like the Israelites, most Rwandans affected by the horror of the Genocide have been taught both the attributes of God and religious

virtues, such as love, equity, justice and unity, that happen to be among Christian values. They have good reasons to ask questions about God's attitude in the conflict that affected them and, as Tschuy observes, "Despite many cases of courage, self-sacrifice and martyrdom, the churches have to face up to the problem of Christians killing Christians and of churches and church centres becoming mass graves for thousands".[828] In the next chapter this theological question and its underlying socio-political aspects, is approached by means of a dialogue between the context of the division of the kingdom of Israel and the context of the Rwandan Genocide. The chapter will outline some tribal-related issues present in the background of the division of the Kingdom in Israel that are dynamically equivalent to the situations that prepared for, and culminated in, the Genocide in Rwanda.

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[828] Tschuy, T. *Ethnic Conflict and Religion*. Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications. 1997, p 54.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ISRAELITE AND RWANDAN CONTEXTS IN DIALOGUE

7.0 Introduction

The examination of the root reasons for the division of the Kingdom has allowed us to note that this event had more to it than just Solomon's sin and God's punishment, as emphasised by the biblical redactor. The context described in the biblical tradition as well as the social history of Israel indicate that the division resulted from socio-economic problems that developed throughout the history of Israel. These problems revolved around the people's resistance against the leaders who exploited and oppressed them instead of serving them. The conflicts that resulted took tribal lines, as the leaders appealed to kinship relations to support their regimes. Aspects of this socio-economic conflict in Israel find parallels in the Rwandan conflict, examined in the second and third chapters of the present work. The present chapter attempts to sum up some major socio-economic and political issues involved in both conflicts, as discussed in the previous chapters, and to examine the extent to which tribal diversity contributed to the conflicts.

As was explained in the second chapter of this thesis, the present work follows a comparative and evaluative approach. This approach aims at the actualisation of the theological meaning of the text in today's context, so as to forge integration between faith and life and engender commitment to personal and societal transformation.[829] To this end, the biblical text and the Rwandan context examined in the preceding chapters are brought together for a mutual and dynamic interaction in this chapter. My deliberate choice to read the text and its context from the perspective of the victims of exploitation and discrimination, or, in West's words, my ideo-theological orientation influenced by my social location,[830] guided the choice of the analytical categories selected from both contexts for interaction. The dialogue in this chapter is a back-and-forth movement between text and context, as Draper has described it.[831] Generally, the discussion begins with the Rwandan context used as the subject of interpretation, so that the biblical text is

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[829] Ukpong, J.S. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa", p 325.
[830] West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile'", pp 256 ff.
[831] Draper, J.A. "'For the Kingdom Is Inside You and It Is Outside You": Contextual Exegesis in South Africa'" in P.J. Hartin, J.H. Petzer (eds.), *Texts and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden 1991. quoted in West, G. "Interpreting 'the Exile'", p 250.

interpreted against the background of the Rwandan experience with the aim of arriving at a new understanding of the text.[832] Yet this approach does not rule out the possibility of starting with the biblical text, then using the biblical insights to provide a theological foundation for issues raised in the Rwandan context. The movement is dialogical since text and context "talk" to each other.

Issues covered are basically taken from the materials of chapters three and four, which discussed the Rwandan context, on the one hand, and from chapter five and six, which concentrated on the analysis of the biblical text and its context, on the other. However, the dialogue between the Rwandan context and the biblical text is still possible beyond the limits of the text and context of 1 King 12:1-24 selected for the purpose of the present work. This broader applicability of the approach is evidenced by the inclusion in the following interaction of some comparative categories which are taken from outside the materials of the preceding chapters, but that fit well into this comparative approach.

The people, whose responsibility in conflicts comes to the fore in the discussion, fall into four following categories. There are the political leaders and their divisive regimes; then the people heeding divisive messages. The discussion includes the contribution of external powers to internal conflicts; and ends with the examination of the attitude of God's servants in times of conflict. Attention is given first to the role of political leaders.

7.1. Inequitable regimes jeopardize social unity

In Israel, as in Rwanda, autocratic leaders were determined to maintain their grip on power and to monopolize the control and distribution of resources. In their bid to secure and keep power and its privileges, these leaders sought and obtained support and loyalty from their closest kin, whom they rewarded with privileges, to the exclusion of those judged "outsiders", and at the expense of the labouring masses that bore the price of the production of these resources. Such nepotistic regimes fit the description of a trend now known as patrimonialism, found in many states in Africa. This section examines aspects of patrimonialism in Rwandan regimes and discusses the effect of patrimonialism in

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[832] Ukpong, J.S. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa", p 320.

promoting tribal polarization, in favouring small groups of influential people close to the leader, referred to below as "Akazu", and in rejecting any wisdom that does not serve their interests. Attempt is made to understand the context of tribal conflicts in Israel in the light of patrimonialism.

7.1.1. Patrimonialism and tribal polarization in Rwanda

Patrimonialism is a term used by Weber[833] to describe a system of authority whereby those lower in the hierarchy are not subordinate officials with defined powers and functions, but retainers whose positions depend on a leader to whom they owe allegiance. The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties, rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions.[834] This tendency, which Gifford deems prevalent in African states, makes them different from Western societies, which rest on another type of authority described by Weber as a "rational-legal authority". In this system, estimates Gifford, power has come to be exercised through legally defined structures, for a publicly acknowledged aim. Operating these structures are officials who, in exercising the power of the office, treat other individuals impersonally, according to criteria which the structure demands.[835] Features of patrimonialism observed in successive Rwandan regimes are not much different from what occured in dynastic Israel.

7.1.1.1 Patrimonialism in Rwandan political leadership

Patrimonialism, as described by Gifford, was prevalent in pre-colonial Rwanda. This is a period during which clientelism worked through a hierarchy of "power brokers",[836] namely, local leaders whom the central figure entrusted with power and socio-economic privileges. They acted as representatives of the central authority in their constituencies. The central figure delivered benefits to the local grandee, who, in turn, delivered the support of his area to the *supremo*.[837] This structure continued into the colonial period, thanks to the Germans' and Belgians' "Indirect Rule" that continued and reinforced the

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[833] Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sapitalism*. London: Routledge. 1992, referred to in Gifford, P. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. London: Hurst and Company. 1998, p 5.
[834] Gifford, P. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, p 5.
[835] Gifford, P. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, p 5.
[836] Gifford, P. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, p 6.
[837] Gifford, P. *African Christianity: Its Public Role,* p 6.

traditional social structure. In pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda, patrimonialism was practised along kinship lines, as the central figure was always a Tutsi king who entrusted power and privileges to local chiefs who were predominantly Tutsi.

The successive post-colonial regimes did not correct the social imbalances they disapproved of in previous regimes. As a matter of fact, independent Rwanda has now had three regimes, each of which ousted its predecessor on the indictment of social discrimination and exclusion. To the classic patrimonial system, where clientelism was formally acknowledged as the official form of government, the post-colonial regimes in Rwanda substituted what Gifford tagged "neo-patrimonialism". This is a system formally constituted on the principle of rational legality, where states function with the apparatus of a modern state, but officials tend to exercise their powers as a form not of public service but of private property.[838]

All the post-independence regimes in Rwanda claimed to be democratic and to serve the interests of the masses. What was noted, however, was a persisting determination of the leading elite in the successive regimes each time to look after the interests of its constituent tribe or group and, by that token, the preoccupation to acquire a kind of legitimacy as the authentic representative of that group. In this neo-patrimonial Rwanda, clientelism continued to follow kinship lines. Loyalty to kinship was easily harnessed in the power scramble by the leading elite promising to restore the dignity, security and socio-economic privileges of a particular tribe or group, really or allegedly oppressed by the preceding regime. Each time, the "deliverers" of one social group became the oppressors of the other groups to whom they denied the same rights they were fighting for. The finding of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of 2002 was that bad governance has been historically a major cause of disunity among the Rwandan people.[839] The Commission named, among other elements of bad governance, dictatorial and sectarian leadership and biased teaching given to Rwandans over generations.[840]

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[838] Gifford, P. *African Christianity: Its Public Role,* p 5.
[839] Report of the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation, Kigali, 2002, 25.
[840] Report of the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation, Kigali, 2002, 4.

Patrimonialism, coupled with tribalism, exacerbated division in Rwandan society. A similar trend was observed during Israel's dynastic regimes.

7.1.1.2 Patrimonialism in Israel

The rise of the monarchy in Israel meant the formation of a centrally administered territorial state in an area that was formerly structured along tribal lines. As Dietrich[841] pointed out, this development brought about decisive economic and thus social changes. These changes included the development of a new centre of economics and wealth surrounding the royal court, a centre that profited mainly the king and his family, as well as his loyal followers. A group of elites that had not previously existed then emerged, meaning that not everyone participated equally in the increasing political and economic wealth created by the kingdom. In general, we can assume that the rulers particularly cared for their own power bases by granting their supporters a series of privileges.[842] This situation is evident through a description of Saul's royal table, where the king sat upon his seat, Jonathan, the crown prince sitting opposite, Abner the leader of the Army and king's cousin sitting by the king's side, the next seat being for David, the commander of the mercenary troops and the king's son-in-law (1 Samuel 20:25). All these top leaders in Saul's kingdom were the king's close relatives.

The patrimonial character of dynastic regimes in Israel is better described in the so-called "rights of the king" (1 Samuel 8:11-17). This text, believed, though with no certainty, to originate from early monarchy,[843] contains a list of exploitative measures associated with dynastic monarchy in Israel. Indications pointing to practices similar to those described in this passage are found further in the accounts of the kings that reigned over the united kingdom. Saul's reported scolding of his fellow Benjamites (1 Samuel 22:7-8) may indicate that the king's servants, most of whom were his close relatives, were rewarded for their loyalty and services with land and with prominent positions. Commenting on the land alluded to in Saul's speech, Dietrich observed:

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[841] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. 2007, p 195.

[842] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.*, p 197.

[843] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.*, p 196.

The text does not say from where he took these lands. It stands to reason that they were not his own or that of his family; these lands would not have been large enough, and the Benjamites – according to the words used – were no stewards of royal lands but rather owners of their own lands and vineyards. It seems that Saul provided them with land – or allowed them to provide themselves with land that either was without owner or that was taken from previous owners.[844]

If Saul favoured the Benjamites, David favoured the Judahites and the Jerusalemites. As seen in the preceding chapter, the top positions formerly occupied by Saul's family were, later in David's kingdom, given to David's relatives such as Joab, Asahel and Abishai, sons of the king's sister, Jonathan, his brother's son (2 Samuel 21:21) and many others of his relatives or his mercenaries, most of whom were from Judah.[845] David's own sons were royal advisors (2 Samuel 8:15-16). In Solomon's kingdom socio-economic imbalances were enhanced by taxes and compulsory labour imposed on northern Israelites, while Judah was exempted from such obligations (1 Kings 4:12).

Frick has used two concepts to describe the practices by which the sovereigns in early Israel used socio-economic privileges to legitimate and strengthen their own positions of leadership. He referred to "clientship", a bond between a political superior and a person to whom he has delegated part of his authority, and to "reciprocity", a system whereby successful patrons who have accumulated material wealth are able to use their positions to gain more clients and more power.[846] In the united kingdom of Israel, dynastic monarchs who controlled the redistribution of resources reverted to clientship and reciprocity to win support and loyalty, mainly from their kinspeople, members of their tribe. Social tensions and conflicts resulted from the reaction of the tribes that were not given equal opportunity for access to such privileges. The phenomenon described above in Frick's terms in relation to Israel is nothing less than the patrimonialism described by Gifford in relation to African states.

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[844] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.,* p190.
[845] Ishida, T. "Solomon's Succession to the Throne of David" in Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon*, p 177.
[846] Frick, F.S. *The Formation of the State in Ancient Israel*. SWBAS, 4. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985. quoted in McNutt, P. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, p 120.

A pattern characteristic of patrimonialism has been the emergence of small groups of very influential people surrounding the heads of states, often closely related to them. In many cases this group grows so powerful that they come to constitute an unofficial nerve centre of state power, masterminding decisions that neither the head of the state nor any other constituted organ can overrule. This phenomenon was referred to as Akazu[847] in Rwandan politics, but finds its parallel in Israel's regimes.

7.1.2 The "Akazu" phenomenon: headquarters of oppression

A Rwandan popular saying *"Umwami ntiyica hica rubanda"* can be paraphrased, "It is not the king who executes, but the people around him". The saying refers to unpopular attitudes and decisions often adopted by kings and for which they are justly held responsible, even though such decisions originate not from the king himself but from his entourage. This saying finds application in the intransigence of Habyarimana, who succumbed to the influence of his entourage, thus hastening his fall. It may also apply to the influence of Rehoboam's young advisors, which brought an end to the hegemony of 'David's House" over Israel. Both leaders paid too much attention to the sycophants they had surrounded themselves with.

7.1.2.1 The "Akazu" phenomenon in Rwandan politics

The pre-colonial and colonial periods were marked by Tutsi regimes, but the power was not distributed equally among all the Tutsi. One particular group of blood-related Tutsi from the Nyiginya clan constituted the oligarchy that succeeded in maintaining the monopoly of political power for centuries.[848] Their hegemony lasted until late in the early 20th century, when a rival Tutsi clan, the Bega, succeeded in toppling them, in what was called the "*Coup d'état* of Rucunshu".[849] It was this new dynasty that suffered the interference of the colonisers and the challenge of the Hutu. It was the attempt to remove them from power and their resistance that turned violent, forcing many Tutsi to go into

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[847] The term literally means "a small house". It is normally used in reference to a group of people with close blood relation, sharing many characteristic traits. During the Habyarimana regime it referred to a group of highly influential politicians who were closely related to Agatha, Habyarimana's wife. In the years that preceded the Genocide, this group has become extremely powerful and controlled all the power.
[848] Kamukama, D. *Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relation*, p 143.
[849] Chrétien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 247.

exile. During the Bega regime the "akazu" of a Tutsi extremist group, the so-called "*Abagaragu b'umwami bakuru*" (the senior servants of the king) arose to oppose the emancipation of the Hutu masses.[850]

The Hutu regime that took over from the Tutsi was not better in terms of power-sharing. Claiming to be republican and democratic, the new leaders did not establish a new dynasty. But it was soon to be observed that political power was concentrated in the hands of people from one region of the country. There was a time when half of the members of the government originated from two districts among the 149 that made up the whole country. Power was not in the hands of the then President, Kayibanda, but in the hands of a small group behind him. It was this situation that provided a pretext for a group of army officers, led by Major General Habyarimana, to organize a coup that toppled the regime on 5 July 1973. The organisers of the coup were from the northern region of the country, a region they reckoned to have been marginalized by the previous regime, and so they undertook to correct the imbalance. The government's centre of gravity shifted from Nduga in the south to Rukiga in the north, or, more exactly, from Gitarama *prefecture* to Gisenyi *prefecture*.[851] This was the beginning of a social rift in the country, which led Rwandans to be identified according to an oversimplified binary division as either northerners or southerners.

The new regime's determination to vindicate the "marginalized" northern region of the country was openly expressed through the so-called "equilibrium policy". This policy was implemented through a quota system allocated to each *prefecture* and to each ethnic group, with respect to admission to public schools and employment.[852] The principle itself was unpopular enough among the "southerners" whom it disfavoured and frustrated. The abuse of it by some "northerners", wishing to secure and maintain the monopoly of power and privileges, further increased the rift and created tension between the two camps, north and south. During this time the feeling of being marginalized shifted from the north to the rest of the country. This sentiment somehow reduced the

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[850] Kuper, L. *The Pity of It All*, p 176.
[851] Chretien, J P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 307.
[852] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994*, pp 117 ff.

social gap between Hutu and the Tutsi of the "south", who faced a common challenge from the "north".

It was in the face of mounting pressure from those who felt excluded that a nucleus of northern hardliners emerged who were determined to maintain their power and subsequent privileges. Most members of this Akazu were related to the President through his wife. They became so powerful, to the point of highjacking power, that Habyarimana could no longer decide anything against their wishes. Members of this Akazu are perceived as responsible for Habyarimana's reticent attitude towards the people's demand for genuine democratisation of the institutions and especially his repeated postponement of the implementation of the Arusha peace agreement, which, when implemented, considerably reduced his power and influence and, by the same token, put an end to the dominion of the Akazu. This group of northerners exerted a heavy pressure on Habyarimana, who could not safely ignore the opinion of his closest supporters who were opposed to political changes that implied power-sharing and unavoidably the end of the northern Hutu hegemony. This kind of influence is equally noticed throughout dynastic Israel.

