

## **IR Theory in Practice Case Study: The Rwandan Genocide, 1994**

### **Introduction**

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 has become one of the most widely studied examples of genocide since the end of the Second World War. It emerged in the context of the longer standing Rwandan civil war, in which the Hutu-led government and the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), which largely consisted of former Tutsi refugees and expatriates, formed the dominant opposing parties. The conflict itself had begun in 1959, during the Hutu-led Rwandan Revolution. An anti-colonial struggle at heart, it sought to overthrow the Tutsi monarchy that ruled Rwandan territory since at least the 18th century, and which both of Rwanda's colonial powers in the 20th century—Germany and Belgium—had supported, themselves ruling through Tutsi monarchs. While Hutu-led acts of violence against RPF members began to increase in 1962, the year of Rwandan independence, this did not see a large-scale development until 1990, when large numbers of Tutsi refugees who had fled from Rwanda during the Hutu-led colonial revolt, returned from Uganda and other neighbouring countries, where they had occupied often high-ranking positions in the military. In 1993 the signing of the so-called 'Arusha Accords' by the two opposing parties saw a temporary period of ceasefire. However, the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana, who had been in office since a military coup in 1973, meant that the ceasefire was broken, eventually resulting in the events that we now call the Rwandan Genocide; a period of three months—from April to July 1994—during which large percentages of the Tutsi and Pygmy Batwa ethnic groups were killed, while almost two million Rwandan citizens—most of them Hutu—were displaced.

## Section 1: Realist IR theory and the Rwandan Genocide

*From reading Chapter 6 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Realist International Relations (IR) theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

### Introduction

The genocide in Rwanda and the response, or lack thereof, from the international community contains elements both supporting and challenging realist theory. The purpose of this case study is to suggest ways in which the insights you will have learned from Chapter 6 illustrate important aspects of the genocide in Rwanda from a Realist perspective. The following is certainly not an exhaustive account of the ways in which Realism might help you to think about the 1994 genocide.

This case study will focus on two points: **1) French involvement in the genocide for reasons of state interests** and **2) Failure of the US and other international powers to intervene in Rwanda**

### 1) French involvement in the genocide for reasons of state interests

#### Box 1.1: Kenneth Waltz

'Success is the ultimate test of policy and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state.'

K.N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 117

The centrality of the state, and its concomitant role as the main actor in international relations from realist perspectives, means that a realist approach to analysing states' behaviour during the Rwandan Genocide is likely to focus on notions of power. Closely tied to material gains (military and economic), power, according to realist perspectives, is the main motivation for both state and individuals' behaviour. The reason for this is twofold. First, power is conceived of in relational terms: both states and individuals compete for relative gains of power. As such, power serves, second, to enhance and/or maintain (state) security in an otherwise anarchical system. Depending on the strand of realism pursued, power thus serves either offensive or defensive state behaviour.

This approach to analyses of political behaviour can be applied to the Rwandan Genocide on two levels. On a domestic level, one might argue that the Hutu state and state leaders perpetrated the genocide in order to ensure their own strength and survival. The traditionally Tutsi-led monarchy that had been in place until 1959, had often been accompanied by state policies that ensured socio-political advantages for the Tutsi

population and equivalent disadvantages for the Hutu population. As discussed in the introduction, such divisions were later exploited and encouraged by Rwanda's colonial powers—Germany and Belgium— where particularly the Belgian introduction of identity cards that marked a hierarchized ethnic status, was later used for an accelerated identification process in the Rwandan Genocide.

Similarly, the French complicity in, and failure to prevent, the genocide can be attributed to France's belief that its interests as a state in the international system were best satisfied by not preventing, and even being complicit in, the genocide.

