

# The construction and framing of ethnic violence in the Great Lakes region in Africa

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23-01-2015  
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## 1. Introduction

In recent history, the world has seen several violent conflicts with an ethnic component. The fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the communist bloc launched a period in which ethnicity was frequently used as a justification for violence and secession movements. The disintegration of Yugoslavia exemplifies this very well: the secession of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were centred around ethnic differences. Other regions in the world struggled with the same problems. One of these conflicts that gained broad attention from the international press and academics is the conflict in Rwanda and in a broader perspective, the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes region is a term used to describe the countries situated around Lake Victoria, Lake Edward, Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika. This region has witnessed an often violent history due to colonialism and the instable independence process in the second half of the 20th century. Ethnicity played a central role in the emergence and course of the tensions leading up to the genocide in Rwanda of up till 50.00 Hutus and 1 million Tutsis (Mamdani 2002). This conflict is however not an isolated incident only active within the boundaries of the Rwandan state. The 1994 genocide can be seen as an outburst of a conflict in the entire Great Lakes region which was sparked by the unequal power relations in which ethnicity played an important role.

The theoretical framework used in this thesis centres around the concepts violence, ethnicity and framing. These three concepts will be used in combination with each other to give a complete image of the causes, development and consequences of ethnic violence in the Great Lakes. This theoretical triangle is used in combination with a regional approach to conflicts. Such a regional approach has gained ground in academic literature, as conflicts in the Great Lakes region are interlinked and a regional approach is deemed necessary to resolve them (van Leeuwen 2008). Some authors use a more broad or narrow range of countries when discussing the Great Lakes region, for example Uganda, DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, while other authors also include Tanzania and Kenya (Mpangala 2004). The choice for which countries to include in the definition depends on the scope and goal of the research and the description of the colonial history.

In this thesis, The Great Lakes region is perceived as constructed out of Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the DRC. The first three countries have been subject to German colonialism until the end of the first World War, while the DRC was until 1908 a private kingdom of the Belgian King Leopold II (Shillington 2012). All these countries thus changed in colonial power around the same decade : Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC became colonies of the Belgian government, while Uganda aligned with the British. Especially Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC developed under colonialism “in states on the basis of ethnic and regional differences” (van Leeuwen 2008, 394). The fact that these four counties underwent administrative and governmental changes around the same time combined with the fact that all countries consist more or less out of similar populations and the geographical and climatological similarities justifies to look at these countries in unison. For example all four counties are home country of the ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi in grater or minor extent. Moreover, as well as in past times as in present, these countries are subject to – sometimes – extensive refugee streams form their neighbouring countries. As a consequence, this has led to a mixing of populations and nationalities, as well as of norms and values. Lastly, these refugee streams have been used as a breeding place for invasions and rebellions against the

dominant power in their home country (Lebson 2013). The nexus of violence, ethnicity and framing combined with a regional approach leads to the following research question:

How is ethnicity framed and used in violent conflicts in the Great Lakes region and specifically the Democratic Republic of Congo?

In order to answer these central research question, the following sub-questions are addressed in the next chapters: How is ethnicity constructed in the Great Lakes region? How does framing influence ethnic violence? How does ethnicity come to the fore in violent conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

The first sub-question gives insight in the historical aspects of the social construction of the concept ethnicity in the Great Lakes region. It explores the influence of processes such as colonialism and state forming on the construction of ethnicity. The second question explores the mechanisms of framing ethnicity and violence and how this can lead to violent conflicts. The last question applies the first two questions to the Democratic republic of Congo, to show how ethnic violence emerges and persists in a region. All these questions are analysed using literature study concerning the three theoretical concepts, historical reference works, ethnic violence in the Great Lakes region and specific case studies about violence in Rwanda and Burundi. the Case study on Congo is constructed with literature about history, ethnic composition and policy papers concerning the first and second Congo war.

This thesis is structured as follows; the next chapter consists of a theoretical exploration of the literature available on the three central concepts: violence, ethnicity and framing, Each of these three concepts is defined on how it is used in this thesis. At the end of the chapter, violence, ethnicity and framing are connected with each other to show how they are interlinked when discussing the Great Lakes region.

The third chapter consists out of a historical overview on the construction of ethnicity in the region. This is done following a chronological approach from pre-colonialism to the present. This is further exemplified in an example on the construction of the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic identities in Rwanda to give an concrete example of the construction of ethnicity.

The fourth chapter gives insight in how violence and ethnicity are interlinked in the Great Lakes region. The role of framing in establishing ethnic violence is discussed. This is again exemplified by a case study on Rwanda, regarding the 1994 genocide. This example shows how ethnic differences are played out against each other and how framing can antagonize people up to the point of genocide. In this example attention is given to the connection with the mass killings in Burundi in 1972 which directly influenced the 1994 genocide.

The fifth chapter consists of a case study of the Democratic Republic of Congo, with special attention to the eastern provinces: North and South Kivu. In this case study, the historical construction of ethnicity and the interlinking of ethnicity with violence is analysed.

Moreover, this chapter has a strong regional approach which allows to look at the conflicts in the Kivu's in relation to the conflicts in the neighbouring countries of Rwanda, Burundi and in lesser extent Uganda which have had a direct influence on the esxalation of ethnic tensions in a real ethnic war. The sixth and final chapter with give an overall conclusion of the previous chapters and with that answer the main research question.

## 2. Theory

The Great Lakes region is, as described above, a diverse region consisting of four countries: Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite the vast territory and population these countries encompass, the rather similar historical development among other reasons made ethnic violence prevalent. In this thesis, ethnic violence is analysed using a theoretical triangle in which the concepts violence, ethnicity and framing are central. This chapter first explores the literature available on these concepts before defining them on how they are used in this thesis. Next, the interconnectedness of the concepts is discussed, followed by a short conclusion

### Violence

Violence is a term often used in daily life. It is used in newspapers, books and conversations in order to describe behaviour that is categorized as deviant by a society. Violence can be conceptualized as an act of physical hurt that is deemed legitimate by the performer and by (some) witnesses (Riches 1986 in Schmidt & Schröder, 2001). Two theoretical approaches are generally accepted when analysing violence. First, there is the functional approach. Within this view, violence is analysed in its relationship with law and order and is often deemed deviant of it. Violence thus needs to be restrained. The second view sees violence from its symbolic quality: it investigates the subjective and cultural meanings associated with violence and investigates how individuals can be compelled or induced towards violence. Violence can be seen as a mechanism destroying or creating order (Stewart and Strathern 2002). This second view draws attention to how violence is constructed in a society and points towards the question of legitimacy. In contrast with the functional approach, academics and analyses focusing on the symbolic quality acknowledge that violence can be perceived as deviant and legitimate at the same time by different actors. Riches in particular has written about this and developed a 'triangle of violence' which distinguishes between the viewpoint of performers, victims and witnesses. The model shows very clearly the subjectivity of a violent act (Riches 1986 in Stewart & Strathern, 2002). Such an act can be deemed justified by the performer, illegitimate by the victim and a wide range between these two by the witnesses, depending on their relationship with the victim, performer or both.

Using this theoretical framework, some basic statements can be made regarding violence. Violence gives benefits to the successful party in a conflict, either short term -such as resources – or long term – in the form of territory. Three other observations can be made with regard to the social ramifications of violence. First, violence always expresses some kind of relationship between the perpetrator and the victim: violent acts do not target totally random victims. Secondly, the enacted violence has always to some degree a meaning and sense in the eyes of the perpetrator. Thirdly, violence is never isolated: it is related to a relationship and thus the product of historical processes that may extend far back in time. (Schmidt and Schröder 2001) These four basic features of violence can be found when analysing violence.

The act of physical hurt can be seen as a part of violence and it can be stated that: "violence is a force that not only manifests itself in the destruction of boundaries but as well in their creation and that 'intransitive violence' (which may operate conceptually prior to manifesting

itself in action) serves to create the integrities and identities which are in turn subjected to those forms of violence that seek victims” (Schmidt & Schröder, 2001, 27). Violence thus can be seen as a mechanism to divide between groups, classes or populations, but at the same time as a way to form an (collective) identity in order to create a bond between individuals or groups. This definition thus generates attention for the forming quality of violence and how these are used.

In order for the dividing or bonding qualities of violence to happen, violence needs to be imagined in order to be carried out. This means that a legitimate and believable image of violence has to be created that people can follow and act upon (Riches 1986). It is a form of practice mediating the historical boundedness of action in response to specific structural conditions. Moreover, since violence is easily performed and highly visible and concrete, it is a very efficient way to transform the social environment and thus sends a clear ideological message to an audience (Riches 1986) This is the performative quality of violence: it is useless without it, for its impact on the audience is the driving factor for action and socially desirable behaviour. One of the bonding qualities of violence is to reassert one group's claim to truth and history against rival claims. Violence can reinterpret past conflicts and wars in such a way that it will fit the current goals of the violence. In this way, violence is not only concerned with for example material goals as territory and food, but also with cultural perception, giving meaning to a situation and creating truth (Schmidt and Schröder 2001).

When looking at violence as a bonding and separation mechanism, it clearly surpasses individual violent acts. Riches triangle of violence needs to be adjusted and complemented in order to understand violence on a larger scale. The triangle of violence focuses on the subjective view of the performer, victim and witness on the legitimacy of violence. When violence is performed on a larger scale, these three categories are no longer clear. A victim can become a performer and vice versa, while witnesses are more numerous and may be directly or indirectly involved in the issues at stake. Riches solves this problem by stating that increase in scale resonates with an increase in organisation of violence and thus with an increase in complexity.

Riches thus states that violent acts increase from singular acts to more organized violence such as warfare by an increase in organization. This focus on organization links with the bonding and separating quality of violence, because the boundary forming of groups by establishing a collective identity through violence requires some kind of organization that directs frames of violence in such a way that it contributes to the preferred identity. Violence as a bonding and separation mechanism thus has a lot of common ground with framing. This is concerned with how the violence is perceived by the public and what message it broadcasts. If violence is portrayed as violation of ethnic rights or used as a justification method for retaliation for historical suppression, the mechanism is the same: the way violence is framed is key.

## **Ethnicity**

There are many different definitions and characteristics of ethnicity identified by an equal amount of academics. Cartrite examined and compared in his article authors in their trial to define ethnicity and ethnic groups. Most often identified were common culture, common descent or a myth of some sorts, shared language, and common history (Cartrite 2003).

These definitions and characteristics however agree on the fact that ethnicity involves the classification of people (Hylland Eriksen 2002). This classification leads to ethnic groups to which generally four basic statements are applied (Barth 1969):

1. Groups are largely biologically self-perpetuating
2. Groups share fundamental cultural values and are realized in overt unity in cultural forms
3. Groups make up a field of communication and interaction
4. Groups have a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

These four statements identified by Fredrick Barth relate to the four views on ethnicity proposed by Antony Oberschall in his article on the manipulation of ethnicity. He identifies four views on ethnicity are used to explain ethnic violence. First, the primordialist view states that ethnic attachments and identities are cultural given and a natural affinity like kinship sentiments. This thus coincides with Barth's first statement. The second view, instrumentalist, views ethnic sentiments and loyalties as manipulated by political leaders and intellectuals for political ends. This view assumes an ethnic consensus among one group. In other words, it states that ethnic sentiments are uniform in one group, and that these can be manipulated to create an uniform action, for example violence in secession movements. The instrumentalist view thus combines the second third and fourth of Barth's statements. Third, a constructionist view on ethnicity supplements the insights of the primordial and instrumental view: ethnicity is a social fact, but in ordinary times it is only one of several roles and identities that matter. Ethnicity can be related to political identities and are more contingent and changing. they can be as well as constructed as eroded. This constructionist view thus consists of all of Barth's statements: ethnic groups are groups that are self-reproductive, have shared cultural values that are overtly displayed, they communicate and interact with each other and they identify themselves as distinct from others and are identified as distinct by other groups. These four requirements include thus as well specific cultural and ethnic traditions as a relational distinction towards other groups.