7.1.2.2 Influence of Akazu in dynastic Israel

Israel's leaders were good at surrounding themselves with people of their own tribes and families. One of the corollaries of the patrimonialism that pervaded political leadership in Israel was the tendency observed among the people surrounding the king to cling to the privileges that they enjoyed by virtue of their kinship relationship to the king. These people would endeavour to hold on to power, which they deemed to be a property of their tribe, and were very reluctant to release it. This attitude is observed with the Benjamites when Abner suggested the transfer of power from Saul's house to David's. Abner knew that it was not enough to ask Ishbaal to resign, he also needed to convince the house of Benjamin to release the throne (2 Samuel 3:19). Power belonged not to Ishbaal but to the "Akazu" of the Benjaminites. The extremists among them such as Sheba and Shimei, never accommodated this development.

The men of Judah surrounding king David manifested the same sentiment when they felt that their claim to pre-eminence was threatened (2 Samuel 20: 42, 43). Fokkelman's pertinent observation that the complaint of the men of Israel, in the incident reported in the passage above, was addressed to David, but that the response came from the men of Judah,[853] might reveal the kind of control the men of Judah intended to have or believed they had over the king. They felt free to speak for the king who, needing them to maintain his throne, would not dare contradict them. This is at least the view of Tadmor, who believes that it was David's failure to reserve a special status to his men of Judah that had pushed them to support Absalom's revolt.[854] David had now learnt his lesson. The attitude of the prominent men of Judah throughout the revolt of Absalom revealed that they had a grip on power and the king could hardly secure his throne without their support.

The division narrative that presents the division of the kingdom as a direct result of Rehoboam's arrogant answer to the people's petition still makes it plain that the king's answer was dictated by his advisors. Rehoboam faithfully communicated to the people the decision taken by a group of advisors whose opinion he valued highly. The description of these advisors as young men who grew up with Rehoboam may help understand their attitude. Their being young implies that they were inexperienced and, as such, they are contrasted with the older and wiser advisors whose advice the king rejected. However, as young as the preferred young advisors could be, they were Rehoboam's age-mates and this seems to surmise that they were mature enough to understand the pain of the oppressed people. But there is more in their description. That these "young men" had probably grown up with Rehoboam may indicate that they were men from Judah who had not suffered the hard labour imposed on the northern tribes, but who had been and were still benefiting from this exploitation and oppression.

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[853] Fokkelman, J. P. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel. Vol. 1. King David (II Samuel 9-20 & I Kings 1-2)*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981, p 316, quoted in Anderson. A. A. *Word Biblical Commentary. 2 Samuel.* Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher. p 239.

[854] Tadmor, H. "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy: Social and Political Tensions in the Time of David and Solomon", in Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 249.

The Rwandan Genocide resulted directly from the intransigence of the President, whose determination to hold on to power led him to ignore the wishes of the people. But in his intransigence the President was just the speaker of a small group of his closest allies, whom he had permitted to usurp the power which normally should belong to the whole people. The supreme leader of the nation ended up becoming a prisoner of the "Akazu", losing the freedom to exercise his authority. Similarly, the harsh answer of Rehoboam that triggered the division of the kingdom in Israel was a direct consequence of patrimonialism that pervaded political leadership. By surrounding himself with people who prioritised their own interests and the interests of their social group above the interests of the whole people, Rehoboam put himself in a position where he could no longer satisfy his people's expectations. Even if he wanted to be moderate and reasonable, he was not free to do so. Power did not belong to him, it belonged to the "Akazu" from the tribe of Judah. The same abuse of patrimonialism greatly contributed to social conflicts in both contexts. Unfortunately, unlike in Israel, where the oppressed people managed to successfully resist the oppressor, in Rwanda the people paid heavily, as the ruling "Akazu" resorted to the Genocide in its attempt to break the resistance. But in Israel, as in Rwanda, the conflict reached an undesirable end because the voice of hardliners was louder than that of the peacemakers, whose wise contribution was ignored.

7.1.3 The ignored voice of the wise

Beside the groups of intransigent and arrogant hardliners responsible for the unyieldingness of the regimes in Israel and in Rwanda, there were surely in each context another group of wise, experienced and moderate politicians advocating peace and reconciliation. Unfortunately, the wisdom of these wise peacemakers could not save the situation because it was ignored by the headstrong decision-makers. In the division narrative, these wise people are identified and their contribution revealed. In the case of the Rwandan conflict such people are not well known. In this case, what is known from the context of the biblical text may help to recognise and to understand what is not very clear in the Rwandan context, with respect to the weak voice of the peacemakers.

7.1.3.1 The ignored voice of the wise elders in Israel

The elders who had served under Rehoboam's father understood better the situation of the complaining people because they knew its background. They were there when Solomon's administrative policies were implemented, they were part of the oppressive regime and they witnessed the suffering of the people. Besides, the fact that Rehoboam could approach these elders for advice may indicate that they were not part of the complaining group. It is then most probable that they belonged to the tribe of Judah. Since these elders had served under Solomon, they had been part of the regime that imposed a heavy yoke on the northern tribes and benefited, even if unwittingly, from the benefits of this exploitation. This may raise the question of their responsibility in the oppression of the northerners.

The attitude of the elders indicates that they were not in support of the oppressive measures. Maybe they never supported this exploitation from the time of its conception, but still they served the regime that conceived and implemented it. The exploitative and oppressive character of the regime may have disturbed them, but they did not oppose it. It was only when a crisis confronted them, and when their opinion was sought, that they were courageous enough to speak the truth. But was this all these wise people could have done? Was their advice not too little and coming too late?

The narrative describes these wise elders as a group of people whose position under Solomon implies some responsibility in the regime's exploitation of the northern tribes. Unfortunately, the narrative does not provide full information that can allow for a fair judgement of their attitude. Whether they enjoyed the benefits of this oppression and actively took part in it, or whether they were silent and passive observers, or whether they had occasion to speak out against it, the text is silent.

The elders' advice to Rehoboam may simply indicate that there had been among Solomon's collaborators officials who did not support his unpopular measures. But the presence of diverging opinion did not prevent the implementation of his policies. The reason may be that such people were not bold enough to challenge the regime, fearing for

their personal security and that of their positions. It may be that they, or some of them, were not in favour of the exploitation but remained indifferent, feeling that they should not interfere, since the exploitation, was not directed against them and their families. It may be that they did speak, but their voice was too soft and easily ignored, when the voice of the hardliners was louder and stronger. A similar situation is observed with respect to some peoples' attitude toward the Rwandan Genocide

7.1.3.2 The weak voice of the peacemakers in Rwanda

It is generally agreed that not all the Hutu, peasants or politicians, actively participated in the Genocide, not even all those who were members of the most indicted political party, Habyarimana's MRND, nor those who were members of his army. Some of these Hutu people made clear their position against the Genocide, either through their boldness in speaking out against it or through their courageous attitude in protecting the Tutsi targeted by the killings. There are many others whose personal participation in the Genocide is not established, but who are credited with little or no express act of opposing it. The question of their responsibility defies easy answers.

In an attempt to distinguish different levels of responsibility in the Rwandan Genocide the people involved have been grouped into categories. For instance, Sibomana[855] places at the top those who planned the Genocide, followed by their technicians who implemented the plan, then the people who carried out orders, and the chain includes the spectators who, though not active in the killing, were present at the scene of the crime. Those who belong to this last category are guilty for their tacit agreement, their indifference, or their failure to revolt. For Sibomana, this attitude of silence determined the success of the enterprise. The law on the crimes of the Genocide adopted by the Rwandan government in August 1996 follows a similar approach of categorising the perpetrators according to levels of their responsibility.[856]

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[855] See Sibomana, A. *Hope for Rwanda*, P101 Following Ternon Yves. *L'Etat Criminel: Les Génocides aux XX e Siècle. Paris: Le Seuil, XXe Sciecle, 1995.*
[856] The Organic Law No. 8/96 of 30 August 1996. see Villa Vicencio, C. *et al*. *Building Nations*, p 89.

Despite these laudable efforts to differentiate the level of responsibility in order to render an even-handed justice, it remains difficult to establish the responsibility of those whose alleged crime is that they did nothing. Their indictment is essentially based on the mere assumption that since they were there, they could do something, which they failed to do. Sibomana believes that had all those who held their peace shouted in opposition to the killings, their noise could have made a difference. Sibomana's argument is based on the assumption that the Genocide happened because there were not enough voices against it. This logic is in line with the opinion of those who wonder how a minority of extremists ended up having their own way. The fact is that crimes like the Genocide are not adopted following a democratic vote so that the opinion of the majority may prevail.

Speaking out might have made more of a difference in preventing the Genocide than in stopping it. Even at the prevention level the voice that could have made a difference would have been that of people expressing themselves through organized social structures rather than the voices of individuals. Had such voice been heard calling for reconciliation and power-sharing before, or at least after, the events of 1959-1962 that cost the lives of many Tutsi and sent more of them into exile, Rwandan history could have taken a different turn and may have avoided the Genocide. Had the Rwandan church and the civil societies in general united their voices to speak for the Tutsi refugees when they were expelled from Uganda by Obote's regime in 1982, and denied entry into Rwanda by the Habyarimana regime, the RPF would probably have had more problems in motivating its attack on Rwanda in 1990. Unfortunately, during such periods of crises that later produced the Genocide, the peacemaking voice was weak, if there was any.

To stop the Genocide after it had been launched much noise could have been good, but surely not enough, because the effect of these noises still depended on the willingness of the perpetrators to listen. In the absence of the will to listen to 'normal' logic, these killers needed to face something more persuasive than mere opposing opinion. The militiamen involved in the killings may have been fewer in number, but they were equipped, encouraged and often co-ordinated. Those who resisted had no power to make the killers listen to them. All who resisted did so in isolated cases. They couldn't count on

anybody for protection or support; the few politicians perceived as potential objectors to the killings having been the priority targets of the massacre. There was nobody to encourage the people to resist and oppose the Genocide. Surely the RPF, through its Radio Muhabura, called upon the few people who listened to their broadcasts, giving some instructions as to how to behave. However, the RPF was too far from most of the people and could not grant them any protection whatsoever to enable them to safely stand against the killing. For many of the silent observers, abstaining from active participation in the killing was all they could do to remain clean and keeping quiet was all they could do to remain safe. Any form of resistance was an act of heroism. Heroism is not a common virtue and, as Sibomana admits, nobody can be condemned for not being a hero!

7.1.4 Summary

As noted earlier, the practice of patrimonialism was mutually benefiting to the leader on the one hand and his kinsfolk on the other hand. By surrounding himself with the people of his tribe, the central figure hoped to secure loyalty and support from the people he could generally trust the most. By granting them strategic positions he made them stakeholders, whose vested interest in the regime would motivate them to support and defend it. From the "*Abagaragu b'umwami bakuru*" in monarchic Rwanda, to the Gitarama politicians under Kayibanda and then the members of *Akazu* of the Habyarimana regime, each group, in its time, was determined to keep the monopoly of power and to exclude those they deemed outsiders. These extreme aspects of patrimonialism were attested even when the concerned regimes claimed to be democratic. Kayibanda abolished the monarchy, to replace it with a democratic regime, which Lemarchand later evaluated as a "democracy for the Hutu."[857] Habyarimana promised to be more democratic, but his "*democratie responsable*"[858] could simply be called a "democracy for the northern Hutu". Nowadays, it is often argued that democracy in Africa ought to be different from the Western type of democracy. Yet, nobody has ever

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[857] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi,* p 116.
[858] This was the slogan which the Habyarimana regime used to remind the people that democracy in Rwanda ought not to be of the Western kind. They should mind the way they use it, a clear way of making it a controlled democracy.

described the kind of democracy that is suitable for the African context. Therefore, whatever is suitable to the leader and his group is often called democracy.

A minister in the current regime in Kigali reasoned that this regime is democratic, since "the majority of members of cabinets are Hutu, the prime minister and the speaker of the house are Hutu and approximately seventy percent of the members of parliaments are Hutu, while several opposition parties (however small) sit in the assembly".[859] The emphasis here seems to be on the numbers of Hutu who hold prominent positions, not on how they got there, and not on the extent to which the people have a say in the governance of their country. The post-Genocide regime in Rwanda has an understandable concern to prevent multi-party politics from taking shape along ethnic lines, which could revive ethnic disputes that would undermine national unity. This concern prompted the Rwandan government to exercise vigorous control over civic activities.[860]

The Rwandan case illustrates situations where the Western kind of democracy, with its corollary of majority rule, is deemed unsuitable. Majority rule in Rwanda means Hutu rule and, to some, this risks discrimination against the Tutsi. The question I would suggest for further investigation is the following: What kind of democracy will be suitable for Rwanda that would be democracy for all? This is an urgent question, and may be pertinent to many other African countries.

In monarchic Israel, each of the first four kings sought and enjoyed support from an 'Akazu'. King Rehoboam, who was mindful of how much he counted on this kind of support for his personal security and the security of his throne, could not ignore the opinion of his supporters. The young men at his palace were more than mere advisors, they were stakeholders in the regime, who were determined to preserve their own interests and the interests of their tribes. They probably saw in the petition of the northern tribes an attempt to question their rights to enjoy exclusive political and economic privileges. Their suggested answer clearly intended to intimidate and silence the people

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[859] From an argument from a Rwandan government minister quoted in Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations*, p 72, (brackets in the original).
[860] Villa-Vicencio *et al*. *Building Nations*, p 82.

who should not dare question the *status quo*. Rehoboam's young advisors formed a group of influential people wishing to hold on to political power and associated privileges and used their power and influence to direct the decision of the head of state.

The case of the division of the kingdom in Israel illustrates the disheartening reality that peacemakers in our societies may not necessarily have the last say in decisions affecting social harmony. They may be many, but still lack ways of making their voices heard. From both the Israel and the Rwandan cases it was noted that the extremists do not need to be in the majority to pull the situation their way. This is not surprising in these days when, in many parts of the world, the possession and exercise of power, be it military or political, does not have much to do with the opinion of the majority. The Rwandan case seems to indicate that even majority rule is no longer seen as a guarantee for peacemakers to get their own way. The need for, and ways of, empowering peacemakers in Rwanda and in Africa remains a challenge. It is an issue that should be explored further, but which extends beyond the scope of the present study. Peace-building is the responsibility of every reasonable citizen, especially those who lead. The people are easily divided by their leaders, as is discussed in the next section.

7.2 The People's response to divisive ideologies in Rwanda and in Israel

The inequitable distribution of privileges in Rwanda and in Israel negatively affected social unity, by dividing the society into groups with opposing interests. On one hand, those having access to privileges were united by the common interest to defend them. On the other hand, those excluded from the desired privileges were drawn closer by their common need to fight for their ignored rights. As shared interests drew people together, conflicting interests loosened even pre-existing social ties. Myths and traditions[861] were used to cement this estrangement.

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[861] The traditions here referred to in the case of Israel were not part of the materials discussed in the previous chapters of the present study. As mentioned before, their inclusion in the discussion at this stage serves to illustrate the broader applicability of the comparative approach followed by the present work.

7.2.1 Diverging interests loosen social ties in Rwanda

Although the social categorisation of Rwandan people into Hutu, Tutsi and Twa existed in pre-colonial Rwanda, there seems to have been enough commonalities among the three social groups, who perceived themselves as one people descending from one common ancestor. Traditionally, all Rwandans, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa perceived themselves as *Bene Kanyarwanda* "the descendants of Kanyarwanda". This conviction was strong enough to transcend the social barriers and minimise the dividing effects of the existing categorisation.[862] It was the consciousness of their common identity, somehow contradicted by the reality of their social diversity, that led Rwandans to come up with aetiological myths to explain the causes of the diversity in the homogeneous Rwandan society. Apart from the Hamitic Hypothesis brought by the foreign colonisers, most myths and stories invented by Rwandans to elucidate these contradictions never departed from the basic affirmation of kinship among all Rwandans.

As time went by, uneven distribution of political and economic power among the social groups, and the subsequent scramble for the control of this distribution, resulted in widening the gap among the groups, weakening the perception of Rwandans that they belonged to the one same homogeneous group. With leaders harnessing kinship on their way to power, interests and challenges were progressively shared among members of a particular social group rather than among all as Rwandans. It was these shared interests/challenges that brought together the Hutu, on the one hand, and the Tutsi, on the other hand, and it was the conflicting interests between the two social groups that estranged them one from the other, when each group perceived the other as its rival, opponent, or enemy. Following the need of the moment, the divisive Hamitic hypothesis was preferred to the unifying tradition of common descent. The Hamitic hypothesis was welcomed first by the Tutsi, who found in it a better argument to serve their interests, as it supported their right to exclusive privileges. Later, it was the turn of the Hutu to fall back on the same theory in their bid to justify their resolve to exclude the Tutsi from

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[862] Rwandans traditionally perceived themselves as one people, categorised into "Ubwoko". Ubwoko referred either to different social groups: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa later perceived as ethnic groups or to the many Rwandan clans like Abega, Abanyiginya, Abasinga, Abazigaba…None of these categories implied blood relationship or common descent. Traditional myths of common descent, such as the Gihanga myth, or the Kigwa myth, united all Rwandans under one common ancestor.

power and associated privileges. The conflicting interest between the two groups emptied the traditional kinship of its meaning and relevance, so that each group began to see the other as alien. A similar pattern was observed in Israel.