In 1990 the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) entered Rwanda from neighbouring states in order to try and force a return for the Tutsis and moderate Hutu who had been forced from the country in preceding years. Sometimes referred to as an 'invasion', it was predominantly French troops that prevented RPF forces from entering Kigaly, as French and Tanzanian military intelligence reports reveal. Following documents from the Mitterrand archive, this French policy was largely motivated by interests of state power and survival. The aim of the French government was to avoid a military victory by the RPF because they were considered to be part of an 'Anglo-phone plot' to create an English speaking Tutsi-land in conjunction with the President of Uganda. The Hutus, on the other hand, were considered 'Franco-phone' by France. The French apparently feared that if Rwanda was 'lost' to such an Anglo-phone coalition then French influence and credibility in Africa would be forever ruined. During the three years of civil war which followed, the Hutu regime in Kigali was thus financially and militarily aided by the French Mitterrand government, which helped to ensure the survival of Hutu power in Kigali. French forces officially remained in the country until 1993 following the instalment of UN peacekeeping troops as a result of the Arusha Accords. An attempt was made to establish a power-sharing democracy with a Tutsi minority involved. Investigative journalist Linda Melvern has shown, however, that not all French troops left Rwanda in 1993, where those remaining to assist the Hutu regime raise important questions about the extent of French involvement in the genocide in a more direct manner (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/10/rwanda-at-last-we-know-truth>).

The full extent of French complicity in the genocide is not, and perhaps will never be, known. The French newspaper *Le Figaro* published articles claiming that President Mitterrand supported the Hutu militias (with knowledge of the ongoing genocide) because he feared an extension of US influence in the region in the form of the Tutsi RPF. This is supported by Gerard Prunier, who has argued that France's fears about the extension of Anglo-phone influence in Africa stem from the 1898 French defeat at the hands of the British in the Sudan. 'Fashoda syndrome' as Gerard Prunier has called it, we might see the French involvement in the Rwandan Genocide from a defensive realist perspective, as motivated by a drive for the maintenance of power in the region, and thus an assurance of its own security as a global player.

**Box 1.2: Investigative reporting on France's role**

'French soldiers who arrived in Rwanda believing that they had come to protect victims soon realized that they were, in fact, protecting killers, and several communicated their disgust to French journalists.'

Stephen Kinzer, journalist, 'A devastating report on France's role', story in the *New York Times*, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/15/opinion/15iht-edkinzer.1.15328850.html>

## 2) Failure of the US and other international powers to intervene in Rwanda

### Box 1.3: Failure of the US to intervene in Rwanda

'We come here today partly in recognition of the fact that we in the United States and the world community did not do as much as we could have and should have done to try to limit what occurred.'

President Clinton, March 1998. Quoted in Samantha Power, 'Bystanders to Genocide', *The Atlantic* (September 2001), available at:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/09/bystanders-to-genocide/304571>

President Clinton uttered this statement at Kigali airport, March 1998, acknowledging the numerous opportunities they had passed up to intervene and prevent the genocide in Rwanda. Many people have asked the question: why?

### Discussion question

What are your own views on Clinton's acknowledgement?

To watch the full speech online visit: <http://c-spanvideo.org/program/Genoc> or (edited version): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_6CFNwJ9ww](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_6CFNwJ9ww)

The realist conception of global politics can be used to explain the failure of the USA to intervene in Rwanda to halt the genocide. In April 1994, President Clinton was in the White House. His administration contained many liberal interventionists who consistently extolled the importance of protecting human rights and Clinton himself was widely regarded as a humanitarian president: 'The Clinton Administration had taken office better disposed toward peacekeeping than any other Administration in U.S. history' (Power, 2001).

Despite this, and despite favouring a pro-active international community, the US government not only failed to prevent the massacre in Rwanda. Even as evidence of the killings emerged, they refused to use available technology to block the Radio Rwanda broadcasts which were co-ordinating and encouraging the attacks and tried to prevent an extended US mission to the region (Power, 2001). When General Romeo Dallaire, the leader of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), alerted Kofi Annan that he was poised to raid Hutu arms caches because he had been reliably informed of their genocidal intentions, he was prevented from doing so. Dallaire was told that the US, one of the veto members of the UN Security Council, would not support aggressive peacekeeping. As Power argues, it was specific US policy to stay out of Rwanda. Only in July of 1994, once hundreds of thousands of Tutsis had already been killed, did the UN Security Council reverse its former position in establishing UNAMIR II, while President Clinton sent 200 troops to the region to support the UN peacekeepers, mostly Belgian, stationed in the country.