However, definitions of ethnicity usually put the focus on either the attributional traits or the relational component of ethnicity. For example, Johnson defines ethnicity as "a shared culture and a way of life especially as reflected in language, folkways, religious and other institutional forms, material forms such as clothing and food, and cultural products such as music, literature, and art (Johnson 2000 109). This definition thus focus on socio-cultural characteristics, but does not pay attention to the relational part of ethnicity which captures the characteristics of the relationship between an ethnic defined group and the wider society in which it is situated (Ford and Harawa 2010). Hylland Eriksen focuses in his definition on the relational dimensions of ethnicity: "aspects of relationships that between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive" (Hylland Eriksen, 2002, 4). Combining relational and attributional definitions of ethnicity leads to a definition of the concept in which socio-cultural aspects such as language, religion but most importantly a myth of common descent are prevalent combined with a distinctive feeling of difference within the group towards the wider society.

The proposed definition above does not however imply that ethnicities or ethnic groups are

constructed in isolation, without any discussions about the boundaries of such a group or the specific characteristics that are part of it. Especially Fredrick Barth has stressed the importance of boundary maintenance of ethnic groups. These boundaries can persist despite a flow of people over them and stable, often vital social relationships are maintained over these boundaries (Barth 1969). Barth argues ethnic groups are defined through their relations with other ethnic groups and that boundaries are socially constructed, instead of culturally constructed. This does not mean that cultural differences do not have influence on relations between and establishment of ethnic groups. It is only when they make a difference in social interaction that cultural differences are important in the creation of ethnic boundaries.

This process is well exemplified by Hylland Erikson in 'Ethnicity and Nationalism'. The outbreak of civil war in Yugoslavia in 1991 was characterized by ethnic based violence. Different ethnic groups had lived next to each other in peace for several decades until the war. Serbs and Croats especially were close: a high level of intermarriage prevailed. Both groups speak the same language. The only main cultural difference concerned religion: Croats were mainly Catholic, while Serbs were Orthodox. At the eve of the conflict in 1991 both groups declared themselves as highly different from the other and culturally incompatible. This example thus shows how relative boundaries are. Moreover, it shows that 'culture' cannot be considered as the main composer of ethnicity or boundaries between ethnicity. In Yugoslavia, boundaries between the Serbs and the Croats were mainly of social nature. The claim that both ethnic groups were culturally incompatible followed after social relations between the groups had changed.

The example above on Yugoslavia thus draws attention to boundary creation and maintenance in relation to ethnicity. These boundaries are of an relational character and are constructed through social interactions. In these interactions attributional traits such as religion, language and cultural norms and values can play a role in these interactions. They are however not decisive and do not define interactions. Only when they make a difference in social settings which benefits one group (or more), cultural differences come to the fore as a reason for changing boundaries. Culture can thus be seen as an instrument in social interactions between ethnic groups for boundary creation and maintenance.

In conclusion, many definitions are used when talking about ethnicity. All try to capture the core of ethnicity: that what makes one group different from other groups. Some academics try to find it in cultural traits and overt norms and values, while others focus on relations and interactions between groups and boundaries of groups. This research is based on a constructivist and relational approach towards ethnicity with special attention to boundary establishment and maintenance. This focus allows an insight in how interactions between two (or more) ethnic groups are established and held, and how these can change. The construction of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries is important to the main research question in this thesis: it gives insight in the historical development of ethnic groups and this in turn influences framing of ethnic violence. The fact that ethnic sentiments are uniform in one groups suggests that effective framing of as well ethnicity as violence has taken place. This has created distinct groups and boundaries between groups. After this is realized, Instrumental framing of ethnicity and violence can contribute to the emergence of ethnic violence.



## **Framing**

Framing is a concept that is characterized by the multiple definitions that surround it: every research area forms an own definition of framing. Framing is a term which is often used to describe how a phenomenon or event is presented to a larger public. Chong and Druckman state that framing refers to the process in which people develop a certain conceptualization of an issue or change their previous opinion on this subject. A person's opinion is formed by his dimensions that he finds important on a certain topic. These dimensions create an individual's "frame in thought" on a topic. Someone's frame in thought can have considerable impact on his overall opinion. This is the reason why for example politicians attempt to mobilize citizens behind their policy lines by highlighting certain dimensions of the policy, in order to resonate it with the frame in thought of the citizens. This process is called "frame in communication" (Chong and Druckman 2007).

So, politicians and other people with power can use frames in communication to influence the frames in thought of individuals. Framing can be described in positive and negative terms: it can be viewed as a strategy to manipulate individuals and groups, or as a learning process in which people gain common beliefs around a general social norm. In policy forming and public opinion field, framing is seen from a more negative stand point. This can concern a novelty such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs), but also reframing of an old, fixed frame of for example protest speeches. When talking about GMOs a politician can invoke the dimension of food security: the introduction of GMOs can greatly increase the food security worldwide and thus contribute development. Highlighting the positive dimensions of GMOs can thus invoke a more positive frame in thought of it. The other side can however also happen: when the negative aspects of GMOs are highlighted, no data on long term consequences and possible new diseases, triggers the more negative dimensions of a person's frame of thought and thus creates a frame of GMOs as dangerous. The reframing of an issue or event can have considerable consequences. Take the example of protest speeches. Linking this to the freedom of speech and gathering, such a protest is not seen as dangerous or disturbing: it is a basic freedom enjoyed by everyone. In the situation when the protest speech is inciting hatred against one ethnic group, reframing of the event can change the frame of thought towards protest speeches (Chong and Druckman 2007). In this frame, the basic statement that everyone is equal and may not be discriminated based on ethnicity prevails the freedom of speech and gathering. These two examples show how important framing is, and what far reaching consequences it can have for an individual's perception and opinions. Moreover, it draws attention to the power of people who constitute such a frame of communication and the possible dangers of it.

Framing can be seen as the middle ground between instrumentalism and an more constructive approach in approaches to understanding ethnicity. Constructivism is concerned with the social construction of shared identities and social structures and their impacts on groups. Part of the constructive approach is symbolic politics. This focuses on the emotional connections and power of social structures such as identity, myths and symbols (Desrosiers 2013). So, symbolic politics and social constructivism combined are able to capture how social structures shape individuals' perceptions and thus their actions. Instrumentalism views ethnic mobilization and conflict as a result of conscious choices and made in pursue of economic gain, security and power of immaterial goals such as group

recognition, autonomy and independence. Framing exists at the cross-roads between strategies and social structures (Desrosiers 2013). Concrete, this means that the framing of ethnic violence is built up out of three interconnected parts: the construction of shared identity, emotional connections and power of identities, myths and symbols and a rational part in the form of instrumental strategies, mobilization and the goals pursued.

Framing is a tactic or strategic instrument which works optimal when it resonates with some image in the mind of the person it tries to influence. This resonance capacity needs to be enough, but not too big, while its function is to allow that what is important to be accepted. This can be seen as frames in thought and frames in communication as described in the theory. This strategy thus needs to be employed when trying to influence someone's perspective on an issue. Framing seeks to bring a public's perception and expectation in line with a framer's view and the goal he tries to accomplish (Desrosiers 2013). This general theory unfolds differently in every situation and with mechanisms and strategies. These strategies are situation-dependent and sometimes pursue long-term goals. Framing theory is thus very diverse and context-dependent. This is especially useful in the analysis of ethnic conflict and ethnic violence, because such conflicts often have multiple causes and goals.

This cross-road approach between constructionism and instrumentalism intertwines thus with frames in thought and communication. Framing theory thus discusses the strategies and goals of a message and how this message resonates with the proposed public. This is very important when looking at ethnic based violence in the Great Lakes region, because it is a highly ethnic diverse region in which different political parties, armed militias and international peace missions have been active or still are. It is therefore important to look at how these different parties are framing ethnic violence in order to reach their goal. With regard to ethnicity, usually strategies are used in which for example a negative image of an ethnic group in the past is used and connected to a certain message, for example that that specific ethnic group cannot be trusted.

### **Combining Violence, Ethnicity and Framing**

The paragraphs above all give an introduction of the concepts used in this thesis. An important aspect however has not yet been discussed. In this thesis the concepts violence, ethnicity and framing are taken together to analyse how these are intertwined and strengthen each other. Framing is crucial: only when ethnicity and violence are framed by politicians, policy makers or regular working class for example, these concepts gain meaning and find resonance with the population. As explained above, framing can be seen as the influence of frames in communication on frames of thought. Usually the person or institution posing a frame in communication is regarded as powerful. This power position contributes to the credibility of the frame in communication. Such frames of communication pay attention to the social construction of shared identities and groups and to the emotional connections with identity and myths. Moreover, it is a rational strategy implemented in pursuit of a concrete goal.

Framing thus can create sentiments with individuals or populations. If these frames are directed at (supposed) ethnic differences, it tries to influence (latent) existing sentiments regarding ethnicity. It can use boundary maintenance to create a uniform sentiment within one group. This is similar to the bonding and separating mechanism that can be identified

with violence. It is thus not surprising that framing of ethnicity can be complemented by framing of violence in the sense of creating (supposedly) antagonistic differences between two ethnic groups. At this point, framing connects violence with ethnicity. Both violence and ethnicity are built up with a component of boundary maintenance and -creation. This creates compatibility of both concepts and thus can be used to explain why and how ethnic sentiments can lead to violent, ethnic based outbursts.

The section on ethnicity described three approaches on ethnicity identified by Oberschall: primordialist, instrumentalist and constructionist view. Especially the instrumental view is useful when combining ethnicity and violence, while it draws attention to how individuals in power can shape and transform ethnicity and ethnic feelings. This is important for the framing of ethnicity in situations. When negative ethnic sentiments for example regarding another ethnic group are well framed and uniform in this group, this suggests that effective framing of as well ethnicity as violence has taken place. This has then created distinct groups and boundaries between groups. After this is realized, instrumental framing of ethnicity and violence can contribute to the emergence of ethnic violence. This instrumentalism needs however feelings and situations it can use to create an uniform opinion in a group. This is where the constructionist view of ethnicity comes into play: the social construction of ethnicity and its evolution over time create the feeling and situations that can be used for instrumental framing.

It is however also possible to look to the connection of the three concepts with violence as starting point. Schmidt and Schröder divide the process leading up to (organized) violence into four stages of processual characteristics of violent actions:

- 1) Conflict: the socio-economic contradictions at the base of intergroup competition.
- 2) Confrontation: the interpretation of these causes by the parties involved as relevant, creating an antagonistic relationship.
- 3) Legitimation: the official sanctioning of violence as the legitimate course of action through the imagining of violent scenarios from the past and their social representation. Questions such as their direction, timing and framing of violent actions are decided at this point.
- 4) War: if these three stages have been passed, violence is put into practice as a means to achieve specific ends

Even though this categorization is not specifically based on ethnic violence, ethnicity still can be traced in this. For example in stage one: socio-economic contradictions create intergroup competition. These groups may as well be ethnic groups, while it is not uncommon for one ethnic group to be dominant in a certain economic sector such as trade or administration. Moreover, in stage three ethnicity and framing come to the fore. Violence is sanctioned in light of reframing of previous injustice. This injustice can be performed by a different country or political group, but as well by a different ethnic group.

The framing of violence and ethnicity come to the fore in every ethnic conflict. I do not wish to proclaim these two as the only causes of ethnic violence, or the most important ones. I only wish to state that in every ethnic conflict violence and ethnicity are shaped, framed, portrayed and used in such a way that it led to a conflict. This can be on different scales and with different intensity. The genocide in Rwanda of Tutsi's by Hutu extremists can be traced

back to ethnic based power differences in the colonial period and an increasing widening of the two groups after independence. In Rwanda, ethnic groups were framed and established in an antagonistic manner for a long period of time. This led in the end to a violent outburst in the 1990s of a great scale. This case will be discussed in detail in chapter four to gain more insight in framing of ethnicity and violence.