7.2.2. Diverging interests loosen tribal ties in Israel

Israel emerged as a confederacy of tribes living in an egalitarian society. Despite their recognized tribal diversity, the Israelites were able to develop a feeling of belonging together ethnically, which they expressed through kinship and traditions of common descent.[863] Shared interests and common challenges reinforced their unity. This feeling of unity lasted as long as tribal Israel resisted social stratification tendencies and the resulting concentration of economic power in the hands of a few privileged families. The rise of the monarchy brought its corollary of centralisation and subsequent ranking privileges that progressively challenged the egalitarian levelling mechanisms of tribal Israel. In dynastic Israel, the kings' reliance on kinship to support their regimes encouraged those related to the kings to claim exclusive rights to power, pre-eminence and privileges to the exclusion of other tribes. Divisions and conflict followed.

The biblical traditions that portray Israel as one people comprising twelve tribes locate this unity in diversity in a period when these people valued their being the "children of Israel". Descending from one common patriarch, Jacob, the children of Israel are organised into different tribes. This categorisation into tribes does not affect their common identity as long as there are no tribal interests conflicting with the interests of the whole community, but, more especially, as long as there are no conflicting interests among the tribes. Rather, their shared identity is reinforced by common challenges. Traditions about the situation of slavery in Egypt, the hardship of the wilderness wandering, the wars they fought together and the common goal to reach their promised land, all these common challenges and shared interests kept them together, minimizing the effects of their classification into tribes.

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[863] De Vaux, R. *The Early History of Israel*, p 747.

According to biblical traditions, all the tribes of Israel managed to preserve their unity as one people throughout the pre-monarchical period. This was a time in their history when no tribe managed to monopolize social, political and economic privileges to the exclusion and expense of the other tribes. The incident reported as the revolt of Korah shows that the community was very sensitive to the issue of the monopoly of power. This concern became more evident with the rise of the monarchy, when different tribes began to believe that they were entitled to exclusive rights to political leadership. Political ambitions triggered jealousies and competitions that jeopardized unity and harmony among the Israelite tribes.

At the time of the division of the kingdom, two antagonistic groups had emerged from a people who at a certain time called themselves "children of Israel". At this time the tribes were no longer united under the same name 'Israel'. Only the northern tribes, united against a common adversary, still called themselves "Israel".[864] As for those of the opposing group, their identity is no longer established (by their opponents) with reference to the common ancestor Jacob, but to one they consider to be a "stranger". Rehoboam and his camp are no longer the children of Israel, they are viewed to as the "sons of Jesse", with whom the "true Israel" has "no share" (1Kings 12: 16). To remain united, Israel's tribes needed to have less, or no, diverging interests and have more interests in common.

7.2.3 Shared interests/challenges: a basis for self-identification

Experience has shown that blood kinship is a key factor in social identity and categorisation. Turaki has argued that the most powerful principle of social organisation is the concept of "brotherhood", which is derived from "blood relationship", which is characterized by "kinship affinity, loyalties and obligations of relatives".[865] He states that the unifying factor and the stronger bond of relationship of a given society is created by the fact of blood relationship. He notes that (a) common ancestor(s) or origin strengthens kinship ties. Genealogical relationship and the legend or the tradition of a founding

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[864] The secessionist chorus distinguishes between the "house of David"(the tribe of Judah) and "Israel" (the northern tribes). This exclusivist ideology reappears after the exile, this time around it is those of Judah who call themselves Israel (Ezra 5:5; 6:16-21; 19; Nehemiah 1:6; 9:1-2; 13:3).
[865] Turaki, Y. *Tribal Gods of Africa*. Nairobi, Kenya: Ethics, Peace and Justice Commission of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. 1997, p 52.

ancestor provides the philosophical basis of unity in a clan or lineage.[866] It can be argued, however, that blood kinship in itself is not the unifying factor, but a phenomenon around which more shared and vital interests revolve. Blood relationship loses its force whenever there is conflict of interests even among siblings. In Rwanda, for instance, the entrenched myth of a common ancestor could no longer serve as a catalyst for national unity when interests began to be defined along tribal lines.

As important as blood relationship is in defining the identities and boundaries of social communities, it remains far from being the only way of construing identity. Historians and anthropologists have associated the Hutu with the Bantu people found in many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, while the Tutsi were identified as related to the so-called Nilotes. There is no evidence, however, showing that the Hutu of Rwanda tend to have more affinity with the Bantu of the neighbouring countries than they have with the Tutsi of Rwanda. The Tutsi of Rwanda do not tend necessarily to associate themselves better with the Nilotes of the region than with their Hutu countrymen and women.

Conversely, the similarity of culture and language, coupled with a shared history, brought together the people of Rwanda and those of Burundi, who associate fairly easily. While the similarity of challenges definitely played a key role in the rapprochement of the corresponding ethnic groups of the two countries, namely, the Tutsi of Rwanda and the Tutsi of Burundi, on the one side, and the Hutu of Rwanda and the Hutu of Burundi, on the other side, the rift between Hutu and Tutsi in both countries grew wider as each group was more and more persuaded that the other group constituted a threat to their well-being, their development, their security and their existence. As a result of this shared threat, each of the two ethnic groups in each country tended to extend their boundaries to include their counterparts across the borders. Solidarity between the analogous social groups was strong in times of crises, such as the massacre of Hutu in Burundi and the massacre of Tutsi in Rwanda.[867]

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[866] Turaki, Y. *Tribal Gods of Africa,* p 51.
[867] We have discussed above the tension produced in Rwanda by the 1972 massacre of Hutu in Burundi and by the assassination of President Ndandaye in October 1993.

Such formulations of boundaries between social groups seem to have resulted less from blood relations among their respective members than from some shared social interests and challenges. In fact, there is no myth or tradition that presents the Hutu of Rwanda as descendents of one same ancestor, let alone any allusion to a common ancestor with the Hutu of Burundi. The same applies to the Tutsi. But, as Brett has noted, there are many kinds of identities and many ways of construing identity.[868] Self-identification does not always need to be based on blood relationship. The history of Rwandan politics is replete with phenomena that illustrate this reality.

Coalitions transcending traditional identities were sometimes observed in Rwanda. For example, the implementation of the policy of ethnic and regional equilibrium by Habyarimana's Hutu regime was perceived by many as a way to favour the people from the northern part of the country, from where the top leaders of the regime hailed, at the expense of the southerners. This perception encouraged a relative rapprochement of the southerners from both Hutu and Tutsi social groups who shared the fate of being discriminated against with respect to access to public education and to employment. In fact, the time of the Habyarimana regime was the period during which ethnic relations in the country were relatively harmonious. Some extremists from the Hutu-dominated northern part of the country never forgave the Hutu from the south for associating too closely with the Tutsi, sometimes going to the extent of claiming that there was no unadulterated Hutu to be found in the south.

This peaceful interethnic coexistence was strong enough to somehow resist the pressure brought by the war in 1990. Contrary to what used to happen previously, each time that an attack was launched against the country by Tutsi refugees, there was no generalised violent retaliation against the Tutsi inside the country, at least not among the rural populations. When the social atmosphere became tense, after political parties were allowed to operate, cases of violent clashes between the youth of different political parties became very frequent. Even in these cases, it was mainly the youth of the ruling party who were violently opposed to those of the opposition. It was very seldom that

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[868] Brett, M.G. ed. *Ethnicity and the Bible*. New York: E.J. Brill. 1996, p 9.

violent conflicts emerged among the members of different opposition parties, even though membership of most of them reflected ethnic sympathies. The tendency, rather, was for political parties of the opposition to play down their ethnic differences and unite against the ruling party. It took a sustained campaign through the media, and even the use of threat, for Hutu hardliners to break that peaceful cohabitation, rallying all Hutu people to unite against a "common enemy". The resistance to this campaign resulted in the split of almost all the political parties of the opposition, divided into those who adhered to the ideology presenting the Tutsi as irreducible enemies whom they should fight at all costs and those who rejected that ideology, some of them at the cost of their own lives. This short period of rapprochement between Hutu and Tutsi, however shallow the affinity may have been, demonstrated that it is possible for these social groups of Rwandan society to unite around one goal. What they need is to have that goal and the determination to achieve it. Shared interests could also bring together the tribes of Israel.

7.2.4 Shared interests hearten tribal coalition in Israel

Coalitions that transcend kinship ties can equally be noted in Israel. When Judah, a tribe presented in tradition as of the "sons of Leah", is sidelined and estranged from Israel in rebellions led by the "sons of Rachel",[869] it is noted that the other "sons of Leah" join the "sons of Rachel", to declare that they do not have any share with David. This strategic coalition against the house of David indicated that there was at stake an issue that was important enough to supersede the bond resulting from descending from the same matriarch. Similarly, it was clear in the years that preceded the Genocide in Rwanda that being a Hutu was not enough reason to be a supporter of Habyarimana's Hutu regime. Many Hutu preferred to work with the Tutsi to challenge a regime that they saw as "their common enemy". If it is true that diverging interests break the bonds of any social relations, including blood relations, it is equally true that converging interests catalyse the rapprochement of the concerned parties, notwithstanding their diverse identities. It was seen above, in relation to the emergence of Israel, that factors such as cohabitation in the same geographic location, the need to combine against common enemies, shared

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[869] The first rebellion was led by the Benjamite Sheba, the second sponsored by the Ephraimite prophet Ahijah and consolidated by the Ephraimite rebel Jeroboam. Benjamin and Ephraim are Rachel's son and grandson, respectively.

economic interests and the shared faith in Yahweh were unifying factors of Israel's society. Neither blood relations nor biological kinship is *a sine qua non* for social unity.

The attitude of the northern tribes in Israel and the people in Rwanda may serve to show the fact that ethnic/tribal identity is not necessarily a barrier to social harmony. It is rather interests defined and defended along ethnic/tribal lines that generate tribal/ethnic conflicts, while interests that transcend tribal/ethnic boundaries catalyse unity and solidarity among different social groups. Unfortunately, the tendency has been for politicians and leaders wishing to conquer or maintain political power to sensitise the people, reminding them of their ethnic differences, rather than uniting them around common interests. These ethnic politics witnessed in many parts of Africa are a central cause of the continent's misery.

Politicians and leaders wishing to achieve national unity in multi-ethnic communities may encourage such concerns that give people a reason to favour their solidarity. In Rwanda, especially, where fear and mistrust between Hutu and Tutsi has continually and violently antagonized them, the way to unity and harmony passes through the identification and eradication of all sources of mistrust between the two social groups, so that they may cease to regard each as a threat to the life of the other. Social differences endemic to any society may be unavoidable, but what can be avoided is exploiting the social differences and using them as a stepping-stone toward personal power acquisition. One way of achieving this is by encouraging the people to channel their energies into working together for their shared interests. As long as the interests diverge, reasons and arguments will be invented to support competing claims. This is shown by myths and traditions used to fuel conflicts in Rwanda, as in ancient Israel.

7.2.5 Myths and traditions at the origins of oppression and revolution

In Rwanda, as in Israel, social groups believed or pretended or aspired to have exclusive rights to enjoy some social, political and economic privileges. To support such claims, appeal was made to invented myths and distorted traditions that were manipulated to suit the fantasy of those who invoked them. The oppression resulting from this attitude and

the resistance against it resulted in open conflict. In this respect, the myth and traditions concerning the origin of the Rwandan ethnic groups parallels the biblical tradition about the origin of the tribes in Israel.

7.2.5.1. Aetiological myths and traditions in support of inequalities in Rwanda

The commonalities and the differences noticed among the social groups that lived in pre-colonial Rwanda compelled them to formulate a myth to elucidate the mystery surrounding their origin. It was said that the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa of Rwanda descended from one same father who, on the basis of the merit of some and the demerit of others,[870] preordained the fate of each group and the order of their future subordination. The three social groups descended from one same ancestor, but they were unequal in rights and privileges. The myth is, of course, naïve, but has had a persuasive narrative power to reconceptualise reality. It was invented at a time when the Tutsi were enjoying the monopoly of socio-political privileges and it tended to provide an explanation and a justification for that situation. The claim was that the supremacy of the Tutsi was deserved and that therefore the other social groups were occupying their rightful subordinate places and so should not dare question the *status quo*.

The idea of natural supremacy of the Tutsi of Rwanda was given impetus by the Belgian colonisers, who suggested a "scientific" explanation by means of the Hamitic Hypothesis. This theory diverged from the traditional myth, in that it contended that the Tutsi belonged to a totally different race, having almost nothing in common with the two other subgroups, the Hutu and the Twa. According to this theory, the Tutsi were endowed with natural ability that predisposed them to be leaders. They were born to reign. What the Hamitic Hypothesis had in common with the traditional myth was the capacity to provide an explanation and justification for the prominent position of the Tutsi. This position was deserved and could then never be questioned.

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[870] According to the myth, the Father Kigwa tested his three sons with milk which he gave them to keep. The forefather of Twa was greedy and drank the milk; the Hutu was careless and spilt it, while only the wise Tutsi kept it.

The Hamitic hypothesis initiated by the Belgian colonisers was used to justify their opposition to political and administrative reforms that could have allowed for the promotion of the dominated and exploited social groups. It is not easy to evaluate the extent to which this hypothesis was believed to be true, especially by the Tutsi that it favoured. What is certain is that most of those whose exclusive privileges it tended to protect were not champions in challenging this hypothesis until it began to be used against them.

When the time came for the Hutu to assert their right to pre-eminence in Rwanda, appeal was made to traditions that attributed to them priority in the order of settlement. Historians and anthropologists had suggested for a long time that the Twa had been the first settlers in Rwanda, where they lived foraging in the forest. The Hutu, coming second, were the first to exploit the land. The Tutsi were said to be the last-comers and this was used to underline that they had the fewest rights in the land that they found already occupied.

The Hamitic Hypothesis itself, which had been used to support the superiority of the Tutsi, was now turned against them. The argument in favour of their superiority was based on their being a different race, originating from outside Africa and closer to the 'more intelligent' European whites. The potentially dangerous element in this argument was that it made the Tutsi aliens, who came from outside Africa. This idea became a weapon at the disposal of some extremist Hutu, who already claimed their priority of citizenship on the basis of the alleged order of settlement in the land. By making the Tutsi non-Africans the Hamitic hypothesis resulted in making them simply aliens, whom some Hutu would not hesitate to call usurpers. The theory portraying the Tutsi as usurpers who should return to their own home was particularly emphasised during the Genocide in 1994. Thus, the same theory that once served the argument of the superiority of the Tutsi over the Hutu was used by the latter to defend their exclusivist ideology against the former. This use of myths and traditions for ideological purposes in Rwandan history may shed some light on the use of traditions in the history of Israel.

7.2.5.2. Traditions and ideologies in Israel's tribes

The double use of the same tradition by competing groups is attested in Israel, where the same tradition concerning the patriarchal blessing served to support the claim to pre-eminence by two rival tribes. While Ephraim could fall back on the tradition according to which Jacob's blessing upon Joseph predestined him to be a prince among his brothers (Genesis 49:26), Judah could claim that the sceptre and the lawgiver were given to him (Genesis 49:10).

The traditions recorded in the Joseph narrative functioned like the Rwandan traditions, to explain and justify some tribes' claims to socio-political privileges. The ideological interpretation of these traditions was present in the conflicts that led to the division of the kingdom. Rehoboam's intransigence, which became the direct cause of the division of the kingdom, may have been encouraged by his conviction of being the legitimate and unquestionable king of Israel. Rehoboam's legitimacy was grounded on the tradition that attributed to Judah considerable leadership prerogatives. According to this tradition, probably originating from Judah, the sceptre and the lawgiver (understood as symbols of leadership) would not depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10).

The ideology giving pre-eminence to the tribe of Judah that took root in the patriarchal blessing was more explicit in the so-called Davidic Covenant by which Yahweh himself undertook to establish the throne of David's kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:13). Rehoboam's arrogant attitude at Shechem was surely encouraged by this tradition that supported his exclusive claim to the throne. Was not he the only legitimate heir of David and a descendant of Judah? Unfortunately for Rehoboam and his supporters, these traditions were understood or interpreted differently by those who opposed him. To those of the opposition, none of these traditions ruled out the possibility for anybody else from outside the tribe of Judah becoming king in Israel. On the contrary, they could appeal to the same or similar traditions to support their own claim to leadership positions.