### Box 1.4: John Mearsheimer

[S]tates talk a good game when it comes to values, but they actually behave in a very realpolitik, or rather cold and calculating manner when the money is on the table.'

John J. Mearsheimer, 'A Conversation with History', interview with Harry Kreisler of the Institution for International Studies, UC Berkeley (Regents of the University of California, 2002), available at: <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people2/Mearsheimer/mearsheimer-con7.html>

While Clinton's speech from 1998 claims that his administration lacked knowledge and appreciation over the scale of the 1994 Rwandan massacres, documents retrieved by the National Security Archive, an independent non-governmental research institute based in Washington DC, have suggested otherwise. Instead, it is speculated that the lack in material interests that Rwanda could offer the US (minerals, geo-political strategic value), together with a fear of a repeated intervention fiasco that the US had faced in Somalia between 1992 and 1995, meant that the Clinton administration diminished its own knowledge, and public representations of the Rwandan Genocide, and explains reluctant US intervention despite prior knowledge (Carroll, 2004). This is supported by John Mearsheimer, a realist scholar, who points to the Realpolitik stance that the US adopted in the case of Rwanda and, which history seems to confirm, has consistently underlined US foreign policy. Events in Rwanda certainly seem to suggest that ideas such as 'national interest' and 'influence' are far more powerful in determining US foreign policy than are those of 'international ethics' and/or 'human rights'.

## Section 2: Liberalist IR Theory and the Rwandan Genocide

*From reading Chapter 7 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Liberal International Relations theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

This case study will focus on two points: **1) Failure of the UN peacekeeping troops** and **2) Failed diplomacy: The Arusha Accords**

### Introduction

Surrounding the Rwandan genocide were two fundamentally liberal institutionalist ideas: the role of the United Nations, and attempts at diplomatic reconciliation in the form of the Arusha Accords. Peacekeeping troops sent by the UN failed to prevent the massacre of Tutsis and in its role as international arbiter, the UN failed to bring the situation in Rwanda to the attention of the international community. The UN remains dogged by controversy and accusations of being an inept, ineffective bureaucracy. The Arusha Accords, meanwhile, were unable to bind the two political groups in Rwanda to a lasting peace settlement; indeed they played a significant part in facilitating the genocide, particularly in relation to leaked discussions on the difficulty of reaching a military power-sharing agreement between the signing parties (Willard, 2014). This case study will focus on these two points to help you consider the genocide in Rwanda through the liberal lens. It is by no means an exhaustive survey but should help to further your understanding of how liberalism works in practice and whether you consider it a convincing theory of international relations.

### 1) Failure of the UN peacekeeping troops

#### Box 2.1: Charter of the United Nations

'To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.'

UN Charter, Article 1, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>

As this passage of Article 1 of the UN Charter shows, the UN is probably the ultimate example of a 'liberal' institution in terms of global politics. It was established to facilitate co-operation between international governments and plays a key role in 'humanitarian' affairs. If there is one institution whose remit is primarily based around human rights and upholding the rule of law, i.e. around liberal values, it is the UN. Yet in reality the UN is only as powerful as its member states allow. The failure of the UN to prevent the Rwandan genocide or to play a more fundamental role in alerting the world to the tragedy unfolding

is one of the most significant failures of the UN itself, and of the 'liberal' cause in global politics.

The UN produced a full report in relation to their role in Rwanda, which you can read here: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/1999/1257](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1999/1257)

Romeo Dallaire, the commander of UNAMIR, was famously ill-prepared by the UN for his mission, knowing little of the intricacies of the country and its history. Dallaire requested 5,000 troops in order to prevent the genocide but was denied. Instead just 2,500 troops, predominantly Belgian, were sent. Most were ill-equipped and poorly trained. It is here that the UN's dependence on member states is particularly precarious: troops have to be sent from a member country and the US, UK, and other major military powers were unwilling to become involved in rendering the UN virtually powerless to increase troop deployment. Madeleine Albright who was US ambassador to the UN at the time described it thus:

**Box 2.2: The UN mission**

'The global nine-one-one was always either busy or nobody was there.'