So, the images and feelings attached to violence and ethnicity are dependent on the frames in which they are utilized. I wish not to claim that violence and ethnicity have no connotations with people if they are not framed, but try to draw attention to the importance of framing and its capacity to resonate and strengthen a certain feeling or image of people with for example ethnicity. In the example above, the frames used by politicians resonated with Hutu images of being suppressed and threatened by Tutsi's in the past (Lemarchand 1995; Kellow and Steeves 1998). The use of this frame created partly a situation in which violence and in the end genocide was deemed legitimate.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a general overview of the three concepts that are central in this thesis: violence, ethnicity and framing. These concepts influence and strengthen each other. It is thus crucial to use the concepts together when analysing the construction of ethnicity and its influence on violent conflicts in the Great Lakes region in Africa. The research will adopt a constructionist view on ethnicity. This allows for a broad interpretation of factors influencing ethnicity and draws attention to the influence of actors on it. This constructionist view of ethnicity is combined with a more instrumentalist view. This allows for an in-depth analysis of how ethnicity is shaped and used by actors in order to create descriptions and accompanying feelings with ethnicity as a identifying concept. Violence is the second concept used in this thesis in which it focuses on the benefit, relationship, meaning and isolation of violence in a specific case. Lastly, framing is defined as the mechanisms that make it possible to influence people's thoughts and actions through resonance, the use of symbolic politics and the social construction of identities. Moreover, it gives insight in the nexus between the goals pursued with framing and the how history, feelings, fears and stigmatizations are used to reach these goals. It shows how ethnicity and violence are used to in framing and how these influence and transform framing, but at the same time themselves. This triangle of framing, ethnicity and violence is recurrent within this thesis. It allows to analyse the conflicts in the Great Lakes region from three sides at once and to analyse how this region has become so prone to ethnic based violence.

## **3. The construction of ethnicity in East Africa in historical perspective**

### **Introduction**

Ethnicity is, as explained in the first chapter, a very complex concept with different explanations and definitions. This chapter gives insight in how ethnicity is constructed in East Africa. A historical and regional perspective is used in order to identify key moments in the periods pre-colonialism, colonialism and post-independence. These key moments show how ethnicity has transformed over time and by which and whose influence. This chapter gives insight in the historical aspects of the social construction of ethnicity in the Great Lakes

region. It investigates in what way ethnicity has played a role in the development of the country and how people deal with each other, as evaluate the actors in constructing ethnicities as dividing labels within the Great Lakes region. This is valuable when looking at the role of ethnicity in violent conflict, because the framing of ethnicity in such situations is often based on a historical precedent or build on a certain ethnic view which is established over a longer period of time. An investigation in the construction of ethnicity thus contributes in answering the main research question by giving insight in how ethnicity is constructed.

Colonialism in every country and continent has been characterized by a selection by the colonial rulers of parts of the population that were given an privileged position in the new colonial power structure and governance. This meant that colonial rulers for example allowed local inhabitants to fulfil local chief positions. Whether an individual would be considered for this position, depended on the criteria the colonialists used. In case of France, this involved mastery of the French language as most important qualification. In British colonies these criteria were slightly more considerate of the customary system in the territory and eligibility for chief positions depended more on legitimate claims to such chief positions (Shillington 2012). In east Africa, colonial powers used mostly an ethnicity-based selection which fitted the western superiority thinking and often had overlap with local superiority myths. The unintended consequence of this reinterpretation of ethnicity came to the fore after independence and especially in the 1990s in the form of ethnic based violence and genocide in the Great Lakes region.

### **Precolonial times**

Precolonial times refers to the times when European countries were not yet present in a country. With regard to the Great Lakes region, precolonial times thus refers to the time before the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mpangala 2004). Until the 1800s little is known about the Great Lakes region in Europe. The areas that comprise modern day Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi (Shillington 2012) are the best documented and give an insight in the early state development before the introduction of colonialism. The territory of present day Uganda comprised the state of Buganda. This was a small scale state with a centralized government. It was agricultural based, which created a certain wealth for its rulers. Peasants were used as labourers to build public works such as roads. This increased the strength of the government control as well as helping the trade (Shillington 2012). The agricultural population of the Kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi were ruled by a pastoralist minority. More and more the pastoralist increased their power through increasing their herds, which were used as trade items for labour and food. By the 1800s, this system had formed two distinct kingdoms which were ruled by a Ba-Tutsi minority. This was however not an ethnically based system, but an economic one: it was possible for a Ba-Hutu peasantry to accumulate his wealth, climb the social ladder and becoming in the end a Ba-Tutsi pastoralist (Shillington 2012).

### **Colonial presence**

Colonialism was present in territory on African continent with sea access from as early as the 1500s by the Portuguese at the east African coast, among others (Shillington 2012). The first centuries were characterized by the establishment of local cooperation agreements of for

example the British with the local chief or king in order to gain the right (exclusive) on trade. From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century several expeditions were held to explore the interior of the continent. These expeditions used the river deltas as a starting point, moving further upstream to investigate the hinterland. Whenever trade with the western companies was established, this still happened through the system of local cooperation.

When looking at the increasing contact between western and African countries and populations, it is important to investigate with what idea people had of each other previous of contact and how these ideas and images resonated in their actions. In the (intellectual) west discussions over the descent of African populations arose. In earlier times, around the middle ages, the black population of Africa was seen as a brother under the black skin based in biblical explanation that Negroid people descended from Canaan, who was subjected to serve the other populations. (Sanders 1969). The introduction of transatlantic slave trade in the 1500s made this theological explanation untenable and transformed to an idea that Negroid populations were sub-human race (Sanders 1969). These changes in how western countries viewed inhabitants of the African continent exemplifies how groups can be seen different to meet one's goal. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the so called Hamitic hypothesis came into fashion to explain the social and economic differences between different populations and countries. This theory became in fashion when Napoleon established contacts with Egypt (Eltringham 2006). The expedition to Egypt had shown that, even though African populations were deemed sub-human and thus not able to reach a high developed society, some African countries had been able to develop themselves to a high standard. The Hamitic hypothesis has been developed and distributed in order to create clarity and justification for western domination.

The Hamitic hypothesis refers to the fact that some groups of populations in African countries are not from the same descendant as the black population, but in fact related to the western, white population. In the biblical legend about Noah, his three sons witnessed their father drunk and naked. Two sons covered their father and looked away from his shame, but Ham did not. When Noah learned of this, He cursed Ham and his descendants with the curse of servitude: from that day on, Ham would be in service of his brothers. This biblical story was used to deal with the fact that the Egyptians had been able to build an society in the past that could rival with the western one. The Egyptian were considered black, but in origin descendants of Ham and thus more related to the western populations than to the black people. After the curse of Noah, Hams descendants populated the African continent and mixed with the native black population. So, every African had some Hamitic blood in them, but some populations and races had more than others: the Egyptians proved this (Eltringham 2006; Lemarchand 1999).

The Hamitic hypothesis was a justification for the subjugation of first the Egyptians and later on other African populations by the western (colonial) powers. By using the Hamitic hypothesis to elevate some populations such as the Egyptians from the 'average black' to explain a high developed society and at the same time using it to subjugate the Hamitic population to the western populations, Europeans created a situation in which it was legitimate to have 'Hamitic populations' rule over black ones, and the Europeans over the Hamitic populations. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century modern colonialism expanded the idea of the Hamite as a descendant of the western populations, the Caucasoid. All development and

wealth creation was identified as done by Hamitic populations. It thus strengthened the idea that black Africa could only be developed through white people: Hamites were descendants of Caucasians and thus reinforced the 'white man's burden' to educate and develop the African continent (Sanders 1969). The 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an increase of academics and scientists identifying Hamitic groups scattered throughout the African continent. Sergi for example identified the ancient and modern Egyptians, Nubians, Bejas, Abyssinians, Gallas, Danakil, Somali, Masai and Watusi (or Wahuma) as Hamites in eastern Africa based on linguistic characteristics (Sergi 1901; Brinton 1890). Brinton identified Hamites based on physical qualities and later on pastoralism was identified as a main occupation of Hamitic populations (Sanders 1969). Generally three categories thus were used in identifying Hamites: language, physical appearance and occupation. In the Great Lakes region the Watusi or Tutsi population was identified as Hamite and thus deemed appropriated to rule over the black populations in the region by the colonial powers. In Rwanda-Urundi this regime was most severely implemented.

The tone of European contact totally reversed (Shillington 2012) between 1880 and 1900 when the 'Scramble for Africa' took place. This so called scramble has several causes located in the West. First, the quick industrialization of France, Germany and The United States led to a saturation of the European market. The vanguard of industrialization – the British companies – started to look to Africa as a potential sales market. Private companies started more and more to invest in African countries under the protection of their respective governments. Secondly, the belief in vast untapped natural resources in the interior of Africa sparked the interest of European countries. More and more countries in Europe realized that only once hegemonies and protectorates in Africa would be divided, which led to the demand of many countries for a piece of Africa. Another reasons needs to be mentioned when discussing the scramble for Africa. The European counties were excellent in playing out rivalries between African counties and kingdoms: some countries accepted the western power in exchange for protection against their enemies. Colonialists thus used existing fears and rivalries to create such a situation in which they benefited the most (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008). Colonialist gained exclusive access to a kingdom by increasing existing fear for other kingdoms and tribes of conquest.

This all led to the Berlin West Africa Conference in 1884-5 as an attempt to draw up some kind of international European agreement to control and regulate the carving up of Africa (Shillington 2012). One of the outcomes of this was that the International association of the Belgian king Leopold the second was recognised. This was later formed in the Congo Free State, what de facto became a personal fiefdom of the king. The second important resolution regarded the so called 'spheres of influence'. From that day on, influence of a country over African territory would only be recognized by other countries if it was effectively occupied, this meant agreements with local chiefs about trade and loyalty. This resolution limited the vague spheres of influence strategy and limited in particular the power of the British on the African continent. Especially the need for agreements with local chiefs has had influence on the style of ruling later on.

### **Styles of ruling**

The signing of the Berlin conference introduced a new way of exercising control over colonies. Before this, western countries often exercised control through so called charter

companies, private companies which were allowed by the colonial government to develop a piece of a colony in return for a part of the revenues or the development of infrastructure (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008). These companies proved unfit for the ongoing colonization and creation of defined, well organized colonies. Especially the use of brute force was found undesirable in creating good states and to keep support for colonialism in the western countries. This was a consequence of the move from conquest to governance and the accompanying idea of the 'white man's burden' to educate and help the African population. news articles of brute force used by companies in the service of governments does not support this idea.

In general, two different government strategies developed after the phasing out of charter companies: direct rule and indirect rule (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008). The strategy of indirect rule was mainly implemented in the British colonies and tried to govern colonies through the existing governmental structures (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008). It established a network of indigenous intermediaries which enjoyed some kind of customary title and had basic education. This limited the necessity of large numbers of people from the "mother country" to fill bureaucratic positions and thus move to the colony permanently. The British practiced a divide and rule strategy which guaranteed that different ethnic groups would not form a united challenge to the British rule. This was accomplished by keeping traditional decentralized structures in place instead of creating a centralized government structure. Moreover, the British often chose individuals from a minority ethnic group, which sometimes occupied an inferior position in the country, to fill the space of intermediaries to block unity among different ethnic groups (Blaton, Mason, and Athow 2001).

Direct rule implies the implementation of a new and centralized government structure which structures the entire colonial territory following a clear chain of command. It limits the involvement of the local population. Important to realize in these direct rule colonies is that it is often accompanied by a assimilation strategy. The 'civilization mission' consisted for an important part of replacing the African cultures with a French, Portuguese, German or Belgian one (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008). In practice this assimilation (with exception of the French colonies) consisted of 'toleration of Africans who tried to assimilate in lower governmental positions and as liaison towards the local population' (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008). An accompanying goal of assimilation was to discourage revolutionist movements against the colonial powers. The German and Belgian government did not succeed in this second goal of the assimilation strategy.

So, direct and indirect rule were generally the two options from which colonial powers chose when organizing the governmental structures in their colonies. Both options included some kind of mechanism to prevent unified opposition against the colonial power based on ethnicity. Indirect rule kept divisive indigenous structures in place accompanied by a strategy in which a minority ethnic group received government jobs and education. In the Great Lakes region, mainly indirect rule was implemented. In Rwanda and Burundi, the Tutsi ethnic group became the intermediaries for the implementation of colonial rule. Tutsi formed in pre-colonial times the royal house, and thus were located in the centre of power. The Germans and later the Belgian government thus kept indigenous patterns in place, which included minority rule. In the DRC no ruling elite existed. The separate kingdoms and chieftaincies implemented their own hierarchies, with own ruling elite. During colonialism



this hindered the implementation of indirect colonial rule. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

## **The struggle for independence**

The pattern of governing the colonies stayed largely the same until the start of the first world war. The African colonies were drawn into the conflict due to their ties with different fighting sides in Europe. One by one the German colonies were overrun by armed forces of the allied parties: Britain and France. The end of World War I launched the high tide of colonialism while there was no longer any real competition for control over Africa. The inter bellum period is referred to as the high tide of colonialism for another reason: it witnessed the rise of an African elite that, schooled in a European way, lobbied for more integration and participation of the African population in the rule of the colonies. Some refer to these elites as collaborators to the regime, but other identify this movement as the first wave of (intellectual) indigenous nationalism (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008, 335).