While Rehoboam and the descendents of Judah could appeal to the patriarchal blessing to support their claim to leadership, Jeroboam, the Ephraimites and their supporters could

refer to the whole Joseph narrative to uphold their traditional pre-eminence. This narrative extensively emphasized that Joseph was the most deserving among his brothers. Joseph's was not only the most beloved son of Jacob, born from the most beloved Rachel, he is also positively characterized as better behaved than his brothers. The "כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים", a princely tunic received from his father, the dreams he dreamt, the leadership skills he exhibited in Egypt, all point to his being destined to become great. Ephraim's aspiration to greatness could be linked to this tradition presenting Joseph as one "consecrated (or prince) among his brothers" (Genesis 49:26).

Since each camp could appeal to traditions to support their claim to pre-eminence, the enjoyment of this privilege depended less on the strength of the argument used to defend it than on the willingness of the brothers to acquiesce to the claim. None of the two groups could take the other for granted. The acquiescence of the dominated group would always depend on the way they were treated by the group in power. In case of oppression, the patience would last just the time necessary to prepare and equip themselves for a successful challenge to the regime.

7.2.6 Summary

The above discussion of the people's response to divisive ideologies allows dialogical space in pointing out some similarities in the two contexts of Rwanda and Israel. There was a time in each society when social diversity was not much of a problem. In Israel and in Rwanda, conflicts resulted from attempts of certain groups to monopolise privileges, to the exclusion of the other groups. The scramble for access to, and control of, resources triggered jealousies and competition and encouraged rivalries divisions and enmity. Under the pressure of conflicting interests even kinship relations became irrelevant and obsolete. In both contexts, social groups that initially affirmed their shared identity ended up treating each other as aliens when they were competing for the control of power and associated privileges. Social relations in these two contexts serve to illustrate the fact that shared interests or common challenges are better catalysts of social unity.

Kinship relations continue to be major tools used by politicians in Africa for rallying support on their way to power, although the present work has reasoned that blood relation in itself is not the unifying factor but a phenomenon around which shared and vital interests revolve. It is noted that most of the time the labouring masses who help their kins-people come to power do not necessarily share in the benefits. Immediately after electoral campaigns these people are left alone to their misery, still supporting their leaders. The elucidation of this phenomenon may require more space than the present study allows for.

In Israel, as in Rwanda, history and traditions have been factors contributing to conflicts among later generations. The myth of Kigwa, the common ancestor of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, who rewarded the better-behaved Tutsi with a destiny to reign over his brothers, parallels the tradition about the patriarch Jacob rewarding the better-behaved Joseph with a "כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים" "a robe of many colours", or "a long sleeved robe", pre-ordaining him to be a "prince among his brothers".   In the same way that the Hamitic hypothesis used to support the alleged superiority of the Tutsi and their right to enjoy exclusive privileges has similarities with tradition of the "sceptre" and "lawgiver" in Jacob's blessing and the "everlasting kingdom" in the Davidic Covenant, narratives that served to support the pre-eminence of David's house.   As was also noted, the same tradition can be differently interpreted, depending on the ideology it is made to suit. Both Hutu and Tutsi referred to the Hamitic hypothesis, each to exclude the other from equitably sharing in political and economic privileges, as Ephraim and Judah could each refer to the patriarchal blessing to claim pre-eminence.

But history and traditions are merely particular attempts to narrate events as they are believed or imagined to have happened. Some of these events are laudable and worthy of being celebrated, others are negative and regrettable. The impact of past events on later generations depends on the way they are interpreted and the objectives motivating appeal to them. Too often appeal to supposed events of the past is done with the secret or expressed objective of seeking arguments to support egoistic and discriminative ideologies. This results in endless conflicts. The effects of the past on the present depend

on the way the present handles the past.[871] While a genuine focus on the common interest of the people as a whole resists the negative and divisive events of the past, an exclusive ideology results in jealousy and competition that destroys unity even among brothers. A people united around a common goal will even resist eventual pressure from external power waiting for an opportunity to exploit the division for their own geo-political interests. The next section discusses the external contribution to internal conflicts in Israel and in Rwanda.

7.3. External contribution to internal conflicts

The conflicts that culminated in the division of the kingdom in Israel, on the one hand, and in the Genocide in Rwanda, on the other, were obviously internal. However, these conflicts were not free from international interference. Both Israel and Rwanda, each in their respective situations, attracted interest from foreign countries that directly or indirectly contributed to their conflicts.

7.3.1 External contribution to tribal conflicts in Rwanda

Much has been said about foreign participation and responsibility in the Rwandan conflicts. Most denounced are the Belgian colonisers and missionaries who supported and aggravated the exploitation and oppression of the Hutu by the Tutsi and later supported the violent revolution that removed the Tutsi from power and sent them into exile. As much as it is unfair and dishonest to shift the entire blame onto the Belgians, as if they created Rwandan conflicts from scratch, their great share of responsibility in the Rwandan context is worth highlighting.

Having explained their colonising enterprise by the need for "civilisation" and "progress", they went ahead to tell everybody that their support of the traditional Tutsi hegemony was justified by the inner qualities they discovered in this social group. But among themselves the foreign colonisers reminded each other that it was not because of a

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[871] Eltringham, N. *Accounting for Horror*, p 152.

pure love for tradition or local colour that they kept the native kings,[872] but that the traditional structure would rather provide a familiar décor, permitting them to act behind the scenes without alarming the people.[873] A similar agenda was behind the missionaries championing of the thesis of Tutsi supremacy. This is clear from Monsignor Classe's words:

> The question is whether the ruling elite will be for us or against us; whether the important places in native society will be in Catholic or in non-Catholic hands; whether the Church will have through education and its formation of youth the preponderant influence in Rwanda.[874]

When the Tutsi became a threat to the interests of the Belgian colonisers, their superior qualities and their abilities to rule became a thing of the past. When the missionary saw a Hutu counter-elite rising, they knew that their former protégés could not for long guarantee the preponderant influence they wanted; therefore, they abandoned the "Tutsi born to lead" theory, which was no longer serving their interests.

If the first Hutu regime enjoyed the support of the Belgian colonisers and the Catholic missionaries, the best-known supporter of the second Hutu regime was President Mitterand of France. Mitterand is often said to have unreservedly supported Habyarimana's regime before, during and after the Genocide, providing his friend with France's economic, political and international diplomatic support.[875] An accord of military co-operation signed in 1975 permitted Habyarimana to receive the support of 750 French soldiers a few months after the Rwandese Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda in October 1990.[876] During the Genocide, as the RPF was gaining ground, the hunt for the Tutsi was still carried on, and the presence of the UN peacekeepers was scaled down, France unilaterally launched *Operation Turquoise*, officially designated as a humanitarian intervention to protect civilians and hinder a mass flow of refugees. Those

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[872] Ryckmans, P. "Le Problème Politique au Rwanda-Urundi" *Congo*. Vol. 1, No 3, 1925, pp 410 ff. Quoted in Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 65.

[873] Ministère des Colonies, *Rapport sur l'Administration Belge*, p 63. Quoted in Chrétien, J.P. The Great Lakes of Africa, p 267.

[874] Pastoral Letter, July 16, 1927, quoted by Chrétien, J.P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 273.

[875] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 191.

[876] Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 192.

who view France's move in a negative light believe that French soldiers came to Rwanda to protect not so much the civilians at risk as the killers and to keep pockets of Habyarimana's defeated troops beyond the RPF'S reach.[877]

France's intervention in Rwandan internal affairs seems not to have been merely based on personal friendship between the two heads of state. In Verschave's analysis, France replaced Belgium, the former colonial power, in the Great Lakes Region through business, commercial and economic interests, francophonie[878] and personal relations.[879] A year after Habyarimana took power Rwanda was integrated into the French-speaking countries grouped in OCAM (Common Organisation for Africa and Madagascar), of which Habyarimana was to become the chairperson. This community of French-speaking countries has continued to provide France with a forum through which it exerts its geopolitical influence. Chrétien has suggested that, in coming to Habyarimana's rescue, Mitterrand intended to defend the *status quo* in France's Francophone "backyard", now threatened by an Anglophone eruption.[880]

Beside France's own hegemonic agenda, its presence in Africa is sometime perceived as a geo-strategic and political plan agreed upon between the European and North American powers, France being perceived as playing the part of a policeman for the West to preserve Western interests in Africa.[881] Seeing France as a representative of Western interests may be too simplistic, however, since the interests of these powers do not always converge. It was noted that in the case of the Great Lakes conflicts, divergences between France and the United States were serious enough to hinder some United Nations' decisions on this conflict. Prunier has recorded such an incident, when the issue of the Rwandan invasion of the DRC (then Zaire) was discussed; whenever France was ready to apply pressure on Rwanda, this was blocked by the U.S. Similarly, whenever

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[877] Pottier, J. *Re-imagining Rwanda*, p 39.

[878] "Francophonie" refers to a special relations between France and a number of French-speaking countries.

[879] Verschave F-X. *Complicité de Génocide? La Politique Française au Rwanda*. (Paris : Découvertes, 1994), pp 10ff. quoted in Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 191.

[880] Chrétien, J.P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 321.

[881] Moose, G. "The French Military Policy in Africa" in Foltz, J. and Bienen, H. S. (eds.) *Arms and Africa, Military Influences on Africa's International Relations*. (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1985) quoted in Gatwa, T. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises,* p 191.

the U.S. wished to put pressure on Zaire, this was blocked by France.[882] With converging or diverging interests, the western powers seem to have intervened in Rwanda not merely with a humanitarian concern, but, as Bah sees it, because they had political and economic interests to protect or pursue.[883]

The Rwandan conflict has been described not merely as an internal conflict in which international powers intervened, but as a conflict involving the development of a regional dynamic. In Mamdani's analysis:

> The critical impetus behind RPF crossing the border in October 1990 was the confluence of a citizenship crisis in Uganda with that of Rwanda. The invasion was at the same time an armed repatriation from Uganda and an armed return home. Having embraced the Banyarwanda refugees as "comrades-in-arms" during their hour of need in the Luwero Triangle, Ugandan guerrillas-turned-government did not hesitate to "solve" their first major crisis in power by dispensing with the same comrades. The combination of loss of state positions for the elite and refusal to give grazing land to ordinary pastoralists highlighted the continuing homelessness of the generation born of 1959 Tutsi exiles. This same development also dramatically underscored the limits of Habyarimana's internal reform. Thus Museveni's government exported Uganda's internal crisis to Rwanda.[884]

The regional dimension of the Rwandan crisis involved not only Uganda but many other countries of the region, especially those bordering Rwanda. The same citizenship crisis that drew Museveni into the Rwandan conflict also existed in the Zaire of Mobutu, where the Kinyarwanda-speaking groups had for years been at loggerheads with the other tribes surrounding them and with the Zairian government. The increasing uncertainty of their citizenship encouraged many of these Kinyarwanda-speaking people, identified as Tutsi, and now known as Banyamulenge, to join the ranks of the RPF, fighting the Rwandan Hutu government.[885] Contrary to Museveni's attitude, Mobutu did not support this group

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[882] Prunier, G. *From Genocide to Continental War: The Congolese Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa*. London: Hurst & Company. 2009, p 33.

[883] Bah, A. M. S. "The Making of the Rwandan Genocide and the Future Protection of Civilians in Africa" in Laband, J. ed. *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime in Africa: From Slavery Days to Rwandan Genocide*. South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 2007, p 268.

[884] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2001, p 268.

[885] The expressed reasons motivating the Banyamulenge to join RPF included: a search for security, opportunism, joining as mercenaries, or maybe finding a solution to their question about nationality, the

of people considered to be Rwandans in their fight against the Rwandan regime. Instead he sided with his friend Habyarimana. Beside a personal relationship between these two heads of states, their shared support and influence from France and subsequent allegiance to that same godfather may have kept them close. In supporting Habyarimana, Mobutu may have intended to fight Museveni, an enemy of his regime, who was backing the RPF. Museveni had reportedly always seen Mobutu as the African stooge of imperialism incarnate[886] and the two leaders had been engaging in mutual destabilising activities, each supporting the other's opposing groups.[887] Chrétien has observed that since Museveni's ascent to power, Mobutu's regime in Zaire and Habyarimana's in Rwanda immediately understood him to be an atypical leader – one who was preoccupied with restoring the rule of law – and dangerous competition.[888] Relations between Museveni and his two neighbours were characterized by anything but trust and warm friendship. Clearly, in supporting Habyarimana, Mobutu was helping a friend, but he was also defending his own regime against an already declared enemy.

Another neighbour who could not remain indifferent to what was happening in Rwanda was President Buyoya of Burundi. The historically close relations between the people of Rwanda and those of Burundi had given them much to share, including social categorisation into Hutu and Tutsi and all the problems related to this identification. Burundi was the country most directly affected by the first Hutu-Tutsi clashes that preceded and accompanied independence in Rwanda in 1959-61. As the Hutu took power in Rwanda and many Tutsi went into exile, mostly in Burundi, serious repercussions were felt by the Burundian people, as summarized by Chrétien:

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desire to gain military experience and to acquire weapons for a possible future showdown with their neighbours. See Prunier, G. *From Genocide to Continental War*, p 52.

[886] Prunier, G. *From Genocide to Continental War*, p 83.

[887] Prunier, G. *From Genocide to Continental War*, pp 82-88.

[888] Chrétien, J.P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 319. The two leaders were surely aware that their names figured on the black list of President Nyerere, among those he saw as a shame of Africa. Nyerere may have relaunched his idea later in 1995, to a number of heads of state he believed were committed to the basic and radical concern for the social and economic welfare of their populations. He wanted them to work together with the purpose of cleaning up what they looked upon as the shame of Africa. Nyerere's partners included Afeworki of Eritrea, Zenawi of Ethiopia, Museveni and Kagame. To this new generation of leaders Nyerere was ready to add the old leftists whom he had helped during their years of struggle such as Mugabe and dos Santos. See Prunier, G. *From Genocide to Continental War*, p 67.

> The Rwandan syndrome rapidly infiltrated the Burundian ruling class: to the Tutsi, the spectacle of ten thousands of Rwandan refugees inspired distrust toward the Bahutu; and to the Hutu, the prospect of having absolute power seemed a very tempting option in the wake of Kigali's social revolution.[889]

The mutual socio-political influence between the two countries was apparent especially in times of crises, through sympathy between the homologous social groups, but also at the level of the political leaders. The Rwandan Tutsi fleeing the violence of the 1960s were welcomed in the then Tutsi-ruled Burundi, from where, with the complicity or the passivity of the Burundian Tutsi authorities, they organised and launched several attacks against the Kayibanda Hutu regime. The massacre of Hutu in Burundi in 1972 provoked a hostile reaction from Kayibanda's Hutu government and created tension in the Rwandan population, causing many Tutsi to be violently dismissed from schools and from their jobs, with cases of massacres in certain regions. The climax of mutual socio-political contamination between Rwanda and Burundi was the crisis caused by the assassination of President Ndadaye of Burundi. The repercussions in Rwanda of this assassination are captured in Mamdani's following analysis: Ndadaye's death was taken as a prophetic lesson that the only alternative for the Hutu was between power and servitude, that there could be no sharing of power between Hutu and Tutsi.[890] Following Ndadaye's assassination, cross-border ethnic solidarities were now in the open. More than ever the Hutu in Rwanda distrusted the RPF, which they perceived as close to the majority Tutsi Burundian army. Meanwhile, two of Ndadaye's Hutu ministers who escaped to Rwanda attempted to create a government in exile, with Habyarimana's blessing. While outraged Hutu in Burundi were retaliating against their Tutsi neighbours, killing thousands of them, these ministers were allowed to use Radio Rwanda to broadcast their messages encouraging their Hutu compatriots in Burundi in what they were doing, which they called "resistance"[891]

Not much has been said about Buyoya's attitude towards RPF's attack against Habyarimana. However, the foregoing description of the relations between Rwanda and

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[889] Chrétien, J.P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 312.
[890] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers,* p 215.
[891] Chrétien, J.P. *The Great Lakes of Africa*, p 326.

Burundi at the time of these leaders may lead us to surmise that Buyoya may not have been unhappy about the attack, to say the least. If the extent of his involvement in the Rwandan internal conflict is not known, his support to the Rwandan-initiated invasion of the DRC may indicate that he was closer to Kagame that he could possibly have been to Habyarimana.