Power, 2001

This statement highlights the intended role of the UN as well as the difficulties with making global governance work in practice.

The liberal ideal of a co-operative international community seems consistently challenged by events in Rwanda in 1994. Various governments sent troops into the country but with the limited remit of retrieving national citizens and removing them from Rwanda.

The Hutu extremists were well aware of the precarious situation of foreign troops placed in harm's way. The *Interwehamwe*, a paramilitary organization, originally formed as the youth wing of the MRND ruling party sought to exploit this situation. During the genocide they deliberately targeted Belgian peacekeeping troops in the hope that this would precipitate a withdrawal of the UN. When ten Belgian troops were killed this is indeed what happened and the UN troops were reduced from 2,500 to just 200.

**Box 2.3: Kofi Annan on the UN mission**

'There was a United Nations force in the country at the time, but it was neither mandated nor equipped for the kind of forceful action which would have been needed to prevent or halt the genocide. On behalf of the United Nations, I acknowledge this failure and express my deep remorse.'

Kofi Annan in a statement following the findings of the UN internal report into Rwanda

**2) Failed diplomacy: The Arusha Accords**

Perhaps the fundamental difference between the liberal and the realist schools of thought (in all their various guises) is that liberals highlight and predict co-operation whereas

realists highlight and predict state behaviour to be predicated on self-interest, whether this is uttered in peace or conflict.

Before the genocide began in 1994, a civil war in Rwanda had claimed more than 100,000 lives. Thousands of Tutsis, who had been marginalized and discriminated against by the Hutus for decades, were in exile in neighbouring African states. The Arusha Accords were intended to put a stop to this civil war. Moreover, they were intended to broker a power-sharing agreement between the Hutus and the Tutsis and reintegrate the Tutsis, who had been exiled, into Rwandan society. These diplomatic negotiations, it was hoped, would create a functioning democracy and peaceful society in Rwanda. Again, the UN was to play a key role by providing peacekeeping troops to patrol the cease-fire and to help with demobilization and demilitarization.

Instead, these attempts at co-existence and power-sharing were explicitly rejected by the Hutu extremists who terrorized and detained up to 9,000 Tutsis, and moderate Hutus who had supported the peace process. Just a few months later, the genocide began.

Not only did the diplomacy fail to implement and maintain peace; many Tutsis formerly exiled now returned to Rwanda, only months before the outbreak of the genocide. Those who had supported the Arusha Accords were the first who came under attack from Hutu power. This failure was solidified when Commander Dallaire was unable to get the number of troops he requested. As Samantha Power argues, the Arusha Accords also served to mask the facts on the ground (Power, 2001). Most international diplomats and politicians became completely focused on the Arusha agreement and its implementation to the point that they failed to see, and to look at, what was going on.

**Discussion question**

Does this spectacular failure of international diplomacy make liberal theories of global politics seem less convincing to you?

### Section 3: Social constructivism and the Rwandan Genocide, 1994

*From reading Chapter 9 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Social Constructivist International Relations theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

#### Introduction

Although perceived as less dominant than Liberal and Realist theories, Social Constructivism is increasingly considered a major theoretical perspective in International Relations. Whether or not one considers them binding, the power of 'norms' and the importance of socially constructed identities are topics of great significance.

This case study will focus on two points: **1) The importance and power of the word 'genocide'** and **2) The social construction of a Rwandan identity that was used to encourage killing during the genocide.** This is a brief analysis of the Rwandan genocide through the social constructivist lens, but it should give you a good idea of the elements of global politics highlighted by social constructivism and help you assess how convincing you find social constructivism as a theory of IR.