The emergence of World War II in 1940 led to another round of war in the African continent which was initiated by Europeans. Troops assembled from the British, Belgian, French colonies were deployed to Europe and Asia. Upon return, they returned with expanded world knowledge and different perspectives than when they left. It led to a spread of pro-democracy propaganda and a new wave of African nationalism: if democracy was worth fighting for in Europe, why not then in Africa?

The new found ideas and feeling on right to independence after the end of World War II continued steadily at most colonies in the African continent. A difference can be seen between so called settler colonies and export colonies. The growing demands for independence was usually reluctantly given in the export colonies. Indigenous population gained increasing access to power positions in the government and eventually declared themselves independent from their colonial ruler. Settler colonies were a different story. The presence of white, European settlers in these colonies often prevented a peaceful independence of the colonies and led to violent conflicts and even wars fought of the dominion of the territory (Shillington 2012).

The countries constituting the Great Lakes region were mainly export colonies. Although in Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and Uganda some white immigrants settled, this was not comparable to the numbers in for example Kenia. The Europeans who settled in the Great Lakes region were connected to the government apparatus or export companies. Some state that export colonies had a more easy way towards independence than settler colonies. This is however only true when taking violence and struggle before independence into account. The road to independence in Uganda for example started with the establishment of African political parties, which increased pressure on the British for more inclusion of nationalist parties in the government. The British government was aware of the wish for independence by the African population, so steps were made to guarantee as much as possible a smooth transition towards independence. This was followed eventually by independent elections in which the African parties gained majority and soon after declared independence. Uganda was thus prepared for more autonomy, initially to become a self-ruling country within the British empire and eventually independent. The British government thus allowed

preparations for independence to be made and did not fight the process in Uganda. This same pattern can be seen in Rwanda and Burundi, countries in which preparations of independent rule were gradually implemented. The DRC however followed a different path towards independence. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 5. The fact if preparations for independence were made cannot be used as explanation for the governance of the country afterwards. Where for example Uganda after independence did not incorporate harsh ethnic policies, thus cannot be said for Rwanda.

A country that well exemplifies the relativity of violent course towards independence, preparation for independence and historical difference in power is contemporary Rwanda. Before Rwanda became part of German East Africa at the Berlin Africa conference in 1884-5, it had been an independent kingdom. From as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a kingdom existed in the Rwandan territory, But until the introduction of colonialism this territory was subject to change. Colonial powers helped to establish the country's boundaries as we know it today. The royal family had always been comprised out of Tutsi lineages until the abolishment in 1962 (Taylor 2004). Rwanda knows 3 distinct ethnicities: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Several explanations were used to explain this. The categories for example corresponded with the main occupations in the country. Agriculturalists were called Hutu, Pastoralist Tutsi and hunters and gatherers Twa. These were sociocultural categories: a rich Hutu could invest in cattle and in the end become a Tutsi, while a Tutsi with few cows could become a sedentary and thus a Hutu (White 2009). Over time, these three ethnicities became entities and hierarchically ordered. This was however not only based on socioeconomic characteristics, but had also a mythical explanation based on the common known myth of Gihanga, the mythical king of Rwanda. Gihanga had three sons, Gatutsi, Gahutu and Gatwa.

“Gihanga gave each of the brothers a pot of milk and told him to guard it during the night. But Gatwa became thirsty and drank his pot of milk. Gahutu became drowsy and in dozing off, spilled some of the contents of his pot. Only Gatutsi succeeded in keeping a full pot of milk until the next morning. For this reason, Gihanga decreed that Gatutsi should possess cattle and enjoy the right to rule. Gahutu would only be able to procure cattle by the work and services he performed for its brother, Gatutsi. As for Gatwa, he would never possess cattle; alternate periods of gluttony and starvation were his lot” ( Smith 1975, 39 in Taylor 2004).

This myth of descent thus explained the difference between the three ethnicities and incorporated sociocultural aspects. pastoralism was seen as the most honourable occupation while it produced milk – an honoured drink – and had the least contact with the earth, which was perceived as impure. Gatutsi had guarded the pot of milk the best in the myth which lead to Tutsi- his descendants- to have the most honourable occupation and the right to rule over the Hutu and Twa. Hutu could still learn and climb up to a Tutsi position by serving well. However, Twa could not reach this ideal and occupied the periphery in society (Taylor 2004).

with the introduction of colonialism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the existing socioeconomic differences and mythical explanations for this were combined with white superiority thinking. The Tutsi were identified as a Hamitic race and thus justified to rule over other groups such as the Hutu and Twa, but at the same time subject to the colonialists. The distinctions between the groups were formed into hierarchies. When Rwanda became a

Belgian Colony after the defeat of Germany in the First World War, ethnicities became truly fixed. The introduction of identity cards with ethnic categories on them was the definitive end of fluid ethnicities in Rwanda (White 2009). Only Tutsi's were allowed employment in government positions and the army. Moreover, the best jobs in the country under the hegemony of the colonialists were given to the Tutsi's. "The Germans and Belgian political and socioeconomic reconstruction of the Rwandan society intensified ethnic identity to the point that ethnic groups in Rwanda were seen exclusively in discriminatory racial/ethnic terms" (White 2009, 474). It can thus be said that under Belgian colonial rule indirect ruling was total: only the privileged minority was allowed to fill governmental positions and to serve in the army. Moreover, these strict division between Hutu and Tutsi in terms of economic and governmental positions drove the two groups away from each other and created resentment towards Tutsi. It thus prevented a unified opposition against colonial rule.

These rigid divisions between the ethnic groups remained the same until the independence in 1962. Already in 1950, political parties were allowed and many were formed. This was one of the conditions under which Belgium had received Rwanda under UN mandate after the end on World War I In Rwanda, these parties were ethnically divided from the start. The demands for independence started around the same time the Hutu Manifesto was published in 1959. This document called for democratization of the governmental systems and for majority rule which would allow Hutu to the parliament (Hintjens 1999; White 2009). The Belgian government supported the claims to power from the Hutu's after years of denying them. This can be explained as a diversion strategy to minimize the attention the Belgians would get for their involvement in the creation of the rigid ethnic system. In 1961 the first independent elections were held. These were won by the Hutu parties. The first action of the new government under the leadership of the Hutu Emancipation Party was the abolishment of the Tutsi led kingdom and instead establish a presidential structure in the newly formed republic of Rwanda (White 2009).

The ethnic divisions implemented by the Belgians such as identity cards with ethnicity on them were not abolished. Instead, they were used to make sure that no Tutsi could enter government positions and that quota could be installed on how many Tutsi could receive higher education. The ethnic system was kept in place and every day through legislation and administrative tools people were reminded that Tutsi's were not only different, but a potential threat. All this resulted in resentment with Tutsi and fear with Hutu. An increase in violence took place between different groups centred around Hutu or Tutsi ethnicity. In 1973, the revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) won the elections and increased tensions between ethnicities. Militias were formed within the army and civil society such as the Interahamwe (White 2009). Around the same time, militias from the Rwandan Patriotic Front started to raid the country. The RPF was a Tutsi's led party which was constructed mainly abroad: Tutsi's that left Rwanda in reaction to the ongoing discrimination and in fear for their lives. These raids led to the well-known statement of the Hutu president Habyarimana: the Tutsi's were vermin and cockroaches that needed to be crushed (White 2009). This stirred up more tensions and violence and eventually led to the genocide in 1994 in which approximately 800.000 people were murdered. This were Tutsi's, but also moderate Hutu's, politicians, human rights activists, journalists and clergy (White 2009). The specifics of the genocide are discussed in the next chapter.

This elaborate example on Rwanda shows how the period before colonialism, colonialism and post-colonialism have each in their own way influenced the way ethnicity has been established in Rwanda. Ethnicity had been constantly elaborated and made more concrete by the intertwining of local myths, western superiority thinking and socioeconomic and political priorities. The example of ethnicity construction in Rwanda is very clear and well documented and thus is very useful in describing the construction of ethnicity. The way ethnicity has been constructed and shaped in Rwanda gives insight in how such process took place in the entire Great Lakes region. Rwanda, Burundi and The Democratic Republic of Congo all experienced indirect colonial rule which built upon the existing power systems already in place. In Burundi and Rwanda this led to a strengthening of the already existing power gap between the Hutu's and Tutsi's. In the DRC however, the situation is more complex, due to the large territory the country includes. The processes constructing ethnicity did take place in the DRC, but were more visible on the provincial level (which comprised often more territory than Rwanda in total).

## **Conclusion**

The history of east Africa and the Great Lakes region is been severely shaped by the introduction of colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pre-existing social and economic differences were used to create a privileged group in the general population and became more and more ethnic identifiers. These so called ethnic differences are thus shaped by the prejudices of the western explorers and later on colonial powers of a superior African race as well as the existing differences found within the colonized territories. This is clear when looking at the difference between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi. The social and economic categories before the colonialists arrived where at independence in the 1960s transformed into fixed, definite ethnic categories which have not changed considerable since then. This chapter has shown the historical path that ethnicity has taken up to the point of independence. This is a good starting point to further investigate the role of ethnicity in violent conflicts in the Great Lakes region from independence on towards the atrocities of the 1990s and the current violent outbursts.

## **4. Ethnic violence in the Great Lakes**

### **Introduction**

Ethnicity and violence are two distinct concepts which both have different and sometimes conflicting meanings and definitions. Both concepts are extensively discussed and analysed in relation to the Great Lakes region. It is however important that they are analysed together, with attention to the intertwining and mutually reinforcing influence violence and ethnicity have on each other. This connectedness can for example be seen in the Yugoslavia war in the 1990s. Antagonistic differences between the different ethnicities were used as encouragement and justification of inciting violent acts performed by Serbs on Bosnians. This short example draws also attention to the importance of framing of violence and ethnicity in this context. Without effective framing through propaganda and news items regarding the legitimacy of inciting violence against the Muslim population, no general feeling of justification of actions could be reached among the general population.

Frames are thus crucial in analysing ethnic based violence. These frames explain situations to explode into violent conflicts and gives justification to actions that would otherwise been perceived as immoral or wrong. This chapter gives insight in how ethnicity can be framed to justify violent acts. It shows the connection and mutually reinforcing quality of ethnicity and violence and shows how this has influenced ethnic based armed conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

### **Ethnicity and violence interlinked**

The Great Lakes region has been characterized by ethnic based violence in recent history. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the connection between ethnicity and violence. As explained in the theoretical framework, framing seeks to resonate with the public by using the public's frame of thought to implement their own ideas. The most effective way for this is to create a resonance with the public and linking this resonance to the actual cause.

Ethnicity is not the ultimate, irreducible source of violent conflict. Conflicts driven by struggles for power between challengers and incumbents are newly ethnicized, newly framed in ethnic terms (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). Violence is not a quantitative degree of conflict but a qualitative form of conflict, with its own dynamics (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). "Attention needs to be paid to the form and dynamics of ethnicization, to the many and subtle ways in which violence- and conditions, processes, activities and narratives linked to violence- can takes on ethnic hues" (Brubaker and Laitin 1998) The cultural construction of fear, on the rhetorical processes, symbolic resources and representational forms through which a demonized, dehumanized or otherwise threatening ethnically defined 'other' had been constructed. Once such ethnically focused fear is in place, ethnic violence no longer seems random or meaningless, but meaningful (Brubaker and Laitin 1998).