The magnitude of the involvement of foreign powers has been greatly highlighted, to the extent of sometimes making them the main cause of the problem. The Belgians have been blamed for creating ethnic differences among the Rwandans, the Ugandan government for invading Rwanda in 1990, the French government for taking part in the Genocide, the United States and the United Kingdom for making Rwanda the victim of their interests in the region. Such perceptions highlight the fact that the Rwandan conflict is not purely internal and that any lasting solution should take into account its regional and international dimensions. Nevertheless, no matter how significant each of the above-mentioned foreign involvements was, the Rwandan conflict remained mainly internal and Rwandans remain the main parties responsible for it, as well as the ones most impacted by its consequences. Speaking about the European colonisers' contribution to ethnic conflicts in Rwanda, Sibomana stated:

> …it was not the whites who invented the terms Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, nor did they invent the traditional stories and tales which articulate different ways of thinking. The whites conceptualised differences which they observed. They imposed on Rwandan society a set of ideologies which were based on real differences. They transformed these differences by making them deeper and cutting off the bridges between ethnic groups, but they did not create them. Steeped in their racial ideology, they froze these differences and organized them into a hierarchy.[892]

The Ugandan government under Museveni may have cheated and conspired against the Habyarimana regime, but it was not the Ugandans who in the first place condemned the Rwandan Tutsi to life in exile, motivating their bitterness against the regime that excluded them. The Western powers may have encouraged the conflict but they certainly did not create it. Most of the foreign intervening powers were either invited or offered

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[892] Sibomana, A. *Hope for Rwanda: Conversation with Laure Guilbert and Herve Deuigne*. London: Pluto Press. 1999, p 85.

opportunity by the Rwandans themselves. While it is important for Rwandans to analyse the impact of foreign intervention in the conflict, the focus should first be on a sincere and honest examination of the responsibility of Rwandans themselves. Shifting the blame is neither fair nor helpful for understanding and dealing with the situation. Similarly, the conflict that led to the division of the kingdom in Israel had external contributions but its roots were internal.

7.3.2 External contribution to the division of the kingdom

The division of the kingdom of Israel was surely a product of internal conflicts. However, external powers played such an important role that without them the events leading to the division may have taken a different turn. If open tension between northern and southern Israel can be traced back to David's conquest of the Saulide north, it was noted that the Philistines functioned as a wonderful tool for this task. It was under the protection of the Philistines, beyond the reach of Saul, that David planned and acted to conquer northern Israel,[893] an enterprise accomplished with the benevolent neutrality of his allied Philistines.[894] In addition to his military campaign in the north, David's diplomacy toward the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead (2 Samuel 2:4-7) and his marriage with an Aramean princess of Geshur (2 Samuel 3:3), had the effect of putting pressure on Ishbaal's kingdom from both sides.[895] Commenting on the conditions under which Israel was united under David, Dietrich observed that the foundation of this unified monarchy promised anything but harmony for the future.[896]

External involvement in Israel's internal affairs is noted under Solomon, especially in his alliances with Hiram of Tyre. In terms of their trade agreement, Hiram provided building materials and technicians to Solomon who paid for these services with natural produce (produced by the labouring masses) and eventually with the concession of a part of his territory. Donner has convincingly argued that, in this bilateral alliance, it was Solomon who was in a position of weakness. In Donner's estimate, Hiram's activities in Solomon's

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[893] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 224.
[894] Soggin, J. A. *A History of Israel: From the Beginning to the Bar Kochba revolt, AD 153*, p 50.
[895] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 224.
[896] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 224.

commercial expeditions and in the construction of the temple betray the dependence of Israel on Tyre, for in both cases Solomon was plainly not in a position to do without Phoenician know-how and the transfer of a whole district was no triumph for Solomon's foreign policy.[897] Donner's point is that Hiram's involvement in Solomon's business was not a result of him being Solomon's vassal; he freely entered into this relationship, motivated by the political and commercial advantages he drew from the situation.[898] The cost of these advantages was paid for by the labouring masses. Hiram was not a coloniser of Israel in the way the Belgians were of Rwanda. At least he came invited and he was not directly involved in the administration of Israel. Like the colonial Belgians, however, he supported and benefitted from internal policies that exploited and oppressed the local people. As with the Belgians of colonial Rwanda, he may have had a share of responsibility in this exploitation and the conflicts that resulted. However, still greater responsibility remains with the local regime that initiated the indicted policies, just as the Belgians' share of responsibility in Rwandan historic conflicts cannot obliterate the essentially local origin of these conflicts.

The other most noted foreign involvement in Israel's affairs came from Egypt. The Egyptian interest with the state of Israel is reported in the form of friendship and generosity, hardly concealing geo-political interests. Egypt's first rapprochement to Israel reported in Kings was through a marriage alliance between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter. This marriage, which sealed a treaty (1 Kings 3:1), was based more on politics than on love. Royal diplomatic marriage, as a means of cementing international relations and as a practical alternative to warfare, was a cornerstone of Solomon's foreign policy. [899] Malamat has observed that it was not the habit of Egyptian kings to marry off their daughters to foreign potentates whom they apparently regarded as inferior and that Pharaoh could not plausibly have undertaken an entire campaign against Gezer solely in

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[897] Donner, H. The Interdependence of Internal Affairs and Foreign Policy During the Davidic-Solomonic Period, In Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*. Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha. 1982, p 208.
[898] Donner, H. The Interdependence of Internal Affairs and Foreign Policy During the Davidic-Solomonic Period, In Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 208.
[899] Malamat, A. "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relation with Egypt", in Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 198.

order to hand this fortress over to Solomon (1Kings 9:16).[900] Both Solomon and Pharaoh had political and strategic agendas. It was suggested that in conquering Gezer, which was given to Solomon as a dowry, Pharaoh's initial goal might have been to take Jerusalem in a bid to restore the Egyptian hegemony over the land of Canaan. Dissuaded by Solomon's strength, he may have reverted to diplomacy. Another hypothesis is that Pharaoh, possibly Siamon of the 21st dynasty, who was facing an internal threat from elements of the army of Libyan origin, ancestors of Shishak who held strong ties with the Philistines, may have sought in Solomon political support for neutralizing this threat. Siamon may have contemplated having a share in Solomon's international trade or having right of way for his own agents and goods into Asia.[901] Perhaps he calculated the possibility of one day having a grandson on the throne in Israel. In any case, Pharaoh's move toward Jerusalem certainly had some economic and strategic motivation.

The extent to which this alliance might have satisfied Pharaoh's strategic plans is not very clear. The daughter of Pharaoh, whose name is not even known, seems to have not played a significant role in Israel's politics, contrary to what her father may have expected. Her relocation from the City of David to a new palace (1Kings 7:8) was interpreted by the Chronicler as motivated by the concern to keep this foreign woman away from a holy place (2 Chronicles 8:11). Apart from some reports that Solomon may have imported Egyptian chariots (1 Kings 10:28-29; 2 Chronicles1:16-17; 9:28)[902], in general Siamon's economic expectations may have been frustrated since, apparently, not only did Solomon exclude Egypt from his commercial ventures, but he even set up a rival cartel, bypassing the traditional Egyptian monopoly over raw material, precious metals and exotica coming from Africa.[903] As for Solomon, the treaty may have allowed him to secure the peace he wanted and to strengthen the empire he inherited from his father, by

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[900] Malamat, A. "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relation with Egypt", in Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 198.

[901] Malamat, A. "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relation with Egypt", in Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 201.

[902] For the possibility of Solomon's trade in Horse and Chariots with Egypt see Ikeda, Y. "Solomon's Trade in Horses and Chariots in Its International Setting" in Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, pp 215-238.

[903] Malamat, A. "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relation with Egypt". In Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 201.

the same token consolidating his power and standing. The marriage and treaty may have inaugurated a period of détente between the two countries lasting for about twenty years until the twenty-first dynasty in Egypt was superseded by Shishak in 945 BC.[904] Shishak, the founder of the 22nd Egyptian dynasty, was less friendly to Solomon and this was first seen in his enthusiastic harbouring of Jeroboam, Solomon's foe.

After his rebellion against Solomon, Jeroboam found asylum in Egypt under Shishak who, as became evident later, pursued Egyptian ambitions for Asian dominion. Halpern may be right with his explanation of Jeroboam's revolt as a reaction to the discrimination and exploitation that his kinsfolk from northern Israel were victims of under the regimes of the house of David.[905] This contention does not explain Shishak's involvement. On this point, Halpern's analysis may be completed by Malamat's submission that either Jeroboam thought that a new dynasty in Egypt antagonistic to Solomon bettered his chances of success, or Shishak himself was inciting anti-Davidic elements, especially in the embittered northern Israel.[906] Shishak's siding with Jeroboam against Solomon may be perceived as a change in political affinity resulting from the change of regime in Egypt, since Solomon had been close to the Pharaohs of the 21st dynasty, whose power Shishak had now taken over. Or this may have been part of Shishak's planned strategy against Solomon, whose capability to fight back may have dissuaded Shishak's predecessors from launching a direct attack against him. In any case, Shishak's hospitality and support for Jeroboam was not out of mere sympathy or sheer generosity. It is more likely to have been politically motivated.

Shishak's plans for Israel and the whole eastern region were executed after Solomon's death, not only when he released Jeroboam to go and lead the opposition to Rehoboam, but especially when, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, he launched his attack against Israel. Given Jeroboam's previous alliance with Shishak against Solomon, it can be surmised that Jeroboam may have encouraged this attack directed against Rehoboam. It

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[904] Malamat, A. "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relation with Egypt". In Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 200.
[905] Halpern, B. "Sectionalism and Schism" *JBL* 93 (1974), pp 519-532.
[906] Malamat, A. "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relation with Egypt". In Ishida, T. ed. *Study in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, p 203.

seems, however, that Shishak was not much preoccupied with his "ally's" interests. Shishak was contented with Rehoboam's submission and gifts and he did not go to the extent of crushing him, as Jeroboam probably would have wished. Rehoboam remained strong enough to sustain continuous wars against his brother enemy. This is possibly all Shishak wanted, as a way to keep these petty kings in check while he remained the master of the region. Like Hiram, the Egyptian Pharaohs were more interested in what they could get out of Israel than what they could contribute to the welfare of the Israelites, just as it was noted concerning international involvement in the internal conflicts in Rwanda, in the Great Lakes Region and elsewhere in Africa and in the world.

7.3.3 Summary

A popular saying in Rwanda: "*Usenya urwe umutiza umuhoro"* can be paraphrased as, "you do not deny your machete to the one borrowing it to destroy his/her own house". The saying is more often used with a cynical tune to mean, "If somebody is foolish enough to destroy his/her own home, it is not the responsibility of those watching him/her to stand in his/her way". The conflicts in Israel and in Rwanda, as discussed in this work, originated from within the respective communities. In both contexts the conflicts resulted from the failure of social groups to equitably share the privileges and responsibilities that their respective nations offered. In both cases, social groups resorted to exclusion and exploitation and oppression to enjoy the monopoly of those privileges.

There has been a perception that each case of foreign involvement was based on particular affinities that each of the intervening foreign powers had with a particular party in conflict in the country. Some opinions have stressed particular sympathy that prompted the foreign intervening powers to step in and help "their friends". This was said about the Belgians who loved the Tutsi, of the friendship between Habyarimana and the then French President Mitterand, of the friendship between President Museveni of Uganda and the Rwigema group. Of course there may have been "lobbying" and "connections", but there is a fallacy in leaving the matter at the level of sentiments. Foreign interference was certainly based more on strategic geo-political interest than on feelings. That is why, whenever these interests were threatened, the former alliances

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faded away. In a world that has become a global village, some countries are seeing their sovereignty significantly reduced because of the interest they represent for more powerful external powers. Small countries may not even be free to plan for peace when there are external powers interested in conflict. Such external influence on internal conflicts in the developing countries is rarely correctly acknowledged. This is another area that can be investigated further.

In Israel, the agenda of the intervening foreign powers, though not very explicit, it is not always covered. It is not disguised under friendship or some humanitarian concerns. The political interest is expressed, for example, through the explicit mention that the daughter of Pharaoh, given to Solomon, was to seal a treaty, while the hospitality offered by Pharaoh to Jeroboam finds its explanation in the attack that the same Pharaoh launched later against Rehoboam. Pharaoh supported Solomon's opponent because he had his personal political agenda against Israel. The attitude and motivation of Pharaoh is not much different from that of all the foreign powers that enthusiastically offered their help to parties in the Rwandan conflict. Motivation is not always for human rights, not for the promotion of social justice, not on compassionate grounds, but with a hardly hidden political agenda. Such "friends" are always available, ready to "fish in the troubled water". This external opportunism is facilitated by internal selfishness from groups of people who prioritise their own interests to the detriment of the interests of the whole people. In Israel, as in Rwanda, the external intervention in internal conflicts was facilitated by particular internal groups of people pursuing, acquiring or maintaining exclusive privileges and being willing to achieve these at any cost. Peace-building is not always the main preoccupation of those involved in the scramble for power, nor of those external powers intervening in internal conflicts. However, a concern for peace is expected to characterize the custodians of moral authority, more than most. These include God's servants and representatives in the society. So we examine next the attitude of God's servants during the social crises in Israel and in Rwanda.

7.4 God's servants in times of socio-political crisis

The socio-political issues involved in the crisis that culminated in the division of the kingdom seem not to have been the main preoccupation of the narrator of the event of the division. They equally seem to have escaped the attention of the contemporaries of the regimes of David's house. Quite surprising is the silence of the prophets, who were the only people who could speak to the king on behalf of the people. The apparent silence of Israel's prophets, who witnessed social injustice in their time, recalls the silence of the Rwandan churches in the periods of social crises that prepared the ground for the Genocide. The present section examines the attitude of the prophets who were in office under the reign of David's house. The evaluation of Israelite prophets at this time may shed some light on the situation of God's servants in Rwanda, helping us to understand the challenges they faced and exposing their strengths and weaknesses in discharging their prophetic role. On this issue of the prophetic ministry, the biblical context takes the lead in the dialogue.

7.4.1 The prophetic ministry and the division of the kingdom of Israel

The biblical traditions mention four prophets whose ministries are connected with the regimes of the house of David in the united kingdom. The ministry of these prophets is situated in the early times of prophetism in Israel, when prophets worked more with individual leaders (usually kings), in contrast with the later prophets who addressed the entire people.[907] The focus of this section is on the work of each of the four prophets who served at the court of the king to whom each was expected to minister. Of the four, Ahijah and Shemaiah are mentioned in direct connection with the conflict leading to the division, so that their position on this conflict is known. The third, Nathan, though not directly connected with the conflict, is presented as an influential man at the court of David and Solomon. The fourth, Iddo, is not referred to in the succession narrative that was the direct focus of the present work. He is mentioned only in the tradition of the Chronicler. His inclusion in this discussion serves once again to substantiate my assertion that the comparative approach followed in the present work is applicable beyond the

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[907] Birch, B.C. et al. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament,* p 251.

limits of the selected text of 1 Kings 12:1-24. Best known of the four prophets is Nathan, who apparently preceded the other three in office.

7.4.1.1 Nathan's prophetic ministry at the court of David's house

Nathan's name and role are recorded in three major incidents of his career as a court prophet. He is the prophet to whom King David reveals his intention to build a house for Yahweh. Without hesitation Nathan encourages David to go ahead with his plan. But in the night of the same day Nathan receives from Yahweh instructions that contradict the answer he had earlier given to David. As an obedient prophet, Nathan goes back to David to announce to him the better deal from Yahweh (2 Samuel 7:1-17). The way Nathan discharged his prophetic responsibility in this matter was captured in his evaluation by Dietrich as follows:

> Nathan was not a willing oracle but resisted the tit-for-tat mentality of the king by establishing a special covenant between king and God within the context of the covenant between YHWH and Israel. He thus prevented any attempt of the divinely blessed king to control the deity. On the other hand, he made a promise to the king that God would bless the dynasty as long as the king acted in accordance with God's guidance. Nathan is no doubt devoted to the king and the royal house but he nevertheless remains the speaker for God and the people.[908]

Nathan's authority and commitment to his prophetic role are also noted in the incident of David's affair with Bathsheba. This time he is portrayed as a courageous prophet who confronts the king wisely, leading him to confess his sin. He points out the seriousness of David's sin and faithfully discharges his responsibility in pronouncing God's judgement against the sinning king. He pronounced a death sentence against the king; or rather, led the king to pronounce this death sentence himself.[909] In this case, like the first one, Nathan is presented as an uncompromising prophet of Yahweh, with the authority to guide the king and eventually rebuke him when he strays.

The third major incident that involved the intervention of Nathan was the ascension of Solomon to the throne. David was getting old and feeble and the succession had not been

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[908] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 337.
[909] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 336.

settled. Adonijah, who was probably the eldest son living, started to behave in a way that demonstrated his intention to succeed his father to the throne. He managed to rally around him some of the most influential officials of his father. Nathan, who was one of those that Adonijah had left behind, decided to frustrate Adonijah's plans. He succeeded in inducing David to believe that he had once pledged himself to designate Solomon as a successor and he fabricated a *coup d'état* on the part of Adonijah to furnish a pretext for extracting from David the designation of Solomon for the throne.[910] In this incident the prophet is represented less as Yahweh's messenger than as an intriguing court politician, planning very cleverly and successfully the succession of David by a successor of his choice instead of a candidate who ignored him. Dietrich sees him as an opportunistic accomplice of the power-hungry Solomon.[911]

Ishida found in Nathan a prophet who, being disappointed in David, placed his hopes in young Solomon to restore the rule of the dynasty of David with justice and equity over the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.[912] Ishida's perception may be correct, but it does not help us understand why Nathan preferred Solomon over his brother Adonijah. Was this because he felt sidelined by Adonijah or was it an expression of division between the tribal groups of Judah, who backed Adonijah, and the city of Jerusalem, who supported Solomon?[913] In any case, Nathan seems here to have had personal reasons to choose his camp. His position in this matter could have been vindicated had he intervened later during the reign of Solomon to ensure that his concern for justice and equity remained the preoccupation of the king. Nathan's support to Solomon should have reinforced his position of influence over the king, who had good reasons to listen to the prophet who brought him to the throne. Yet this prophet is nowhere reported using his prerogatives and influence to advise or admonish King Solomon, as he had done with his father.