#### 1) 'Genocide': The power of a label

When we consider the US response to the genocide, the state-centric realist approach can seem very persuasive. However, one element to the US response is highlighted when we use the lens of social constructivist theory that challenges many of the realist assumptions. One of the most poignant interventions to emerge in this sense is Alexander Wendt's 1992 article 'Anarchy is what states make of it' (Wendt, 1992). Against the notion of states as fixed entities—the black box theory often posited by (structural) realists—Wendt argues that the (international) self-help system that states act within and sometimes against is a construction in their making, where state behaviour is largely contingent on its (self-) identification, a definition that is continuously in flux. Rather than a universalist input-output approach to analyses of state behaviour and international norms, Wendt argues that the perception and construction of identity yields varying approaches to international political issues by the different actors. This approach is relevant to an analysis of the Rwandan genocide on two fronts. First, in relation to the (development of) international norms (including international laws of war-crimes and genocide). Second, in relation to the representation and articulation of the identities of its various actors.

In 1951, following the end of the Second World War and the atrocities that it brought with it, the international community adopted a new international norm, by implementing the 1948 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' (see weblinks below), which prohibits any engagement in, or plotting to commit acts of genocide against any particular group(s). Declaring that those found guilty of any such acts are to be penalized either by sovereign state law, or, where appropriate, the International Court of Justice, the utterance of the term genocide implies involvement in the worst possible crime

against humanity and suggests an impetus for the international community to prevent and penalize it. In this sense, the term becomes what is sometimes called a speech act (see Section 6 on post-structuralism below). Defined as the utterance of language in ways that compels particular actions and/or responses, speech acts fulfil a performative function in its alluding to particular rules of conduct to which the person uttering the speech act (in our case the term 'genocide') holds its interlocutors. This compels us to ask:

**Discussion question**

Can a norm have as much power as military or economic might?

By May 1994, a report on the Rwandan genocide published by Human Rights Watch estimated that thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus had been killed (Human Rights Watch, 1994). Though the choice of language used to represent the events is somewhat questionable, particularly when considered from post/colonial perspectives (see section below), who are concerned over the continuous representation of post/colonial subjects as either 'barbaric' or the exclusive recipients of human suffering, the report is crucial in that it employs the term *genocide*, which had hitherto been avoided by other international actors, including the UN and the US, despite intelligence that the latter had received about the particular nature of the killings in Rwanda.

Indeed, many policy-makers within the US administration made it an explicit point to avoid the term 'genocide' (Jehl, 1994). On the one hand, they feared an obligation to act should they publicly employ the term 'genocide', and thus acknowledge that this phenomenon was indeed under way. As signatories of the 1948 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide', the US, alongside other powerful states, would have a legal obligation to ensure the prevention of such intended killings.

In this sense, the reluctance of the Clinton administration to use the word 'genocide' as a label for what was happening in Rwanda because it might compel them to action, lends weight to social constructivist theories.

**Box 3.1: Genocide investigation and the US**

'Genocide Investigation: Language that calls for an international investigation of human rights abuses and possible violations of the genocide convention. Be Careful. Legal at State was worried about this yesterday—Genocide finding could commit [the U.S. government] to actually "do something".'

A discussion paper on Rwanda prepared by an official in the office of the Secretary of Defence dated 1 May 1994.

On the other hand, many within the US government also clearly feared the moral implications of failing to act against the genocide. Susan Rice of the National Security Council, and later President Obama's ambassador to the UN, allegedly asked at an interagency meeting:

**Box 3.2: Normative implications of genocide investigation**

'[I]f we use the word "genocide" and are seen as doing nothing, what will be the effect on the November [congressional] election?'

Power, 2001.

Thus, while the former—the avoidance of the use of the term genocide as a means to avoid obligations to intervene—might be read along the material self-interests of international actors such as the US in line with realists perspectives as those offered above, the reluctance in relation to the latter stems largely from a moral self-interest that is concerned over the perception and legitimation of the US government as a knowledgeable actor. Similarly, the HRW report's explicit and repeated use of the term in both its title and throughout its report, as well as the graphic descriptions it offers in relation to observed atrocities, marks its articulation as an act of persuasion with the intent of imploring others to act upon the unfolding of the genocide by holding them accountable to the formulations and thus regulations of international law. In this sense, we can see that the avoidance of the/ use of the word 'genocide' as a label for what was happening in Rwanda lends weight to social constructivist theories in that its un/deployment is contingent on the self-perception of the role of the individual actors in question, and thus their particular interests.