This is closely connected to the two tracks of framing are identified by Desrosiers in her article on reframing framing analysis (2013): consensus framing and action framing. Consensus framing tries to create a feeling of solidarity within a society. It identifies a problem and proposes solutions. It is concerned with the cause of the frame, that what is at stake, the guilty party and how to solve the bad situation (Desrosiers 2013). Action framing aims at creating such a feeling of fear or arousal, that the society justifies and legitimizes action as a viable strategy to solve or change that what is creating this feeling. These framing strategies can thus be translated in very concrete examples of influencing and manipulating society through mass media such as radio and television, propaganda in newspapers and through representatives of for example political parties. This all are conventional channels through which political entrepreneur try to influence target groups. Frames thus use pre-existing feelings and fears which they activate in such a way to reach their goal. The relation between ethnicity and violence in terms of framing is thus very important: the use of ethnic fears, preconceptions and stereotypes increases the need for violent actions and justifies these, while at the same time the justification of violence as a viable option to limit for example the dominance of an ethnic group again reinforces negative ethnic images and supplements these.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda is a clear example of the move from a consensus framing to an

action frame. A case in which the influence of framing has had great influence on inciting ethnic violence is the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In the violent outburst around 800.000 to 100.000 people were often brutally killed in a time span of two months: Tutsi's, moderate Hutu's, opposition leaders of other parties than the ruling political party and human right's activists. The genocide was not, as sometimes said, a sudden outburst of ethnic violence based on racial differences, but rather a directed, well prepared action combining several interlinked goals (Hintjens 1999). The genocide was a reaction to increasing opposition to the government under conditions of economic and sociocultural crisis. Action framing has been crucial in mobilizing the general population to participate in the genocide, leading to the unprecedented scale and participation rate. This framing used historical details and myths as a resonance with the population of the Rwandan history, but also used the recent massacres and ethnic violence in the neighbouring country Burundi to reach its goal. In order to understand the full causes and consequences of the Rwandan genocide the situation in Burundi has to be included (Hintjens 1999).

### **The 1994 genocide**

The violent genocidal outburst in 1994 can be traced back to the colonial times. In this period, ethnicity was used as a divisional mechanism in governmental bureaucracies and daily life which led to a rigid division between ethnic identities.(see chapter 3 for more details). The 'Hutu revolution' of 1959-1962 started the chain of events which led to the 1994 genocide (Lemarchand, 1995, 8). 1959 is a key moment which led to the change of the Rwandan government of a predominantly Tutsi-dominated institute to a Hutu-led government with the Hutu Manifesto. The Tutsi superior positions in government and in the kingdom as an institutions (the Mwami(king) was always a Tutsi, for example) became identified with the unjust racial order which was seen as a colonial structure and therefore no longer applicable(Hintjens, 1999, 254). The manifesto was important in the run-up to independence in 1962. In the intermediate years the Belgians replaced half of the Tutsi chiefs with Hutu's and deposed the Mwami (Hintjens 1999). Moreover, it transformed the view on Tutsi ethnicity: the Hamitic hypothesis which legitimized Tutsi dominance in the colonial period was now used as a way to describe Tutsi's as alien and as a legitimization for the plans to drive them out of Rwanda (Hintjens 1999). Gradually, only Hutu was seen as the true indigenous ethnicity in Rwanda. A reframing of previous views on legitimate reasons to rule the country took place in which the legitimacy shifted from the Tutsi to the Hutu. The independent elections in 1961 were won by Hutu political parties. This new government did however not change the ethnic system. Instead, it replaced Tutsi employees with Hutus. The military consisted after the changes almost only out of Hutu soldiers. The Tutsi minority was restricted from public offices and thus confined to private business as employment opportunities (Lemarchand 1995). Other Tutsi's decided to leave the country in fear for discrimination and retaliation.

A pattern of violence and counter-violence emerged from 1959 on with the murder of several hundred Tutsi's by Hutu's in reaction on violence against Hutu's(United Nations 2015). Between 1962 and 1967 raids on Hutu targets and the government were organized by Tutsi refugees in the neighbouring countries in order to regain their former positions. The answer on these raids and attacks by the Hutu government was retaliation killings of Tutsi's within Rwanda. These killings increased the refugee streams out of Rwanda (United Nations 2015). From time to time Tutsi refugees tried with peaceful methods to return to their

country. This however had no more success than the violent raids. Arguments such as that there was no space left in the country to inhabit all those refugees and the fact that there were too few economic opportunities for everyone were used to keep refugees from returning. These explanations were framed as causes which lay outside the power of the Rwandan government to change: the continuous trials of Tutsi refugees to return were framed as impossible due to territorial and economic constraints. As a result, the Tutsi's were framed as that, if they would return, this would have serious consequences for the population within Rwanda. Implicitly, this can even be interpreted as a warning of Tutsi's who were trying to steal the land of Hutu's.

In 1988 the Rwandan Patriotic Front was founded as a political and military Tutsi movement with the stated aims of securing repatriation of Rwandans in exile and reforming of the Rwandan government, including political power sharing (United Nations 2015). In 1990 the RPF launched a major attack on Rwanda which displaced many people. The fear for this Tutsi dominated army led to a propaganda strategy of the government which labelled all Tutsi as possible accomplices of the RPF, just as all opposition Hutu parties, which generally were more moderate than the party of President Habyarimana. A mass killing of Tutsi in Kibilira happened as a reaction on the invasion of the RPF and in 1992 at least a thousand Tutsi cattle herders were killed in reaction to a RPF raid (Lemarchand 1995). The 1990s thus saw the creation of a pattern of revenge killings of Hutu by the RPF and Tutsi by the government army in reaction of violence performed by the other party.

The early 1990s were characterized by negotiations between Rwandan parties, the RPF and the international community in order to prevent more violence in the country but at the same time ethnic tensions were increasing. Moreover, the proposed power sharing regulations and the introduction of a multi-party government were necessary to receive financial support from the World Bank. These funds were necessary to redirect the economy after the drop in coffee prices (Hintjens 1999; Lemarchand 1995). The deteriorating economic crisis was a serious problem for the government's support in the country. President Habyarimana diverted open opposition against his rule by blaming the economic crisis on a conspiracy of traders and merchants- professions mainly occupied by Tutsi's (Hintjens 1999). Ethnic tension within the country were thus used in frames to explain the economic deterioration in the country: the Tutsi were conspiring against the legitimate government in order to re-establish Tutsi rule. Since the independence in 1962 over and over again Tutsi were framed as a distinct alien ethnic group which tried to gain power as part of a scheme of Hamitic domination in the region (Hintjens 1999). This enhanced fear for Tutsi domination and a return for Hutu to a subordinate position in society. Every Tutsi was a potential rebel trying to overthrow Hutu rule.

The negotiations with international parties and institutions led to the Arusha Accords in 1993 which guaranteed power sharing between the government and the RPF. Cooperation with the RPF was however not thinkable for the party of Habyarimana, the MNRD. Assisted by the anti-Tutsi CDR party, he derailed the implementations by killing Tutsi civilians. In February 1993 some 300 Tutsi were killed in Gisenyi. This became the most effective and rational way of eliminating all basis for a compromise with the RPF (Lemarchand 1995). The continued revenge killings by the government were possible because in 1992 "the institutional apparatus of genocide already was in place" (Lemarchand, 1995, 10).

The shooting of the presidential plane with the Burundian and Rwandan presidents Ndadaye and Habyarimana in it on April 6 1994 is generally seen as the direct cause for the 1994 genocide (Lemarchand 1995; Hintjens 1999). It made a definite end to the Arusha accords and was the starting point of the genocide against all Tutsi and moderate Hutu. It is not clear who shot the plane, but in the weeks after the shooting the RPF and other Tutsi loyalist parties were said to be guilty. The fact that the Burundian first democratically chosen Hutu president was also killed strengthened the claim that Hutu's were not safe from Tutsi's, ever. On April 6 1994 the genocide started with the killing of Tutsi's in Kigali (Hintjens 1999), followed by six weeks of extensive ethnic killings of Tutsi's and moderate Hutu's across the country. An important driver in the spread of the genocide was pro Hutu propaganda broadcasted by the *Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) (Kellow and Steeves 1998).

The station however has had more influence than only during the six weeks of genocide in 1994. In the years leading up to the genocide, RTLM radio increasingly broadcasted a solidarity message for the rule of Habyarimana's party before his death and afterwards a genocidal message against all Tutsi's (Kellow and Steeves 1998). From the 1990s on, the RTLM was used as a propaganda machine for agenda setting and framing. Agenda setting consisted of ordering the relative importance of different news and policies. The political conflict was projected in different frames, for example the 'risk and danger frame, violence frame, victims frame and the 'powerful and wicked' frame. In the same order, these frames are concerned with alarming the audience of threats, dramatizing the conflict, the costs of the conflict for various actors and unifying the opposition into one dangerous group (Wolfsfeld 1991 in Kellow and Steeves 1998). These frames were more and more implemented leading up to 1994. After the shooting of the presidential plane, RTLM encouraged hatred and genocide by reporting on Tutsi violence and slaughter against Hutu. This was combined with biblical and historical references, which increased the resonance of this message with individual's frame of thought to establish a frame of communication in which the Tutsi's were the ultimate enemy. A victim frame was thus implemented and combined with a kill-or-be-killed message. Hutu's would certainly become victims of Tutsi atrocities if they would not act first (Kellow and Steeves 1998). In conclusion, the run up to the genocide in 1994 radio RTLM successfully established a consensus frame in which all Tutsi's were seen as potential dangerous elements, waiting for the moment to regain power and enslave the Hutu, just as they had done in history using a fear and danger frame. The day the presidential plane was shot, RTLM transformed this consensus frame into an action frame, using a kill-or-be-killed frame, combined with a victims frame (Kellow and Steeves 1998).

The 1994 genocide took place over the span of six weeks and approximately killed between the 800.000 and 1.000.000 people. Framing was very important in stimulating and motivating ordinary people to kill their friends, neighbours and even family members. Over the years a consensus frame was put in place which regarded Tutsi as alien ethnic group who were constantly trying to regain power from the Hutu government. Moreover, recurring ethnic violence in Burundi of Tutsi against Hutu's supported the idea that Tutsi's would even resort to violence to gain power. In the late 1980s this frame was complemented by blaming Tutsi for the economic crisis in the country. So, in 1990 Tutsi's were framed as power hungry, alien, violent people who would stop at nothing to regain power in Rwanda and



enslave once again the Hutu majority. The negotiations about the Arusha accords combined with raids from the RPF increased the fears of this consensus frame. The assassination of two Hutu presidents in 1994 was the final drop: the consensus frame was transformed in an action frame. By constantly confirming the violence carried out by the Tutsi RPF against Hutu's combined with the already existing fear of regain of power by Tutsi's justified and legitimized violence against Tutsi as a viable course to prevent 'enslavement'. This frame was supported by the government because it allowed the government to stay in office. The Tutsi's were used as a scapegoat for all things wrong in Rwanda.

### **Ethnic violence produced and reproduced**

The example above on the genocide in 1994 gives insight in how ethnic violence can be framed and initiated though a combination of rational issues such as keeping power, and fear, history and the feeling of being second class citizens in creating what some have called the worst ethnic violent conflict post World War II (Eltringham 2006; Lemarchand 1995). This does however not give the full picture regarding ethnic conflicts in the Great Lakes region. An important factor in these is namely a recurrent pattern of conflicts which had the same goals. In Burundi for example, from the first independent elections in 1965 until the mass murders of Hutu by Tutsi army forces, the country has been witness of recurrent patterns of violence and counter-violence and the refugee streams is produced (Lemarchand 2009). The conflict situation thus was never really resolved: it became time and time again reactivated in pursue of the same goal: to re-establish Hutu-majority rule in the Tutsi governed Burundi. It is thus important to look at how over a time span of several years or even decades a conflict can stay relevant and active in the minds and actions of people. In other words, it is important to look at how violent ethnic frames are produced and reproduced over time.