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[910] Ishida, T. "Solomon's Succession to the Throne of David" in Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon*, p 178.

[911] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 336.

[912] Ishida, T. "Solomon's Succession to the Throne of David" in Ishida, T. ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon*, p 187.

[913] Soggin, J. A. "The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom", in Hayes, J. H. And Maxwell Miller. eds. *Israel and Judean History*, p 365.

Nathan's silence before the unpopular and exploitative policies of his *protégé* is difficult to explain. Maybe, as time went by, the prophet grew too close to the regime to notice and denounce its injustices. It is recorded that two of the chief officers of Solomon, Azariah and Zabud, were sons of Nathan, Solomon's friend (1 Kings 4:5), and it is possible that this was Nathan the prophet.[914] If this is the case, it could mean that Nathan had vested interests in Solomon's regime and was too involved to denounce it. Such kinds of vested interests in the regime are part of what prevented some Church leaders in Rwanda from denouncing social injustices in their time.

It is important to note that the assumption that Nathan failed to promote justice in the time of Solomon is based on the silence of biblical traditions on Nathan's exact behaviour at this time. It is possible that Nathan spoke and nobody listened to him. A fair evaluation of Nathan's prophetic role in Solomon's time would require more information about his exact attitude and contribution toward the indicted policies of Solomon's regime. The absence of information limits our ability to justly condemn him. His situation may be close to that of many Rwandans who, though not being in favour of the Genocide, were still not able to prevent or stop it. Being present does not necessarily mean being in a position to make a difference. Guilt should be proved, not presumed, as has too often been the case in times of social conflicts in Rwanda, with people being judged guilty of the crimes committed by those of their social groups. Presuming a whole social group guilty has always been, and remains, a serious obstacle to reconciliation in Rwanda.

7.4.1.2 Ahijah's involvement in the socio-political crisis in Israel

Ahijah is introduced in the narrative about the time of the troubled end of Solomon's reign as a Shilonite prophet who acts to implement Yahweh's judgement on Solomon. Ahijah informs Jeroboam that Yahweh is not satisfied with Solomon, who has become idolatrous and has failed to keep God's ways and statutes. Ahijah announces a planned secession that will result in the separation of ten tribes, leaving the house of David reigning only over the king's own tribe. The secession, designed to be a means of

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[914] Dietrich, W. *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, p 92. Dietrich insinuates this in his identification of Nathan, referred to here as one of the well-known men from the Davidic-Solomonic tradition.

chastisement for Solomon, is a blessing to Jeroboam, now chosen to inherit what Solomon loses.

Ahijah is here introduced as a prophet modelled after the pattern of Samuel and his sudden appearance in the account parallels that of Nathan.[915] In his king-making role, however, Ahijah behaves more like Samuel than Nathan, whose choice of Solomon appears to follow his own taste while Ahijah, like Samuel, is guided by Yahweh's choice. Ahijah, like Samuel, acts in secret to take the kingdom away from the current king. But in the case of Samuel, the biblical narrative mentions that Samuel was not totally secretive about Saul's upcoming fall. Both before and after secretly anointing David, he is reported to have confronted the king more than once about the shortcomings that caused him to be rejected by Yahweh. The absence on the side of Ahijah of a similar kind of bold initiative that generally characterised Yahweh's prophets gives a character of conspiracy to his secret move against Solomon.[916]

Ahijah is identified as a prophet from Shilo, an ancient northern shrine later supplanted by Jerusalem. Jagersma estimates that in the protest of Ahijah there was involved a conflict between the old cult of sacral confederacy at Shechem and Gilgal and the new cult at Jerusalem.[917] In Jagersma's opinion, the involvement of the prophet Ahijah from Shilo could indicate that the religious group in Shilo may have backed the revolt against Solomon and this could result from rivalry between Shilo and Jerusalem.[918] However, Ahijah's move could have had some socio-political ground, in addition to the expressed religious motives. As a prophet from the north, Ahijah is likely to have been sensitive to issues of exploitation and oppression, of which his fellow northerners were victims. His identification with the exploited people of the north predisposed him to empathise with them and, at the same time, leading him to easily notice the injustice of Solomon's regime. His indictment against Solomon referred to the king's apostasy, but the choice of

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[915] Mullen, E.T. *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity*. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press. 1993, p 260.

[916] Jagersma. H. *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period,* p122. Jagersma submits that Jeroboam fled to Egypt after Solomon had discovered this conspiracy.

[917] Gray, J. I &II Kings, p 294.

[918] Jagersma. H. *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period,* p 122.

Jeroboam does not seem to focus as much on his better moral and spiritual qualities as on his abilities as a charismatic leader. Jeroboam was apparently not meant to be to Solomon what David was to Saul. He was never described as a man after Yahweh's heart who, like David, would succeed where his predecessor had failed. The designation of Jeroboam seems to aim more at the vindication of the oppressed people of the north than correcting Solomon's idolatrous practices.

Ahijah is credited for noticing the weaknesses of the king and distancing himself from an oppressive regime. In this he stands in contrast to his colleague, Nathan, whose silence under the reign of Solomon may indicate that he was not sensitive enough to notice the social injustice of the time, or was not objective and bold enough to denounce a regime that, though oppressive to the northern tribes, was favourable to his own tribe. The same remark may apply to Iddo.

7.4.1.3 The silence of Iddo the seer and prophet

The person called by this name and connected with the reign of Solomon is first referred to as a seer, serving as a historiographer (2 Chronicles 9:29). The designation 'seer" in Hebrew "רֹאֶה" is from the ordinary verb "רָאָה", meaning "see'. It appears from 1 Samuel 9:9 that "seer" "רֹאֶה" was the older name for those who, after the rise of the more regular orders, were called "prophets." It is not appropriate, however, to speak of the "seers" or "prophets" of Samuel's time as on the level of mere fortune-tellers. Whatever insight or vision they possessed is traced to God's Spirit. Samuel was the "רֹאֶה" by pre-eminence and the name is little used after his time.[919] Another term used for "seer" is "חֹזֶה". Individuals who, like Iddo, bear the title "חֹזֶה" are mentioned in connection with the kings and as historiographers (2 Samuel 24:11; 1 Chronicles 21:9; 25:5; 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 19:2, etc.) and distinction is sometimes made between "prophets" and "seers" (2 Kings 17:13; 1 Chronicles 29:29, etc.)[920]. Havernick thinks that "seer"

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[919] International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. 'seer" Bible Works 7.
[920] International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. 'seer" Bible Works 7.

denotes one who does not belong to the regular prophetic order,[921] but it is not easy to fix a precise distinction.

The work of Iddo referred to by the Chronicler comprises his visions (2 Chronicles 9:29), his genealogies (2 Chronicles 12:15) and his annals (commentary or midrash) (2 Chronicles 13:22). Since the chronicler says that the visions of Iddo concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat, comprised the acts of Solomon, this seems to suggest that these visions occurred during the reign of Solomon. Therefore Iddo was already a seer in the time of Solomon. Moreover, Iddo's interest with the affairs of the southern kingdom[922] may suggest that he himself was a southerner.

Iddo's ministry seems not to have been limited to seeing visions. The Chronicler calls him a prophet (2 Chronicles 12:22). He may have been the prophet who denounced Jeroboam (1 Kings 13), who is called by Josephus and Jerome Jadon, or Jaddo. If this is the case, this was a prophet who had authority and enjoyed enough recognition to confront a king. If then he lived in the time of Solomon, he could have been in a position to confront him about his unpopular policies, as he apparently did with Jeroboam. Here the courage of a southern man of God in speaking out against the policies of a northerner king is in sharp contrast with his lenience before the oppressive policies of a king from his region and tribe. Maybe Iddo had some vested interests in Solomon's regime that affected his objectivity. It is possible, for example, that this was the same Iddo whose son Ahinadab was one of Solomon's governors appointed to implement his policies in Mahanain (1 Kings 4:14). Like Nathan, Iddo may have had no motivation to challenge the shortcomings of a regime that were not against his personal interest. Or perhaps none of these southern prophets had really paid attention to what was happening. Since they were not on the side of the victims of exploitation, to them the situation was just normal. Such an insensitive attitude was often noted from God's servants in Rwanda, who seemed

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[921] "Havernick. Introductions to Old Testament", 50 ff, in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, "seer".

[922] Iddo's work is mentioned in connection with Rehoboam and Abijah; his interest in Jeroboam may be explained by the extent to which he affected the pre-eminence of the house of David.

not to notice injustices inflicted by political leaders from their social groups on the people of other groups. It seems that Shemaiah behaved differently.

7.4.1.4 Shemaiah's boldness makes the difference

Prophet Shemaiah is introduced in the narrative about the division of the kingdom at the heat of the crisis. He is the "man of God" who dissuades Rehoboam after this king in his frustration had resolved to use military force to restore the kingdom to himself. Shemaiah intervenes and convinces the king and his supporters that civil war was neither in God's will nor in the interests of the people. By so doing, the prophet spares the nation from senseless bloodshed.

The ministry of Shemaiah seems to have been marked by his bold stand before Rehoboam. Later traditions of the Chronicler report that this same prophet stood before Rehoboam and his officers to speak strongly against their perverted regime announcing the impeding invasion of Shishak, the Egyptian Pharaoh (2 Chronicles 12:5-7). This time, again, the prophet's intervention was successful because the king and the people recognized their wrongdoing and, according to the Chronicler, the judgment against them was mitigated. What is reported about Shemaiah fits well in the role of a prophet at this time.[923] Shemaiah is portrayed as a man of God who was wise enough to distance himself from the corrupt practices in Rehoboam's time and bold enough to confront the king whenever he erred. By faithfully doing his prophetic ministry, he saves the whole nation from impending tragedies. If Shemaiah was a Judean prophet, as is suggested,[924] he is to be credited also for overcoming the bond of his tribal ties with the regime, which could have blinded him and rendered him insensitive to its mistakes.

Shemaiah is portrayed as the man of God who speaks the word of God. Through him God's position on human conflict is made known unambiguously: it is not God's will that brothers fight one another. Even when they belong to different tribes, they are still brothers. This reality is perceived and proclaimed by a man of God who does not allow

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[923] Gray, J. I &II Kings, p 309.
[924] Gray, J. I &II Kings, p 309.

his/her personal interests, agenda or tribal identity, to interfere with God's will and God's truth. Nathan was that man of God under David, but under Solomon, when he involves himself in the court's intrigues, he is no longer the prophet sent by God. Ahijah discharged his prophetic role in opposing the oppression of, and siding with, the exploited northern tribes. Maybe his kinship with them predisposed him to sympathize with their condition. The diverse attitude of these prophets of Israel illuminates the attitude of God's servants in Rwanda.

7.4.2 Attitude of God's people in social conflicts in Rwanda

Although Rwanda has never been a theocracy, the influence of the church has been an important factor contributing to the making of the history of the nation. From the advent of Christianity in Rwanda, the action and inaction of the church influenced the turn of events that shaped Rwandan history. Throughout Rwandan history Christians and church leaders have been part and parcel of social conflicts. God's people have often been criticized for their involvement in politics, or for their involvement for the wrong motives. They have also been criticized for doing nothing to prevent or solve crises.

The Catholic Church of the colonial period was best positioned to influence the action of the colonial administration. Unfortunately the considerable authority that the church possessed was not used to defend the just cause. Instead of speaking for the voiceless and exploited Hutu masses, the Catholic Church opted for siding with the oppressing regimes, directly participating in the oppression by promoting discrimination and exclusion. When they later shifted their sympathy from the Tutsi to favour the Hutu, it became even more apparent that their preoccupation was not social justice. In Israel, Nathan performed excellently in his early ministry at David's court, especially in the case of Uriah. Later, in the time of Solomon, his attitude was as disappointing as that of the Catholic Church in Rwanda. As Nathan did under Solomon, the intervention of the church was evident when it was about supporting political leaders, but blatantly lacking when it was about challenging their mistakes.

The weak Protestant churches of the colonial period remained marginalized in the Catholic-controlled post-independence regime. Their relative emancipation by the Habyarimana regime still kept then in a position of weakness in their preoccupation to remain on good terms with the regime. The same preoccupation to stay on the good side of the regime may be behind the attitude of Nathan under Solomon and it may be a plausible explanation for the silence of Iddo. But the silence of Protestant leaders in the presence of social injustices in Rwanda mainly resulted from giving in to the intimidation from political authorities, insensitivity to the plight of the oppressed masses, a poor grasp of their prophetic responsibility or the pursuit of personal interests, which would be jeopardized if the concerned religious leader was not on good terms with the politician.

A recurrent phenomenon observed is the tendency for religious leaders to note and denounce social injustices committed against their kins-people and to remain silent when their related groups are the oppressors. It took a northern prophet, Ahijah, to note and oppose the abuses perpetrated by a southern king, Solomon, and endured by northern people. Were there no prophets in the south? The Rwandan experience has shown that few Tutsi servants of God have ever noted and openly spoken against injustices endured by Hutu under Tutsi regimes and vice versa, few Hutu in the church have noted and denounced Tutsi oppression by Hutu regimes. Instead, whenever political power moves from one social group to the rival group, church leadership tends to change accordingly. The result has been that when the Hutu were exploited, Tutsi leaders of the church did not do much to speak for them. When Tutsi are oppressed by Hutu political regimes, it takes time for the Hutu leadership of the church even to be aware that something bad is happening to the Tutsi. If the church is to perform its prophetic role in Rwandan society it needs to arise above tribal politics and assert its independence from the state.

7.4.3 Summary

In Rwanda, as in Israel, the failure of God's people to discharge their prophetic role resulted in their inability to prevent social crises. The failure can be explained by a number of weaknesses that are similar in both contexts. These include a narrow understanding of the social responsibility of God's servants. In both contexts spiritual

leaders allowed for exploitative and oppressive political regimes to go unquestioned, maybe thinking that it was not their business to be involved in politics. In many cases those who were supposed to speak out were not directly concerned by the oppression perpetrated by their tribesmen against the "other" group. To some, tribal identification with those holding political power may have prevented their sensitivity to the suffering "outsiders". It was easier for those who were not feeling the weight of discrimination to remain indifferent. To others, it was probably fear or lack of boldness that neutralised them. They were not courageous enough to accept the risk of confronting the rulers. Others, maybe, had vested interests in the regimes which they willingly protected, overlooking their weaknesses and sacrificing social justice at the altar of personal interest. It is the ambiguous behaviour of God's servants in Rwanda that confused the people with respect to their understanding of God's attitude to the conflicts. If the contemporary church of Rwanda is to make a difference, more "Shemiah-like" messengers of God are needed in the country, who, regardless of their tribal identity, will make known the God of peace, opposed to conflicts among brothers.

In Rwanda, as in Israel, God's people are criticised either for the absence of their voice denouncing social injustices or for their direct involvement in politics not in the interests of the oppressed. Today, a number of church leaders have decided to be fully involved in politics, not as "prophets", with God's message to the politicians, but as politicians. Whether this is the best way for God's servants to discharge their responsibility to the society, I will leave for future debate, as I maintain that the role of the Church of God is that of contributing towards finding solutions to social problems, rather than participating in creating problems or remaining unconcerned in the face of problems.

This chapter has attempted a survey of some major socio-economic and political issues involved in the conflicts in Israel and in Rwanda, as discussed in the previous chapters, and has examined the extent to which tribal diversity contributed to the conflicts. Issues discussed have been grouped into four categories, following the kind of actors whose action or inaction contributed to conflicts in both contexts. In the first group, the political leaders resolved to monopolize the privileges of power. They failed to organise equitable

regimes that guarantee justice and equal access to resources for all. In the second group, the people subjected to the inequitable policies of their leaders reacted by dividing themselves into social groups according to their sharing interests or challenges. The third group is that of the religious leaders and God's servants, who, by failing in their prophetic role, failed their respective nations and their people. The fourth group is that of the external powers, whose interventions were major contributions to the conflicts. Any conflict prevention or resolution strategy should consider these four categories of players.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction

This chapter intends to recapitulate various issues pertaining to tribal conflicts covered in the present study. It summarises the findings of this study which has analysed the context of tribal conflicts that culminated in the Genocide in Rwanda, in dialogue with the context of tribal competition that contributed to the division of the kingdom of Israel, narrated in 1 Kings 12:1-24. This dialogue has helped in identifying dynamically equivalent issues from both contexts that, on the one hand, guided the interpretation of the text and, on the other, helped to answer some questions raised by the contemporary context of tribal conflict in Rwanda and elsewhere, especially in Africa. After a summary of findings, the chapter concludes with an attempt to answer the questions asked at the beginning of the study. Finally, some areas not sufficiently covered by this study are pointed out for further research.