**2) Identity construction in Rwanda**

As you will know from reading the textbook, an important part of Social Constructivist theory is the social construction of identity and how this is politicized. Constructivism understands ethnic identity as the product of social constructions, human actions and choices, and (self-)identification processes in relation to a larger social group. For the ways in which this occurs on a national/nation-state level, the most influential writer in International Relations in this regard is arguably Benedict Anderson and his book *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 2006). Premised on the constructivist notions of norm-emergence, cascade, and internalization, Anderson argues that nations are imagined entities, created among its members through the *articulation, representation, and practice* of a sense of belonging to this particular community. More than a mere process of self-identification, however, such theoretical underpinnings are crucial also for how representation functions to establish certain narratives about another (ethnic) social group. On the question of representation and social constructions of 'others', particularly post/colonial authors have made great advances, where Homi Bhabha (2004), Frantz Fanon (1967), Stuart Hall, Achilles Mbembe (2001), Edward Said (1993), and Sylvia Wynter belong to the most prominent.

There are clear examples of the construction of identity for political ends during the genocide in Rwanda. But how is identity constructed in practice? We return, once more, to the notion of speech acts referred to above. Here the particular representation of certain social groups becomes integral to compel others to act. Much like in other conflicts, or indeed global politics in general, the Hutus in power made use of particular representations in the social construction of both Hutu and Tutsi identities to facilitate and legitimize the genocide.

Radio as the main media outlet in Rwanda at the time, was an especially powerful force for spreading information and thus encouraging particular representations about the two 'opposing' ethnic groups. In 1992, Radio Rwanda repeatedly broadcast a *communiqué* spreading the message that Hutus in Bugesera would be killed, by the Tutsis, if they did not attack first. In an attempt to demonize members of the Tutsi community, media messages were consistently used by Hutu extremists in order to shape a particular image of Tutsis as a threat to Hutus and the Rwandan nation-state as a whole. Such instances as reference to Tutsis as 'cockroaches', turned the Rwandan public radio (RTML) into what has been referred to as 'hate media' that called for the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group by the general population (*The Guardian* Agencies and Staff, 2003).

**Box 3.3**

'I do not know whether God will help us exterminate [the Tutsis] ... but we must rise up to exterminate this race of bad people ... They must be exterminated because there is no other way.'

Radio Television des Milles Collines, 2 July 1994

The Rwandan genocide was not only carried out by a small elite group, but by a majority of the larger population. How and why this was so is a topic of continuous academic debate, but the social construction of identity in the media representation of Tutsis as a threat to the Rwandan nation-state at large, certainly played a key role (for a theoretical underpinning of such arguments see: Said, 1997).

## Section 4: Marxist approaches to the Rwandan Genocide, 1994

*From reading Chapter 8 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Marxist International Relations (IR) theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

### Introduction

Marxist theory is distinctly critical. Rather than working within the existing international framework Marxism challenges the entire international system and seeks change systemically. Because Marxist theories aim to undermine the mainstream view they can often seem quite controversial. However, Marxist theory is not without empirical evidence to back up these arguments, as this case study will aim to demonstrate.

This case will focus briefly on three points: **1) Economic causes of the genocide, 2) The myth of an 'international community'** and **3) The post-genocidal Rwandan economy.** Considering these three factors should give you a deeper understanding of Marxist theory and which facets of global politics it highlights.

### 1) Economic causes of the genocide

#### **Box 4.1: Looking at deeper causes of the genocide**

'Perhaps there is no better case than Rwanda of state killing in which colonial history and global economic integration combined to produce genocide.'

Robins, 2002: 269.

Integral to Marxist analyses of global politics is the notion of **Historical Materialism**. First introduced in the writings by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, it describes a methodological approach to the analysis of societies and their socio-political dynamics over time, that makes the intricate character of **base- and super structure** both focal, and the starting point for social analyses. Its primary objective is thus to examine how the modes and means of production—the ways in which societies collectively produce the necessities of life—determine social organization, dynamics, and developments within them. In other words, it posits that socio-political structures, and the ways of thinking that underlie them, are intricately connected to the dominant economic activity that marks particular societies at particular moments in time.