Every conflict in the Great Lakes region has created refugee streams in the form of internally displaces people to refugees fleeing across borders fearing for their lives. The people fleeing across borders usually end up in refugee camps close to their country of origin. in some cases, a militarization of refugees takes place. This can have serious consequences, while it can increase the likelihood of war diffusion in the host country (Lebson 2013). Moreover, it can make conflict resolution more difficult and can thus sustain a conflict over time. The likelihood of refugee militarization depends on the circumstances around the origins of the conflict, to what extent the host country is able to demilitarize and secure refugee camps and the availability of international humanitarian aid which can be used to support and assist rebel movements (Lischer 2005 in Lebson 2013). Lebson develops in his article a theory regarding refugee militarization. His theory states several interesting points regarding refugee streams in the Great Lakes Region. One of the motivations for militarization discussed in the paper is a situation in which the purpose of a war was to displace a population, refugees are more likely to militarize. This provides the "grievances around which military entrepreneurs are able to "frame" mobilizing arguments"(Lebson 2013, 137). Moreover, "A politicized ethnic group that has constructed an historical narrative and symbology of nationhood connected to their territory of (prior) residence has already established the foundations for nationalist aspirations" (Lebson 2013, 139). This has thus as a consequence that expulsion from the territory only increases unification of ethnic groups around one common goal: to return to their home country. In these situations militarization of refugees is more likely to take place.

The Great Lakes region has been characterized by refugee streams crossing borders in reaction to violence aimed at the elimination or expulsion of one particular group. In Rwanda, the Tutsi population was forced to flee the country to prevent a violent death. In Burundi, Hutu population fled more than once across borders in flight of Tutsi violence. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, people living in the border provinces North and South Kivu have been subject to increasing refugee streams from Rwanda and Burundi, complicating their already diverse ethnic composition and inflicting land conflicts. Moreover, the Kivu's have been subject to invasions from neighbouring countries in order to support rebel movements, eliminate extremists from their own country who crossed the border or to support ethnic groups who are deprived or being discriminated.

## **Conclusion**

The always present ethnic violent feelings in the Great Lakes region made atrocities as the 1994 genocide possible. A long history of ethnic differences in power positions and opportunities created an extensive base which was used to install violent frames in the Great Lakes region. This consensus frames transformed into action frames when the political power of the Hutu regime began to crumble. A hate inciting campaign directed by the RTLM and government officials began in the early 1990s started to use the fear and danger frame combined with agenda setting that benefited the government. The death of Habyarimana marked the starting point of the genocide. Already existing action frames were activated and directed at the Tutsi population. Moreover, the militarization of refugees in neighbouring countries is a factor that needs to be taken into account when discussing ethnic violence in the Great Lakes region. It can have major influence on the course, intensity and duration of conflicts and can even lead to the emergence of new conflicts or can have influence on a non-violent conflict changing in a violent one. This militarization will be discussed more elaborate in the case study concerning the Kivu provinces in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the subsequent chapter

## **5. Ethnicity and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

### **Introduction**

Discussing the Democratic Republic of Congo is discussing contradictories: Congo's territory is one of the most vast on the African continent, with great diversity in climate, vegetation and soil conditions. It is also generally used as a school example to illustrate the term 'failed state', to discuss the negative legacy of colonialism. Congo's recent history is characterized by a constant eroding of government structures and civil society and foreign involvement and ownership of the country's most valuable natural resources. This is complemented by an highly diverse ethnic composition of the country which is greatly influenced by conflicts in the region such as the Rwandan genocide in 1994 ethnic tensions and mass killings in Burundi in 1972 as well as land disputes on the Eastern part of the country. This chapter will focus on the ethnic composition in the two provinces North and South Kivu and the tensions arising from this. First, the colonial history and independence struggle in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be discussed, as well as the problems arising after independence in 1960. Next, ethnic tensions in the Kivu's will be discussed by taking a closer look at the

Banyamulenge ethnic group and the problems arising around citizenship acquirement. The last section analyses the ethnic tensions and the two Congo wars in relation to the ethnic conflicts in the countries bordering the Kivu's. Lastly, a comprehensive conclusion will be given.

Figure 1: Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2005



Source: [http://www.insidejustice.com/intl/2007/03/04/dr\\_congo\\_new\\_constitution/](http://www.insidejustice.com/intl/2007/03/04/dr_congo_new_constitution/)

### **Congo in historical context**

Before colonialism the area that nowadays comprises the Democratic Republic of Congo consisted of several kingdoms such as the Kingdoms of Kongo, Kuba, Lunda, Luda and various social groups (Frankema and Buelens 2013). There was diversity in terms of centralization and institutions. As early as in the 16<sup>th</sup> century contact with Europe was established (Diogo Cao 1482) with whom slave trade and ivory trade was set up. The lower Congo kingdoms had rich natural resources such as archil, copal, gum, ivory, palm oil and woods. These goods were traded between the kingdoms and with the European explorers. Agricultural surplus was also traded between the kingdoms. Generally, it can be said that economic ties between the kingdoms and with foreign presence such as the Europeans intensified over time, leading up to the level where some even state that the Congo territory was the leading trading partner in the southern part of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Zezeza 1993 in Frankema and Buelens 2013). The separate kingdoms were organizationally different, but all were characterized by some kind of state power. The kingdom of Kongo is the best known political entity in the region (Frankema and Buelens 2013, 21). The highest power laid with the king, but he was controlled by councils, which were chosen by the local chiefly offices. The state played an important role in the division of land revenue which was assigned to individuals or groups. No private party could own the land (in our modern sense). Colonial presence had its influence in the coastal regions, because here the transatlantic trading partners were located. The coastal region profited in this situation, often at the expense of the hinterland, where kingdoms gradually lost power and population: the

increase of the Atlantic slave trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century increased the number of raids for slaves in the hinterland. This led to destabilisation of interior kingdoms while it disturbed labour relations and kin-group inheritance structures. Political power weakened, challenges increased and ethnic fractionalization and social alienation took place (Whatley and Gillezeau 2011). This all had long term negative effects on development of the region: militarization led to a continuation and intensification of violence in everyday life.

The increase in slave trade and the increasing demand for ivory among other goods led thus to a commodification of the Congolese societies. prestige goods became more important. In order to achieve this, violent political rule and capital accumulation gained importance and sponsored the emergence of a new 'class': the warlords. The vertical hierarchical societal structures and horizontally integrated groups such as lineages and age grades which previous all had influence on the government structure lost their importance. The new warlords became more and more powerful, but the Congolese area as a whole became more vulnerable to external influences(Frankema and Buelens 2013).

### **Colonial times**

It can be said that the colonialization of the Congolese territory started in 1878 when Henry Morton Stanley, commissioned by King Leopold II of Belgium, explored the interior of the country and collected treaties with local chiefs regarding cooperation (Frankema and Buelens 2013). Kasja Ekholm-Friedman describes in Frankema and Buelens 2013 the consequences of colonialism: it "led to serious disturbances in the authority structure. Political hierarchies collapsed, chiefs lost their power, religious authority was undermined"(1991, 225). Traditional chiefs and power officials were replaced by others, which undermined the traditional system of accountability of chiefs to the councils. Moreover, it proved impossible to subject the whole territory to colonial rule of Leopold II, which created power discrepancies within the country. This all however was not important: The Congo Free State generated unprecedented revenues which almost all came to Leopold II. In 1885, after the formal establishment of the Congo Free State at the Berlin conference, he secured property right to large pieces of 'vacant' for himself and declared the *domaine privé* or *domaine de la couronne* (Frankema and Buelens 2013). Leopold II traded large pieces *domaine privé* to private companies in return for profit or building of infrastructure (Shillington 2012).

In the early 1900s open rebellion was becoming widespread and the system introduced by King Leopold II threatened to collapse. To prevent this, Leopold handed his empire over to the Belgian government in 1908. So, in the end the Free state- no subject of any European country- was colonialized under Belgian rule. It proved however difficult to implemented a good governmental structure, due to the damage caused by the rule of Leopold II and the continuing lease of territory to private companies. An extractive system was still in place in which Congo did not receive any benefits of its natural resources. The character of rule became less violent, but did not change much in terms of hierarchy: The decisions made concerning the Congo were taken strictly in a top-down manner, without any influence of the local population (Frankema and Buelens 2013). The colonial powers thus created a coercive system in which the local populations were virtually excluded from any decision power. The economic course was decided by commercial parties and focused on extractive tactics which generated the most revenue. This situation caused a focus on plantation cash

crops and mineral extraction, which eroded the internal food production and thus increased the dependency of people on earning cash. Colonial rule caused thus a situation after World War II in which the Congolese people were aware of their subjected position and wanted to change this, but has almost no skills to do this. There was no freedom of association and cultural organizations were only permitted when they were ethnically homogenous, preventing inter-ethnic political parties (Frankema and Buelens 2013).

### **The road to independence**

After the end of World War II the Belgian government had no intentions of granting independence to Congo in the near distant future. Only in 1956 self-government for Congo was discussed in official circles and then only as an option for the distant future. In the same year a group of teachers, clerks and shopkeepers from Leopoldville (Kinshasa), were demanding abolition of racial discrimination in social, economic and political facets of the country. To please this group, the Belgian government allowed open participation of all citizens in the elections for local government in the big cities of 1957-58.

The elected parties soon turned their local interests over into political independence. Over the course of 1958 and 1959, the country spiralled down from political rallies to uncontrolled rioting by the unemployed. the legalization of national political parties in 1959 was soon followed by a round table conference in Belgium in 1960 to discuss the future independence of Congo with its main political leaders. These leaders were astonished by the Belgian suggestion of full independence within the following six months, while they had estimated a gradual increase of self-autonomy over the course of five years (Shillington 2012). May 1960 the first independent elections were held in Congo. The long wanted independence combined with the dismal life circumstances in the country raised the expectations for the elections to an unreachable level. Soon after the new coalition was formed and independence declared on 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1960, the mineral rich province Katanga seceded and the army fell apart in dissatisfaction with the Belgian officers (Young 2006). President Lumumba requested a peacekeeping mission from the UN to control the chaos that had erupted in reaction to the Katanga secession and the loss of army control. In 1961, president Lumumba was murdered and army general Mobutu emerged behind the scenes as the most powerful and influential man . In 1965, General Mobutu seized power in a coup d'état and renamed the country, again including the province of Katanga, Zaire.

The legacy of the poor Belgian rule in term of establishing a good governmental structure which was designed for an effective extraction of natural resources combined with almost no preparatory governance for independence thus created a situation in which the DRC became vulnerable for internal turmoil such as the secession of Katanga after independence and the military coup of Mobutu. Mobutu became president of an unstable country where there was inequality between the provinces in terms of development: the mineral rich provinces were developed in economic sense, supported by agricultural production of other provinces. Moreover, flows of people moved to the mines, which created food shortages (Frankema and Buelens 2013). In short, the country was disintegrated. Mobutu invested in creating political unity around his rule. "Political power derived from client patron relationships across networks encircling the presidency. Public offices were distributed among relatives, friends, clients in order to exploit them, and private interests were pursued within a political structures"(Frankema and Buelens 2013, 255). As a consequence power

discrepancies increased and no effort was made to diversify the production of the country. This had far reaching consequences. The drop in international copper prices from 1973 onwards hit the DRC hard, because this was the main export product. The stagnating price of copper marked the beginning of economic decline in the DRC. The decrease in revenue decreased investments in the country in the form of educational and health services. This economic decline thus resulted in an increasing deterioration in the DRC regarding economic performance, social situations and state control and power.

### **Ethnicity in the Kivu's**

The Provinces North and South Kivu are located on the most eastern part of the country, bordering Rwanda and Uganda. In these provinces, the pre-colonial rule followed by the rule of Leopold II of Belgium and eventually the Belgian state had only sparse influence (Mushi 2013). The provinces were physically far away from the centre of power in capital. As a consequence, local institutions remained important. Moreover, the border demarcations were in practice more fluid and restrictions on crossing borders to keep districts and provinces ethnically the same were not so strict (Court 2013). In the Kivu's a substantial part of the population is Rwandophone: this means that they speak Rwandan language and moved in some point in history to the Congolese territory. The fluid border regions is one of the reasons for the presence of the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge in the Kivu's. Both groups are originally from Rwanda, but the Banyamulenge transformed into a distinct group in relation to the Banyarwanda, which can be seen as an umbrella term for all people in the eastern part of Congo originally from Rwanda. The Banyamulenge originally consisted of a "group of pre-colonial Tutsi pastoralists migrants who distinguished themselves from all other Banyarwanda communities in the Kivu's, including Tutsi kin groups" (Court, 2013, 417). This group arrived in what now consists the province South Kivu in the Congo, but in more recent history the term has become a label which includes these settlers as well as Tutsi who moved during the colonial times and the ones who migrated to the area following the Rwandan independence in 1962 (Court 2013). This is important in discussing ethnicities and ethnicization in South Kivu while "intense competition between groups over time not only directly impacted on the status of new arrivals but also on their more established kin communities" (Court, 2013, 421).