8.2 Summary

This study involved the use of a biblical text, the passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24, that narrates the event of the division of the kingdom of Israel. To bring this text in dialogue with the contemporary context of conflict in Rwanda, a contextual approach was required in order to bridge the gap between the two worlds, the ancient world that shaped the biblical text and the contemporary world that conditions the way a contemporary reader understands it. To establish this dialogue, this study followed the inculturation interpretive approach. The second chapter of this study described, in detail, this contextual approach.

Inculturation hermeneutics is an approach to biblical interpretation inspired by the concern of African theologians to promote an African interpretation of the Christian faith. This concern resulted in the development of African theology. Inculturation biblical hermeneutics developed following the same processes followed by African theology, of which it was destined to be the expression in the domain of biblical interpretation. Three phases were identified in the development of inculturation hermeneutics. First was the

reactive and apologetic phase, characterized by its reactive and apologetic turn in response to the condemnation of African culture and religion by the missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries. This was the phase which produced comparative studies, undertaken to legitimise African religion and culture. Next was the proactive phase, when emphasis was put on the use of the African context as a resource in biblical interpretation. Inculturation and liberation methods were expressions of this concern. Then there was the reader-centred phase, when new emphases were directed, on the one hand, toward the contribution of ordinary readers and, on the other hand, toward the African context, which now becomes the subject of biblical interpretation. It is this last aspect that influenced the present study.

Inculturation hermeneutics helped especially in the analysis of the two contexts, the contemporary context of conflict in Rwanda and the context of the selected biblical text, as well as in the use of the contemporary context as the subject of interpretation. The steps suggested by Ukpong in analysing the context were helpful. The inculturation hermeneutics were complemented with aspects of the tri-polar interpretive approach, especially the phase of this approach called "appropriation". In this phase the issues deemed dynamically equivalent from the two contexts were brought face to face. As the Rwandan context was the subject of interpretation it was analysed first.

The analysis of the Rwandan context was the focus of the third chapter of the present work. This chapter undertook to analyse and evaluate the situation of social relations during the different regimes that led the country from the pre-colonial period to the present. The pre-colonial period, the colonial period, the First Republic, the Second Republic and the post-Genocide regime each has its contribution to social conflict in Rwanda.

It was noted that the pre-colonial period witnessed no conflict among the different social groups existing in the country. But the inequality of privileges among social groups in that epoch were the root sources of social disharmonies. Beside the monopoly of power that was reserved to one social group, to the exclusion of others, most noted were the two

institutions, 'ubuhake" and "uburetwa", that resulted in the subordination of some groups to the others, with subsequent uneven distribution of resources.

The cattle clientship *ubuhake* was the chief institution of pre-colonial Rwanda. This was a contract by which a Hutu client entrusted himself to a Tutsi patron, who would grant him some privileges in terms of usufruct on cattle and land in exchange for commodities and services regularly offered by the Hutu servant. This institution could sometime result in a personalized relationship between a Hutu client and a Tutsi patron, involving the exchange of certain commodities and services. Most of the time, however, it was rather exploitative and generative of hierarchical differences between Tutsi and Hutu. Some saw it as a form of quasi-slavery enabling the Tutsi masters to exploit the poor, downtrodden Hutu.[925]

Uburetwa was compulsory and non-paid work imposed on Hutu peasants. Sometimes it was extended to poor Tutsi, although even in this case the kind of work requested from the Tutsi was relatively lighter than that which was requested from the Hutu. The discriminatory nature of this institution, coupled with the abuses that characterized it, provides additional argument to those who trace the sources of social conflicts in Rwanda back to the pre-colonial period. Social relations in pre-colonial Rwanda were not perfect and when the colonial powers arrived the situation worsened.

The first colonisers to arrive in Rwanda were Germans. Despite their short stay, the Germans contributed to social conflicts in Rwanda in two main ways, first, through their indirect rule strategy, then by providing military support to the then ruling Tutsi regime. The indirect rule consisted of maintaining unchanged the traditional administration structure and controlling the country through local officials who became the executive instruments of the colonial power. This strategy gave more power to the Tutsi ruling class, at the expense of the downtrodden mass of mainly Hutu peasants.

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[925] Lemarchand, R. *Rwanda and Burundi*, p 40-41.

In addition to their political support to the ruling Tutsi, the Germans provided the Tutsi regime with military assistance that enabled them to conquer the remaining independent Hutu kingdoms. With the military support of the German colonizers, the king was able to extend his control to the peripheral regions, especially in the north of the country, where some Hutu polities had maintained their autonomy *vis-à-vis* the central state. The Germans did contribute to Rwandans' social problems, but their contribution cannot compare to that of the Belgians who replaced them

Continuing in the path of the Germans, the Belgian colonial administration further reinforced the traditional institutions. Under their regime *ubuhake* and *uburetwa* were extended to regions that had never known these systems of exploitation. The administrative reforms introduced by the Belgians were an additional setback to Hutu peasants, whose chance to escape exploitation was further reduced. But the greatest contribution of the Belgian administration to Rwandan social conflicts was their propagation of the Hamitic Hypothesis, an ideology that preached the superiority of the Tutsi over other social groups. The Hamitic theory claimed that the Tutsi descend from a superior race different from the other social groups and were endowed with exceptional skills and characteristics that qualified them to rule over the other "primitive" groups. The theory postulated that the Tutsi were aliens who came to conquer the land already occupied by the Hutu and the Twa. These claims repeated over and over the front of both Hutu and Tutsi, were internalised by many from both groups and they regularly fuelled conflicts that set the two groups against each other throughout the history of Rwanda.

The assertion that the Tutsi were born to lead had its logical corollary that they alone should have access to education. Belgian administrators who advocated this supremacist ideology made sure that the Tutsi remained the sole recipients of colonial education. In government and missionary schools, Tutsi sons were trained to serve as auxiliaries of the colonial administration and, from among them, new chiefs would be appointed. Thanks to this exclusive right to education the Tutsi elites managed to perpetuate themselves in the seats of power. Education provided them with the technical skills and training necessary for the preservation of their traditional claims to supremacy

Towards the end of the colonial regime, the Belgians shifted their support from the Tutsi, who were campaigning for independence, to the Hutu, who were agitating for socio-political changes. Throughout the events that marked the period of transition from colonialism to independence, the Belgians played a determining role, gradually destroying or neutralizing all sources of resistance to the Hutu revolutionary movement, while at the same time creating new institutions through which further changes favourable to the Hutu could be generated. It was under the supervision and encouragement of the Belgians that the Hutu militants took power from the Tutsi before accession to independence in 1962.

Independence found the Hutu in a position of strength. They had abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the republic. They now controlled power. But the transition had been at the expense of the Tutsi community. Targeted by bands of Hutu who burned their huts and looted their property, many Tutsi followed the members of the Tutsi elite, who had lost their positions and privileges and gone into exile. The former freedom fighters now in power were not particularly magnanimous in their victory. Little effort was made toward reconciliation. The exclusion of the Hutu from power in the deposed regime was replaced by the exclusion of the Tutsi community from participation in the political institutions of republican Rwanda. The situation, already tense, was worsened by repeated attempts by Tutsi, now in exile, to fight their way back. These external Tutsi attacks were always followed by reprisals on the innocent Tutsi who had stayed in the country. The new regime badly failed to repair the damages of a long history of exploitation, oppression and rivalries that had generated mistrust and violent conflicts.

It was this climate of social tension that provided a pretext for the putschists to seize power in 1973. The second Hutu republic promised to restore social harmony. Their slogan was peace and unity. In practice, however, they created more problems than they solved. To the historic Hutu/Tutsi divide, they added a sectional one, opposing the north to the south. If this regime can be credited for putting an end to violent attacks on the Tutsi, it is noted that the peace it granted them was conditional. They were safe as long as

they accepted their exclusion from positions of power and their limited access to education. The strategy of keeping the Tutsi away from power was behind the decision to oppose the return of those living in exile.

The obstinate opposition to the return of the Tutsi refugees provided the Tutsi with a pretext to launch an attack against the regime of the Second Hutu republic. The war, started by Tutsi refugees, was used to revive the anti-Tutsi sentiment in the country, depicting them as the historic enemies and oppressors of the Hutu. This anti-Tutsi campaign received a mixed response, as many of those who were disgruntled with the regime preferred to overlook their supposed tribal differences and to unite their efforts to oppose the regime through political alliances.

The war lasted longer than each fighting party had expected. Meanwhile, the level of mistrust had not ceased to increase, so that when the parties were asked to negotiate, there was no serious commitment to reconciliation. It was this mistrust that delayed the implementation of the negotiations concluded under pressure. The assassination of the Hutu president transformed this mistrust into an almost generalized hatred and fear of the Tutsi among the Hutu, who were convinced that the Tutsi were out to exterminate the Hutu. This fear and hatred were the main forces that drove many who perpetrated the Genocide.

The Genocide brought the relations between the Hutu and the Tutsi to its lowest level ever. The hate campaign that accompanied it, the number of people it involved as perpetrators and victims, the amount of atrocity it caused, and the physical and psychological injury it inflicted; all these made the Genocide an unprecedented tragedy in the history of social relations in Rwanda and a serious setback for any efforts at reconciliation. The rifts in the Hutu/Tutsi relations were even further widened by acts of retaliation against the Hutu during the early post-Genocide period, as well as the tragic consequences of the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Hutu refugees. Among the challenges facing the post-Genocide regime in its reconciliation programme is the conviction established in the minds of many from both social groups that members of the

"other" group are historical and unredeemable enemies. This perception results in a climate of constant mistrust, fear and hatred. These feelings could have been overcome by the message of the churches, had they been able to effectively discharge their prophetic responsibility.

The fourth chapter showed the weaknesses of the Rwandan churches that prevented them from making a significant difference, especially in social crises. In this, the Catholic Church, through its European missionaries, contributed to social injustices, first, by their promotion of the Hamitic theory and in their discriminatory admission of only Tutsi to their school. Later, when they decided to support the Hutu uprising, they did this through training a Hutu counter-elite and supporting them in many ways. While the Catholic Church contributed to Rwandan conflicts through a biased participation, the Protestant churches contributed through their complacence, being in many ways deficient in their ability to confront socio-political issues.

Having established that the causes of the Rwandan Genocide are rooted in history, we studied the context of the division of the kingdom in Israel. The fifth chapter of this work focussed on the literary analysis of the passage of 1 Kings 12:1-24, reporting the event of the division of the kingdom of Israel. This passage was located first in its broader context of the former prophets narrating the life of the people of Israel in the Promised Land under different modes of leadership. Then the focus of analysis shifted toward the immediate literary context of the passage, the narrative reported in the book of Kings about Israel under the reign of David's house.

The analysis of the division narrative revealed that the division, interpreted as Yahweh's judgment of Solomon's apostasy, resulted from the failed negotiations between Rehoboam and the representative of the northern tribes. It was found that the issue at stake had all to do with socio-economic and political problems that existed even before Rehoboam's accession. The monarchical regime that had displaced the charismatic kind of leadership was making high demands on the people, whose determination to stop their oppression met with the intransigence of their king. It was noted that the revolt that

resulted was not directed against King Rehoboam alone, but against the house of David. Moreover, the secession that ensued followed tribal lines. The tribal connotations of this conflict justified the need for a socio-historical analysis aimed at examining the history of social relations in Israel. This was the focal point of the sixth chapter of this study

The discussion of social relations in Israel considered two periods in the history of Israel, namely the pre-monarchical period, referred to as the tribal period, and the period of the united monarchy. Different hypotheses explaining the emergence of Israel in Canaan were surveyed. It appeared from these hypotheses that Israel emerged as a tribal confederation in Palestine during the period of transition from the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I. It is contended that the sense of kinship and mutual loyalty which these tribes came to share emerged gradually after the settlement, due to such factors as geographical proximity, similar lifestyles elicited by the physical features of the mountainous regions, shared sanctuaries and the necessity of combined warfare during the pre-monarchical period. Yahwism, a new religious movement brought by a group referred to as the 'Exodus group", transcended tribal religion and created solidarity among pre-existent social units. The basic characteristic of this confederacy included a common concern for the Yahwistic cult, shared laws and ideology, a commitment to economic egalitarianism and a readiness to organize military opposition against external forces such as the Canaanites and the Philistines.[926]

In the post-settlement period, Israel was an egalitarian society without centralized institutions. As in any segmented society, the organization of power and leadership followed lineage systems and kinship units. Charismatic deliverers called judges were nominated as *ad hoc* leaders to meet the need of the moment and their power ended with their specific mission. The judges were generally called individually and seldom sought to establish ruling dynasties through which they could eventually confer on their tribes some long-term privileged status that could attract jealousies and competitions from other tribes. The social structure of this time was not favourable to a scramble for power. Ranking privileges, which typify tribes with chiefdoms, were fiercely resisted and the

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[926] McNutt, P.M. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* p 86.

claim of certain families to greater wealth and honour than others ran against the grain of the egalitarian levelling mechanisms guarded by the protective family associations. Attempts to establish dynastic monarchy were resisted until the time when internal and external conditions called for it.

With the institution of the monarchy, Israel progressively changed from an egalitarian to a hierarchical society. The centralised regime of the monarchy provided permanent leadership and reinforced political integration and cohesion of different tribes. But this was accompanied by the emergence of an administrative apparatus with a group of specialists in whose hands were concentrated the society's resources. From a few people in the service of King Saul, the system grew to become a fully fledged administration in the time of Solomon, with a good number of administrative officers needing to be sustained from the rapidly dwindling surplus of the peasant masses. Leadership positions increasingly moved away from the charismatic type, which were intended primarily to serve the people, to patrimonial regimes with a hierarchy of local leaders mostly chosen from the close relatives of the central figure, who entrusted them with power and socio-economic privileges. They acted as representatives of the central authority in their constituencies.

The king's tribesmen surrounding him began to believe that they were the legitimate custodians of political power and were not ready to share it, let alone relinquish it to any other tribe, without contestation. Had Zibah, Shebah, Mephiboshet or Abner, each in his time, had enough military power, the throne of Israel could probably not have moved from Benjamin to Judah. It was because of his military power and the support of his tribesmen that David conquered the throne and reigned over a dual monarchy of Israel and Judah. Under David, the people of Judah attempted to assert pre-eminence over other tribes, with this attitude embittering the northern tribes who attempted to mount a number of rebellions, easily quelled by David's superior military power. David's same power kept Israel and Judah together under the same king but could not make them a united society.

Solomon inherited an emerging empire from his father, together with enough prestige to command submission from all the tribes. His father David had spent his time expanding the emerging empire; Solomon undertook to re-organize and develop it. This re-organization was done at the expense of tribal leaders, the elders, who lost their power to Solomon's men. The immense projects he initiated weighed heavily on the people, who were bearing the cost of the opulence of Solomon's court and the maintenance of his harem. More importantly, the northern tribes came to believe that they were exploited by the southerners, who were taxed less and who enjoyed more access to resources and power. Solomon's administration increased bitterness among the northern tribes, whose power and influence had been eclipsed by the rise of David's house.

Jeroboam, a mighty man from the north, attempted a rebellion, but Solomon was strong enough to prevail. Towards the end of Solomon's reign his empire declined, losing most of the territories earlier annexed by David. At his death, Solomon left behind a kingdom weakened by external conflicts from neighbouring countries fighting to recover their sovereignty. It was with less prestige and less authority that Rehoboam succeeded his father. At the very beginning of his reign Rehoboam faced the unhappy northerners, who were determined to do away with what they perceived as oppression from David's house. Rehoboam's young courtiers advised him to ignore the people's request for relief from hard labour. His intransigence provided the northern tribes with a motive to successfully rebel against this weak and stubborn king, forming their own kingdom. The secession was interpreted as Yahweh's judgement on Solomon's apostasy, but it was a result of socio-economic and political conflicts with roots traceable back to the beginning of the monarchy.

The context of conflict in Israel was further examined in the light of the context of conflict in Rwanda in Chapter Seven of this study. The issues taken from these different contexts that allowed for space for comparative dialogue revolved around four categories of contributors to the conflicts, namely, the political leaders, the people, external interventions and the religious leaders.