To analyse ethnicity and ethnic violence in the Kivu's it is important to distinguish between these groups. Court proposes a phase categorization to distinguish between the different arrivals from Rwanda. The first phase during precolonial period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw an influx of Tutsi's in reaction to the expanding kingdom of Rwanda. People fled the fighting in their former place of residence and settled in Mulenge, South Kivu. They denied all influence from the Rwandan state, but their conjugation under the authority of local kingdoms deprived them of their own 'customary system of land control' (Vlassenroot 2002, 502). Three forms of conflict emerged following the settlement of the Banyamulenge: The pastoral lifestyle conflicted with the agrarian culture in the region, due to their pastoralist lifestyle the Banyamulenge possessed the 'local representation of wealth' which gave them economic advantage and third, social cleavages emerged through their economic superiority through which the Banyamulenge developed a feeling of 'natural superiority' (Vlassenroot 2002).

The second phase of migration took place during colonial rule. This inflow consisted of

spontaneous migrants fleeing drought, famine and labour policies in Rwanda, but the migration of pastoralists was however stimulated by the Rwandan state to alleviate population pressure in famine prone regions. Moreover, regulated migration- the *transplantes*- of primarily Hutu labourers from Rwanda to work on coffee and tea plantation in the region did also take place (Newbury 1996, 574, Lemarchand 1997, 180 in Court, 2013). This increased population pressure South Kivu. Moreover, the *arrivés* during the colonial period were regarded as outsiders by the Congolese, and by their Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge kin groups (Court 2013) "Colonial demarcations thus created a context of discrete national communities whilst ignoring the implications of introducing people who were arbitrarily defined as foreigners by imposed colonial boundaries" (Newbury 2005, 255 in Court, 2013).

The third influx took place after the independence of Rwanda which ended Tutsi rule with the instalment of a Hutu president, Gregoire Kayibanda (Hintjens 1999). Mainly Tutsi political refugees crossed the border with Congo. This period coincides with the Congo-Zaire civil war (1960-1965) in which the Banyamulenge became politically active during the Simba rebellion in 1964-65. Many of the refugees as well as the 'indigenous' Congolese groups were supportive of the anti-governmental forces of the *Armée Populaire de Libération* (APL). The Banyamulenge however sided with the governmental *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC) when the APL started to raid their villages and steal their cattle (Court 2013). As a consequence, the eastern regions became divided along ethnic lines, when the 'indigenous Congolese groups' Babemembe and Bufalero labelled the Banyamulenge as collaborators (Vlassenroot 2002). The Simba rebellion and support for the ANC thus consequently incited communal hostilities and made the Banyamulenge aware of the fact that, even though they lived in South Kivu since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their position stayed fragile. Moreover, the influx of more and more Tutsi's after the independence in Rwanda made the Banyamulenge more aware of the necessity to not become associated with the present migrants.

The fourth and last influx Court identifies took place shortly after the end of the 1994 genocide. In this period, a mix of government officials from the defeated MRND party, members of the army and militias and civilians crossed the border. This influx significantly increased the Banyarwanda presence in the border regions: South and North Kivu (Court 2013). These four periods of Rwandans moving into what is today North and South Kivu illustrates the fluidity of borders in the Great Lakes region. Moreover, this categorization can be used as a starting point for analysing the ethnic and nationality problems in the region, how and why foreign governments assume legitimacy over this region and how it is up to today proven impossible to create a lasting peace in the region.

## **Citizenship**

As described above, over time different inflows of Rwandans took place in the Kivu's. In reaction to this, the first migratory group, the Banyamulenge, distanced themselves from these new migrants in terms of identity. The group ethnicized themselves as Congolese, taking on a name which incorporated their place of origin- Mulenge. Incorporation in the Congolese society was important too, so association with for example Rwandan kin groups and hierarchy was led to. During the colonial rule the Banyamulenge were not governed by one of their own chiefs, but divided under other chiefdoms. This resulted in a lack of secure

land tenure, hostilities by the dominant ethnic group and social and political isolation. In short, “the Banyamulenge were the only group under colonial rule which were denied their own ‘native’ administration during the late colonial period” (Pottier 2002, 17 in Court, 2013). After the independence, the Banyamulenge became more socially and politically integrated in the Congo during the Simba rebellion. This new raised awareness of the role the Banyamulenge community wanted to play in the country. Their support for the ANC during the Simba rebellion created a more favourable economic and social climate for the Banyamulenge who spread out over the region (Court 2013).

The constant influx of people in the Kivu’s destabilized the ethnic composition of the Kivu’s and made the question who was ‘a real Congolese’ more important. Several laws were implemented to clarify this issue. There was however no consistent line in these laws. The 1964 law states that Congolese nationality “is granted, beginning from the date 30 June 1960 to all persons having now, or at some point in the past, as one of their ancestors a member of a tribe or the part of a tribe established on the territory of the Congo before the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1908” (Jackson 2006, 104 in Court 2013). 1908 marks the beginning of formal colonialization by the Belgian government. The dates stated in the law were however flexible: they were changed whenever it suited the governments goals (Court 2013; Vlassenroot 2002). The 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a constant shifting of the cut-off date as a political tool to either enlarge or reduce the pool of those who were eligible for the Congolese nationality (Jackson 2007)

The Banyamulenge, as described above, were migrants who arrived in the Congo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1970s, they officially took Banyamulenge as their name to distinguish themselves from other Banyarwanda people in the region (Young 2006). This was in reaction to increasing tensions around the influx of people from Rwanda in the 1960s. The dominant view on who was considered a national was however complicated and partly due to the legacy of colonial rule. The Belgian had distinguished between ethnicity and race: “Races (whites and other non-native races) were subject to civic laws of the central state...despite their status as foreigners or immigrants” (Court 2013, 432). Ethnicities or tribes were subject to customary laws. The national state presided over the native authorities (Mamdani 2005 in Court 2013). After independence, this system was so to speak turned upside down: civil citizenship was given to all inhabitants, but those who had been subject to customary law still kept their customary rights (Mamdani 2005 in Court 2013). After independence, “the ethnic basis of colonial native authorities transformed into full citizenship for ‘indigenous’ Congolese in the post-colonial state, was framed by an ethnic definition of nationality” (Court 2013, 433). This led thus to a discrepancy between civil and ethnic citizenship. Civic citizenship was given to everyone, while ethnic citizenship only could be claimed when a group had been subject during colonialism and even before that to an ethnically similar chief.

This view on ethnic citizenship had great influence on the Banyamulenge community in South Kivu. They were an in between category: they arrived in the Eastern Congo well before the 1885 date forming the border which decided on nationality, but were during colonialism and post-colonialism not subject to their own customary rule. When the 1989 the *Mission d’identification des Zairois au Kivu* was implemented had this far reaching consequences for the Banyamulenge in the Kivu’s. This investigation had as objective to “verify the nationality



status and citizen rights of the Kinyarwanda-speaking denizens of the Kivu Provinces” (Court 2013, 429). The implementation turned out to be an identification to identify foreigners, which was imposed on the Banyamulenge group, while “there was no ethnic community called Banyamulenge living in Zaire” prior to 1885 (Vlassenroot 2002). Citizenship depended thus on an ethnic category: a person had to be part of an ethnic group known in the Congo prior to 1885, when Congo became part of the imperial structures of western Europe. Citizenship was thus no longer based on the place of residence of an individual, but on his ethnic background and ancestral ties (Court 2013). Moreover, the Banyamulenge had not been under their own customary rule in the past, and thus not considered indigenous. The Banyamulenge were thus categorized as foreigners, and subject to changing views on foreign people in governmental circles. This law stayed in force until the end of Mobutu’s rule.

### **Rebel groups in the Kivu’s**

The combination of decreasing state power and state control of the vast territory has had far reaching consequences. Between the 1970s until the toppling of president Mobutu in 1997 Congo was subject to increasing deteriorating living standards and state presence (Reyntjens 2014). The further away provinces laid from the capital Kinshasa, the less state control was exercised. In the eastern provinces North and South Kivu this decrease in state presence divided the different ethnic groups even further. This was supplemented by first placing the Banyamulenge in power by Mobutu in 1965, to only restrict the right of this group and deny them citizenship in 1981 (Young 2006; Court 2013). The last two decades of Mobutu’s rule were characterized by trying to hold on to power which actions such as described above. In the case of South Kivu it only had negative effects: the Banyamulenge were first despised for being foreign and in power, then power was taken away from them and in the end it was stated in 1989 that they were not even nationals or citizens of the Congo. This continuous which of power between ethnic groups led to ethnic tensions and a further decrease of state power.

The regions became more and more ungoverned spaces (Neethling 2014). This means that there was no effective control of the government in these provinces, that a power vacuum emerged, which was filled by “aggrieved groups or rebels [which] make their presence felt, often brutally and violently” (Neethling 2014, 340). In the case of North and South Kivu, this power vacuum was filled by a plethora of rebel groups, militia’s and local businessmen which enjoyed sometimes foreign support from Rwanda, Burundi or Uganda and maintained intensive transnational economic ties and networks (Neethling 2014; Reyntjens 2014; Autesserre 2009). The reasons for the emergence of the first Congo war in 1996-1997 and the second Congo war from 1998 until 2003 are complex. They are a combination of foreign policy, failed state power, ethnic tensions and resource conflicts. In the next section these factors are analysed.

### **The first Congo war**

The 1990s witnessed a massive break down of the Congolese state. In 1990, the continuous flow of western aid- aimed at preventing the Congo from becoming a communist state- ended in light of the end of the Cold War (Young 2006). Mobutu dropped the one party

monopoly that allowed him to stay in government for 25 years and prepared for multi-party rule with the preparation of a new constitution. In 1996, independent elections were promised.

The first half of the 1990s witnessed the violent eruption of the Rwandan civil war into a genocide of Tutsi people in 1994. Before this date, Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge were perceived as Rwandan. The genocide of Tutsi's implemented by a Hutu government changed this. Moreover, when the Tutsi-dominated *Front Patriotique Rwandais* (RPF) seized power the differences between Hutu and Tutsi became active in the Kivu's. This was clear when as early as 1991 Banyamulenge enrolled in the RPF forces (Vlassenroot 2002). As described above, a massive influx of mainly Hutu population from Rwanda settled in Kivu. Mobutu tried one last time to regain his power by playing humanitarian arbiter and aligned himself with the Hutu refugees. At the same time, expulsion of Tutsi residing in the eastern provinces was discussed as a policy option, including groups such as the Banyamulenge (Young 2006). Soon, raids started initiated from these refugee camps into Rwanda. Moreover, the camps were used to recruit re-employment for the former Hutu government for its political and military activities. By 1995, they regained enough power to install themselves as the Rwandan government in exile including the Interahamwe and the Rwandan army in the camps (Vlassenroot 2002). The new Rwandan government saw this as a treat to the mainly Tutsi Banyamulenge in Congo and their own power position in Rwanda. They trained and send a force of Congolese Tutsi to protect them against the Hutu's.

In the summer of 1996, Rwanda actively sought contact with the Banyamulenge to prepare them for the coming war which started in august 1996, when Banyamulenge trained in the Rwandan army, tried to infiltrate in the Banyamulenge community(Vlassenroot 2002). This started the rebellion of the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire*(AFDL) against the already discredited and chaotic government of Mobutu. The AFDL was covertly supported by as well as the Rwandan as the Ugandan government. The main military leaders received training in the Rwandan military, which consequently led to Tutsi-generals. One of the main goals of the AFDL, besides the defeat of Mobutu, was to push back all the Rwandan refugees in Rwandan territory (Young 2006). "the encadrement by the disciplines and affective Rwandan army, and subsequent decisive intervention by the experienced Angolan armed forces, transformed what initially appeared to be a minor irritant into a triumphant insurrection...It swept across the country, marching into Kinshasa in May 1997." (Young 2006, 306). Laurent Kabila emerged as the main figure during the rebellion, and succeeded Mobutu as president of again renamed Democratic Republic of Congo.

## **The second Congo War**

Soon after Kabila had been installed as president, the foundations of his rule began to crumble. Internationally, his refusal to cooperate with investigations focused to find out the fate of the Hutu' fled for the AFDL was condemned. Internally, the dominant position of Rwandan Tutsi's in his army discredited him with the local population. In 1998 Kabila tried change his connection to Rwanda by expelling al Tutsi officers in his army and used anti-Tutsi rhetoric, which deteriorated his relationship with Rwanda. Moreover, after the progression of the AFDL to Kinshasa again a power vacuum emerged: the Kivu's became more and more

ungoverned spaces. This allowed rebel groups and war lords to roam freely in the borderlands creating insecurity and porous borders with Uganda and Rwanda. The second Congo war started in this political mine field: the Banyamulenge were since the first war spread across different rebel groups, the AFDL made a 180 turn from pro-Tutsi to anti-Tutsi and the Rwandan and Ugandan government were once again trying to force their way into the eastern part of Congo under the guise of 'intervention in order to save their own people and country'.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1998 violence started. A faction of the AFDL, the *Rassemblement Congolaise pour la Démocratie*(RCD) took up arms against President Kabila, backed by Uganda and Rwanda (Kalron 2010). Rwanda and Uganda legitimized their actions which infringed the Congolese sovereignty by stating that the violence and instability in the eastern regions negatively impacted their security. Moreover, Rwanda insisted that former Interahamwe operating in Rwanda had their main bases in Congo. Another factor is however important to explain the willingness of the countries to involve themselves in another war. During the instable times in which state power was scarce in the region, Uganda and Rwanda enriched themselves with valuable natural resources from Congolese soil. The first Congo war only increased this. The anti-Tutsi language of Kabila and his negative attitude towards foreign involvement threatened this lucrative business. It can thus be said that the second Congo war had more to do with dominance over the resource rich countries, and less with the ethnic problems in the country, as was the case in the first Congo war(Kalron 2010; Neethling 2014; Reyntjens 2014; Hintjens 2006).

This second war is characterized by changing alliances, factions of rebel groups breaking away and an even further impoverishment in the eastern region. Some aspects are important to mention with regard to the end of the war. First, in 1999 an initial cease fire was implemented and signed by the main governmental fighting parties and some rebel groups. The RCD however refused to sign. Second, the murder of Laurent Kabila by his bodyguard in January 2001 made the conflict flame up once again. He was succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila, who turned out to be more cooperative. Finally, at the 'inter-Congolese Dialogue' a settlement was reached in July 2003. A power sharing interim government was installed which participation of the RCD, the MLC(a splinter group of the former) and unarmed civilian opposition (Young 2006).

The end of the second Congo war did however not restore state power in the ungoverned spaces in the Kivu's. State power remained distant which forced customary institutions and religious organizations to take over their role (Mushi 2013). These institutions were rivalled by informal forms of organization such as war lord's networks and business men. Moreover, the nationality question of the Banyamulenge was still not legally solved: During the two wars, the 1995 "resolution on nationality" was still legally in force, "which accused Rwandophones of exhibiting 'hostile behaviour towards Zaireans by these Rwandans and Burundese who, having become Zairean by simple by fraudulently obtaining Zairean identity cards, are now combatting the Zairean customary, political and administrative authorities which they would like at any cost to supplant'"(Ruhimbika 2001 in Jackson 2007). All Rwandophones, including the Banyamulenge thus were virtually excluded from citizenship for nearly two decades(Jackson 2007). Only in 2004, a new provisional law on ethnicity was being formed. After extensive discussion, the law was accepted including the much debated article 6: " person belonging to ethnic groups or nationalities whose people and territory

constituted that which became the Congo (presently the Democratic Republic of Congo) at independence, are Congolese by origin" (Lumbumbashi 2005, 5 in Jackson 2007).

This law seems to solve the nationality question regarding the Banyamulenge. This is however not true: two problems remain regarding the law in practice. First, the implementation can be troublesome, while the recognition of Banyamulenge as Congolese lies with local representatives of the state, which are in the Kivu's often chiefs. These non-Rwandophone chiefs can disregard citizenship on the basis of the old 1995 law which is still deemed true in the eyes of many, or citizenship can be denied as payback for the privileged position the Banyamulenge enjoyed during the first decade of the Mobutu regime. Second, the new law does not resolve the customary, ethnic citizenship debate. Still denied their own chiefs and chiefdoms, the Banyamulenge have no customary claim to land. This was one of the problems in the 1992/93 interethnic war in the Kivu's as well as the first Congo war (Jackson 2007).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has given an oversight of the historical development of the Democratic Republic of Congo and has shown how the eroding of the central state can be related to the extractive policies of the Belgian colonial power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Next to this, an in-depth analysis of the political situation of the Banyamulenge in the eastern North and South Kivu has been given. The Banyamulenge are originally mainly Tutsi pastoralists which settled in the Congo territory. Over time, increasing flows of Rwandaphones to the region led to a strategy of the Banyamulenge to become more ethnicized as Congolese. In the post-colonial period the legal position of the Rwandophone people stayed uncertain and changed at whims of politicians. This led to minor conflicts sometimes in the regions North and South Kivu. In the 1990s however, the Banyamulenge became, sometimes against their wishes, incorporated in the First Congo war waged by Rwanda which used the uncertain legal position of among others the Banyamulenge as an excuse to wage war against the Congo State. Ethnic affiliation was forced upon the Banyamulenge, which from the 1970s actively tried to lose this connection with the Rwandan state. The causes of the first and second Congo war are diverse: they are a combination of ethnic tensions, foreign interest and dominion over natural resources. Ethnic affiliation and the uncertain position of the Rwandophone people were used as an excuse to infringe the sovereignty of Congo. The peace agreement of 2003 formally ended the war, but not the ethnic tensions and subordinate position of the Rwandaphones in the Congo, especially that of the Banyamulenge. They often encounter more opposition than Hutu Rwandaphones, while they are identified as Tutsi. Tutsi are perceived as the ethnic group behind the first and second war, which devastated the region. Moreover, during the Mobutu regime, the Tutsi enjoyed a privileged position in which they dominated the majority of the population in the Kivu's.

In conclusion, the ethnic position of the Banyamulenge is complicated. They are perceived as well as by other Congolese ethnic groups as by the Rwandan state as ethnically Rwandan Tutsi. They however tried to distance themselves of Rwanda over time. Only when their position became too precarious, the Banyamulenge became politically active in rebel groups. This however has not had the desirable outcome. Instead of incorporating in the Rwandan state and law, the Banyamulenge have been repeatedly excluded from citizenship. Only in 2004 citizenship was granted to the Banyamulenge, but the implementation of this is

dependent on local chiefs, often members of other ethnic groups which have resentment against the Banyamulenge as a group.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this thesis, I have tried to find a comprehensive answer to the main research question: how is ethnicity framed and used in violent conflicts in the Great Lakes region and specifically the Democratic Republic of Congo? In order to answer this question three sub-questions are analysed in three complementary chapters. In these chapters the three theoretical concepts violence, ethnicity and framing have been used together in analysing the historical construction of ethnicity, ethnic violence in the Great Lakes region and in the case study concerning ethnic violence in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, North and South Kivu. An important element in this thesis has been the use of a regional approach towards ethnic violence. This enabled to look at the Great Lakes region in unison, instead of on a country level. Moreover, the regional focus has been useful in determining and describing the influences of conflicts within one country on the others. It enabled a more comprehensive and inclusive view on the sometime perceives isolated conflicts.

Ethnicity and violence reinforce each other and can create recurrent cycles of violence. A violent conflict with an ethnic component becomes part of the collective history of an ethnic group. Through framing strategies, such collective history can be so to speak 'reactivated': it becomes relevant again in a the context of new tensions. Framing is thus essential in an ethnic conflict to establish a consensus frame or an action frame. In the Great Lakes region, ethnicity proved to be a concept with a lot of connotations, history and myths. In pre-colonial Rwanda, social stratification and power differences were divided along socio-economic lines. With the introduction of colonial rule, these socio-economic categories were gradually transformed in rigid ethnic categories. This took place mainly through framing in the form of superiority myths such as the Hamitic hypothesis, linked to the indigenous myth of the onset of the identities of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Tutsi was deemed superior. Around the time of independence in Rwanda, exactly this was reframed to justify majority rule by the Hutu's. Framing is thus dependent on the goals political entrepreneurs pursue: the same historical facts and myths can be used to pursue two goals that are diametrical opposite from each other.

In the Great Lakes, frames which displayed the disadvantageous position of a certain ethnic group were sometimes used to set the tone for ethnic violence. This is in this thesis shown in the elaborate examples on the construction of ethnicity in Rwanda and the 1994 genocide. Despite the fact that is only concerns one country, the regional approach towards ethnic violence allowed to take the situation and event in Burundi such as the 1972 mass killings and the recurrent refugee streams of mostly Hutu's into account. The recurrent violent episodes in the Great Lakes between ethnic groups and mostly between Hutu and Tutsi influenced the establishment of distinct ethnic boundaries between the two groups. It fed the agendas of political entrepreneurs in establishing inherent violent antagonistic frames of the other. Moreover, the 1994 genocide directly influenced the emergence of the first Congo war which was centred in North and South Kivu. It is vital to take the 1994 genocide into account when discussing ethnic tensions the east of Congo, while the region borders as well

Rwanda, as Burundi and Uganda. In the ethnic conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi the borderland with the Congo has frequently seen streams of refugees from these conflict, but also scattered defeated army troops, rebels and deposed governments. From here, raids and insurgents were initiated into the home country of for example the Interahamwe militias into Rwanda. As a consequence, this region has witnessed invasions from the neighbouring countries.

The case study on the Kivu's in the fifth chapter of this thesis concerned the Banyamulenge, a group originally originating from Rwanda before the establishment of the colonial borders in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After independence of the Congo in 1960, the Banyamulenge have been subject to continuous discrimination and exclusion based on being ethnic Tutsi. Despite the fact that the Banyamulenge changed their name from Banyarwanda (people from Rwanda) to Banyamulenge (people from Mulenge) they were perceived by the other indigenous Congolese tribes and groups as alien. The influx of more Rwandaphones in 1962 after Rwandan independence and in 1994 after the genocide only exacerbated this discrimination, combined with resentment on the short period of time during the Mobutu regime when the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge occupied a privileged economic and political position in the Kivu's. A striking fact in the case of the Banyamulenge which regard to violence is that they did not initiate this. The first Congo war for example Rwanda justified their infringement of Congolese sovereignty on the fact that they had to protect their fellow Tutsi. Rwanda army forces approached the Banyamulenge combined with the Interahamwe who raided Rwandan territory. The second Congo war had even less to do with concern for the Banyamulenge in Rwanda, but more with preserving economic interests the country had in the form of natural resources which Rwanda extracted since the decline of central state power in the 1990.

The answer to the main research question of this thesis is thus twofold. First, the framing of ethnicity in the Great Lakes region is strongly built upon history. Power differences between ethnic groups were used to justify the implementation of violent frames. These frames were based on a combination of historical facts, prejudices and institutionalized myths of origin and superiority. In the 1994 genocide Tutsi's were perceived as an alien, intrusive ethnic group which wanted to restore colonial structures which would disadvantage Hutu's. The effective use of framing methods such as the 'risk and danger' frame and the 'powerful and wicked' frame created a situation in which violence was perceived as a legitimate strategy for self-preservation. Secondly, in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo ethnicity played an important role in access to land and citizenship. The Banyamulenge exemplify these struggles concerning ethnic citizenship and discrimination. Moreover, violence was ever present in the provinces as a consequence of decreasing state power during the last years of the Mobutu regime. In the years leading up to the first and second Congo war, ethnic framing and violence hindered peaceful coexistence between the Banyamulenge and other Congolese ethnic groups. The Banyamulenge were named in one breath with other Rwandaphone groups who often migrated in later periods of time. So, the construction and production of ethnic violence in the Kivu's had some internal causes such as tensions over land rights, but was mainly due to external causes such as the presence of Rwandan rebels after the 1994 genocide.

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