It was noted that, through the practice described as patrimonialism, political leaders in Israel and in Rwanda surrounded themselves with people from their own tribes. In so doing the central figures hoped to secure loyalty and support from the people they could generally trust the most. They granted them strategic positions, making them stakeholders whose vested interest in the regimes would motivate them to support and defend them. As such influential groups of privileged elites grew stronger, they were able to highjack the control of power and silence the voices supporting social justice. The Genocide became possible in Rwanda not because the majority of Rwandan necessarily wanted it, but because most of those who did not support it were not able to successfully oppose it. Similarly, wise people who wanted harmony in Israel witnessed the division of the kingdom, but could not stop it. The effects of patrimonialism in both contexts were the division of the people into those who had access to power and privileges, which they were determined to defend, and those who felt excluded and were united by their shared determination to resist and claim their rights.

It emerged from this study that shared interests and common challenges are catalysts of social unity, while diverging interests loosen kinship ties. The claim that the unifying factor and the stronger bond of relationship of a given society is created by the fact of blood relationship[927] cannot be pushed to the extent of concluding that social diversity is an obstacle to social unity. It was observed that blood relationship in itself is not the *sine qua non* for social unity. The possibility that one people of Israel may have emerged from a diversity of tribes may strengthen the argument that tribal diversity is not necessarily an obstacle to social unity. The present study argued that blood ties are not the unifying factor alone, but one phenomenon around which more shared and vital interests revolve. Blood kinship loses its force whenever there is a conflict of interests, even among siblings. In Israel, as in Rwanda, there were times in each society when social diversity was not much of a problem. Shared goals, or a threat from a common enemy, brought together social groups, minimizing their differences. Conflict among them resulted from attempts of one group to monopolize privileges to the exclusion of the other group. Competition encouraged rivalries, divisions and enmity.

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[927] Turaki, Y. *Tribal Gods of Africa, p 51.*

Under the pressure of conflicting interests kinship relations became irrelevant and obsolete. In both the contexts of Israel and Rwanda, social groups that initially affirmed their shared identity ended up treating each other as aliens when they were competing for power and associated privileges. Unity for the Hutu and Tutsi of Rwanda will not necessarily be reached by proving that the two groups are not (or used not to be) tribes. Tribes or no tribes, what they need is to be delivered from whatever issues that antagonize them today and to be encouraged to work together for the common interests and against one common 'enemy'. The disappearance of Hutu and Tutsi categories may not prevent people from grouping into other equally or more harmful categories. Mamdani has recorded, for example, the appearance of new categories in the post-Genocide groupings (or rather dividings), separating Rwandans into returnees, refugees, victims, survivors and perpetrators.[928] These categories that have taken root in Rwanda are not empty rhetoric, because there are privileges or prejudices attached to each.

The present study has illustrated that the Rwandan Genocide and the division of the kingdom resulted from internal conflicts, to which external powers contributed. External intervention in internal conflicts is often justified by the alleged noble motives of the intervening parties. The enthusiasm to offer help is often said to be based on friendship, compassion for the suffering people, promotion of human rights, social justice, democracy and other laudable motives. Strategic interests are rarely formally acknowledged, though they remain the *sine qua non* for any intervention. Friends are always available, ready to come in if only this will offer them the occasion to "fish in the troubled water". Sometimes the external intervention determines the outcome of the conflict. For this reason, the prevention or resolution of an internal conflict requires considering and adequately addressing the external factor involved.

External intervention, as opportunistic as it can be, is most of the time facilitated by internal selfishness, from groups of people who prioritise their own interests or the interests of a small group, to the detriment of the interests of the whole people. Foreign

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[928] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers,* p 266.

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powers may have interests in internal conflicts, but they rarely create conflicts from scratch. The conflicts in Israel and in Rwanda, as discussed in this work, originated from within the respective communities. In both contexts, the conflicts resulted from the failure of social groups to equitably share the privileges and responsibilities that their respective nations offered. In both cases, social groups resorted to exclusion and exploitation and oppression to enjoy the monopoly of those privileges. Most of the time, the intervening foreign powers were either invited or welcomed and supported by internal parties.

In Rwanda, as in Israel, the failure of God's servants to discharge their prophetic role resulted in their inability to prevent social crises. The failure can be explained by a number of weaknesses that are similar in both contexts. These include a narrow understanding of the social responsibility of God's servants. Many church leaders in Rwanda, and apparently some prophets during the united monarchy in Israel, allowed for exploitative and oppressive political regimes to go unquestioned, maybe thinking that it was not their business to be involved in politics. In many cases, those who were supposed to speak out were not directly concerned by the oppression perpetrated by their tribesmen against the "other" tribes. It was the Ephraimite Ahijah who prophesied against the southern king. Similarly the Tutsi-dominated church of the colonial period seems not to have been very sensitive to the exploitation of the Hutu masses. When the Hutu took over the leadership of the church, they seem not to have paid much attention to the pain of the Tutsi community.

To some religious leaders, their tribal identification with those holding political power prevented their identification with the oppressed. It was easier for those who were not feeling the weight of discrimination to remain indifferent. To others, it was fear or lack of boldness that neutralised them. They were not courageous enough to accept the risk of confronting the rulers. Others, maybe, had vested interests in the regimes which they willingly protected, overlooking their weaknesses and sacrificing social justice at the altar of personal interests. The Israelite prophet Shemiah was singled out as a model for God's

messengers, called to rise above tribal politics and speak God's message of peace and unity.

8.3. Conclusion

The Genocide that happened in Rwanda in 1994 was a culmination of a long period of conflict between the two main social groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi, who never agreed to share equitably the leadership responsibilities of the nation and subsequent privileges. Throughout history, the different regimes that governed Rwanda were monopolized by one of the two groups. Each time that one of the two was in power, it adopted exclusivist ideologies and oppressive strategies that aimed at keeping the rival group in a powerless position, to prevent them from becoming strong enough to challenge the regime. While power struggles were maintained at the level of the elite from the rival groups, the implied scramble for access to the limited resources brought the conflict to the level of the masses, often called upon by their respective kinsfolk in the elite group. Rivalries and competitions for power developed into jealousies, mistrust, hatred and fear, sentiments that fuelled the Genocide.

In the same way, the division of the kingdom was a reaction to the monopoly of power and abuse of it by one tribe at the expense of the other tribes. Dynastic patrimonial monarchy, with its hierarchy and exclusion, had failed to unite the people. During the period of the united monarchy, the tribe of the king monopolized the power and attempted to hold on to it. Under David and his sons, social division fuelled rebellions, but it was the oppressive policies implemented especially by Solomon's administration that exacerbated tensions and triggered the revolt that ended in secession. The details discussed in this work concerning these conflicts allow us to answer the questions we asked at the beginning, as follows:

8.3.1 What are the root-causes of the conflict that led to the Genocide in Rwanda and how do they compare to the causes of the conflict that led to the division of the monarchy in Israel?

The decision to annihilate the Tutsi in Rwanda was not taken by the masses of Hutu people, although many of them took an active part in its implementation. It was taken by powerful extremists among the Hutu elite who saw in this "final solution" a way to prevent a rival group from snatching power from them. For many of these Hutu leaders, Tutsi rule meant an end to the pre-eminence of the Hutu, which this group had enjoyed since independence, and a return to Tutsi oppression, which the Hutu had endured before the independence. The Hutu acted out of mistrust, fear and hate, sentiments that were rooted in the history of rivalries, exclusion and oppression. The historic aspect of the roots of the Genocide can be summarized in what Mamdani had called the victim psychology. Referring to the cycle of violence between Hutu and Tutsi, he states:

> Ever since the colonial period, the cycle of violence has been fed by a victim psychology on both sides. Every round of perpetrators has justified the use of violence as the only effective guarantee against being victimized yet again. For the unreconciled victim of yesterday's violence, the struggle continues. The continuing tragedy of Rwanda is that each round of violence gives us yet another set of victims-turned perpetrators.[929]

The Genocide had its roots in history but it also had immediate causes. For extremist Hutu, losing the war implied losing power. It was this perspective of seeing power pass to the Tutsi that led them to opt for the "final solution". The war situation made it easy for more extremists to convince the masses that the Tutsi constituted an immediate threat to their lives. The threatened people easily heeded the message to kill-first-not-to-be-killed.

The event of the division of the kingdom is obviously different from the event of the Genocide. The similarities are found in the causes of the two events. Like the Rwandan Genocide, the division of the kingdom had its immediate causes, the obduracy of Jeroboam who ignored the plight of the exploited people, and causes rooted in history, namely, socio-political conflicts that dated back from the rise of the monarchy.

8.3.2   *How does the attitude of the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda compare to that of the competing tribes in Israel?*

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[929] Mamdani, M. *When Victims Become Killers,* p 267.

Before independence, the Tutsi in Rwanda monopolized power and excluded the Hutu. Holding on to power resulted in a violent transition when the Hutu revolted in 1959. After the Hutu seized power in 1961 it was their turn to practise monopoly and exclusion. Their opposition to the idea of sharing power with the Tutsi in 1994 resulted in the Genocide.

The same attitude is observed with the tribes that ruled in Israel. Under King Saul the Benjamites enjoyed the privileges of power and ended up believing that they had exclusive right to the throne. When David began to rise, the transition could not be smooth. A good number of Benjaminites paid with their lives in their attempt to defend the throne against the men of David. The conflicting groups in both situations were antagonized by their failure to equitably share power and resources.

8.3.3 *How do we evaluate the role and attitude of religious leaders in the two conflicts in the light of their responsibility to the people and their prophetic role toward the political leaders?*

It was noted that the presence of the church did not make the expected impact in times of conflict and social injustice in Rwanda. Most of the time, the leaders of the church echoed the ideologies promoted by the political leaders. In pre-independent Rwanda, the Tutsi leaders of the church seem not to have been dedicated defenders of the plight of the oppressed Hutu masses. In independent Rwanda, Hutu leaders did not do much to condemn the discrimination against the Tutsi. It appears as if each group of leaders of the church were inclined either to overlook, condone, or to support the discriminative ideologies and strategies adopted by their tribesmen in the politic. For some, such behaviour was caused by ignorance of their responsibility, for others it was fear of being victimized by intimidating political leaders and others were staunch supporters of their regimes.

Diverse attitudes were noted with Israelite prophets in the time of David and his house. Nathan was portrayed as a prophet who started well, providing the advice that the king needed and confronting him when it was necessary. But he could not resist the attractive charms of power and influence. He involved himself in the intrigues of David's court and could not help the king he supported to avoid social injustices. It was Ahijah, a northerner, who, maybe because of his identification with the oppressed, secretly opposed a regime that oppressed his tribesmen and prophesied against it. Shemaiah stands as a good example of a servant of God who discharged his prophetic ministry. He dared to differ with the king from his tribe, preventing him from harming the northerners, rivals of his own tribe. The church of Rwanda needs prophets like Shemaiah.

8.3.4   God is said to have not only allowed the division of the kingdom but even to have ordained it as a reaction against the failure of political leaders to keep his statutes and judgments (חֻקַּי וּמִשְׁפָּטַי). What is the possible socio-political element involved in this sin attributed to the leaders of the people?

According to the terms of the covenant that Yahweh made with David (2 Samuel 7:8-16), especially the version of it repeated to Solomon (1 Kings 1-9), Solomon was not only warned against idolatry but urged to keep Yahweh's "instructions and judgments" if he was to fully enjoy Yahweh's favour. The biblical redactor explained the decline of the empire under Solomon as a result of God's judgement on Solomon's idolatry. In the narration of events, however, there is no direct link established between idolatry and the secession that followed the failed negotiations at Shechem. Solomon's reported weaknesses surely included idolatrous practices, caused by his marrying many pagan wives and building shrines for their gods. In addition to this costly harem, Birch has observed that details of Solomonic policy and activity show a dismantling of covenantal practices rooted in the Yahwistic Sinai tradition in favour of institutions and practices largely modelled on Canaanite/Phoenician or Egyptian practices.[930] The opulence of Solomon's court, his building projects, the maintenance of his harem, all these required

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[930] Birch, B.C. *et al*. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament. Nashville*: Abingdon Press. 2005, p 250.

funding which was obtained mainly through heavy taxation and forced labour. This kind of situation was definitely not conforming to God's instructions and judgments and was not approved by Yahweh. It is observed that:

> What happens under Solomon's administrative policies is that the concern for equitable distribution of economic resources reflected in the covenant law codes was displaced by an economics of privilege that begins to create sharp class divisions of wealthy and poor within Israel. The redivision of tribal territories signals the beginning of forced shift in land tenure and inheritance that moves land out of the realm of continuous family inheritance and initiate the accumulation of land by royal retainers and wealthy elite classes associated with royal power structures. The eventual outcome of these economic shifts that begin under Solomon can be seen particularly in the economic practices condemned by the prophets at a later point in Israel's history.[931]

If Yahweh judged Solomon, this was not only for his idolatry but also for failing to follow his instructions and judgments with respect to his treatment of the people he was trusted to care for. Birch observes that, under Solomon, political power had displaced the emphasis on justice in the covenant law codes. The weak and the poor no longer had real access to the precincts of royal decision-making.[932] This was the socio-political aspect of Solomon's sin and it highlights the socio-political responsibility of God's servants in Rwanda today. The church that is not concerned with social justice cannot claim to be fulfilling its mission.

8.3.5 *How does God's involvement in the conflict affect the human character of the conflict which had an obvious tribal element? How does this apply to the tribal conflict in Rwanda?*

The narrator of the event of the division of the kingdom made God's participation in the events so plain that one may conclude that the fate was already sealed and inevitable, since God had ordained it. The report of Solomon's idolatry is followed by that of God's action in raising enemies against the unfaithful king. It is God who sends prophet Ahijah to announce judgment. Reporting on the obduracy of Rehoboam that exacerbated the

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[931] Birch, B.C. *et al*. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, p 251.*
[932] Birch, B.C. *et al*. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, p 251.*

crisis, the redactor is quick to add that the "thing" came from Yahweh. At the end, when the secession is complete, the prophet Shemaiah announces that the fait accompli could not be challenged because God had ordained it.

Despite this repeated reference to God's intervention, however, nowhere is he referred to as using his irresistible power to force any of the involved parties to behave in a particular way. The enemies raised against Solomon are Hadad and Rezon, both of whom had good reason to rise against Solomon. Yahweh did not push them to fight Solomon. The foolish answer of Solomon was not dictated by Yahweh but by a clique of the king's friends wishing to hold on to their privileges. Even the prophets who spoke in favour of the rebellion did not compel anybody to do anything in the name of Yahweh. The main characters who actively contributed to the division of the kingdom had their own agendas. Their preoccupation was not to fulfil God's plan. They did what they chose to do and were responsible for their own behaviour. The understanding that God planned the division does not exonerate any of the intervening parties from their responsibility for their acts. God's intervention in the conflict did not interfere with the deliberate decisions of each of the parties. God did not behave like a supreme power, manipulating the people and pushing them to do what otherwise they would not have done.

The image of such a God using his power to control the actions of men and women is understood in the complaint of those who lament God's absence during the Rwandan Genocide. For many, if God is who he is said to be, he was expected to prevent or stop the Genocide. But, like the division of the kingdom, the Rwandan Genocide was a purely human conflict. It was produced by a succession of historical events in which the parties acted deliberately and in which they are fully responsible for their actions. Both the division of the kingdom in Israel and the Rwandan Genocide were primarily products of human mistakes and wickedness, not the result of God's activity or inactivity. If the present Rwandan society watches to avoid the same or similar mistakes, God will surely not impose any Genocide on us. If we fail to reconcile and promote unity, we shall surely not need God's help to suffer another tragedy.

8.4. Further research

This study has shown that the division of the kingdom in Israel and the Genocide in Rwanda were the culmination of a long history of tribal conflicts. These conflicts revolved around the monopolization of power and the associated privileges and the exclusion and exploitation of the dominated social groups. There are some aspects of these conflicts in the two contexts which were not sufficiently covered because of the limited scope of this study but which could be a helpful complement to this study. In addition to some of the aspects mentioned in the summaries ending the four sections of Chapter Seven, I would recommend further research on the following two issues.

Discussions concerning the history of social conflicts in Rwanda have focussed on the relations between the two main social groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. Very little is said about the third social group, the Twa. Although this is a minority group that has never been the main party in any social conflict, the Twa were always affected by the conflicts. It would be interesting to investigate the historical relation between the Twa and the two other social groups and its role, place and challenges in building peace and unity in Rwanda.

The discussion of the role of the church in social conflicts concentrated on the mainline churches that had a significant presence, from the colonisation era to the time of the Genocide. After the Genocide more (mainly Pentecostal) denominations increased in number and importance and they have been working among the Rwandan people for about 15 years now. It would be interesting to study the impact of the broader church with respect to reconciliation, peace and unity in the present and future Rwanda.

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