Marxist theory thus highlights several economic causes of, and facets to, the genocide in Rwanda, which tend to be left out of mainstream debates. In 1974 the World Bank funded a project to establish cattle ranches over 51,000 hectares of land. Rene Lamarchand, the Belgian anthropologist hired to appraise the project, warned those at the World Bank that the Hutu were using a system of patronage and spoils in order to reduce the economic prosperity of the Tutsi and to increase their political dependency on the Hutu. This system

was creating significant tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi. When Lamarchand warned members of the World Bank of this, however, he was ignored.

Economic aggravators of ethnic tensions were highlighted once again when commodity prices collapsed in the early 1990s. The Rwandan economy relied to a significant extent on the exportation of coffee. In the 1989 negotiations to extend the International Coffee Agreement, the US was under pressure from multinational coffee corporations. Consequently, it decided to pull out of setting the price of coffee at a fixed rate, opting instead to allow pricing to be determined by market forces. Coffee flooded the market and the price collapsed to its lowest level since the 1930s, further crippling the economies of coffee exporting countries such as Rwanda (Robbins, 2002: p. 271).

This devastation to the Rwandan economy resulted in widespread famine and removed a vital source of funding from the state elite who relied on tin, coffee, and foreign aid to maintain their position of power. In order to secure this foreign aid the Hutu state elite had to agree to reforms imposed upon them by international bodies. The IMF imposed a structural adjustment programme on Rwanda that devalued the Rwandan franc and created further devastation for the Rwandan people. Fuel and consumer prices increased, and an austerity programme imposed by the IMF resulted in collapse of the education and health systems. This had many knock-on effects, such as increased child malnutrition and outbreaks of malaria. This economic collapse obviously had a devastating effect on the Rwandan economic and social fabric but perhaps more pertinent to an analysis of the genocide was that the RPF used the opportunity of a precarious Hutu elite in economic crisis to invade the country (Robbins, 2002: 271–272).

The two-tracks of war and genocide ran simultaneously in Rwanda (Power, 2001) and the war to a great extent concealed the genocide, especially from the international community. Rwanda was a dependant in the international economy and dominated by wealthy powers such as the US. The Marxist position would argue that this was crucial in facilitating the genocide.

## **2) The myth of an ‘international community’**

Marxists argue that any sort of ‘international community’ is a myth used only to conceal international relations of power in terms of economic dominance and dependence. Such theories argue that it is evidence of hypocrisy that the ‘international community’ did little to prevent, and at times helped, to facilitate the genocide while at the same time professing a concern for human rights and liberal values. France is a key member of the ‘international community’ and supposedly a bastion of liberal, humanitarian values. However, as we have seen in Section 1 above, economic and state interests consistently triumphed over any concerns for those being slaughtered in Rwanda, as did those of the US.

As discussed under the realism section above, the French government were concerned to maintain their geo-political influence in Africa, especially in the face of increasing Anglo-phone influence, and so supported the Hutu regime. The economic dependency of President Juvénal Habyarimana’s administration on international aid at the time (including that of the French), meant that these countries could have used their considerable leverage in order to remove the Hutu elite and to pressure the Habyrimana regime into stopping their systematic discrimination of the Tutsi and moderate Hutus. Yet their concern

for apparent stability and for maintaining their position as global economic powers meant that these countries ignored the looming genocide in order to serve their own economic interests (International Responsibility, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, Human Rights Watch, March 1999).

Simultaneously, global arms trade played a crucial role in the exasperation of the intra-Rwandan conflict. On a domestic level, Rwandan military spending tripled between 1990 and 1992, a development that was directly linked to the obtaining of IMF loans. Several IMF and World Bank expert delegations were sent to Rwanda during this time, predominantly to praise the supposed positive features of Habyarimana's austerity policies, an integral aspect to the Bretton Woods' donor conditions. Simultaneously, however, increasing concerns over Rwandan military spending was voiced and delegators threatened to suspend credit loans unless military spending stopped increasing. The Rwandan authorities, however, manoeuvred their way around these restrictions. Lorries imported for army use were put on the transport ministry's account; a significant share of the petrol used for militia and army vehicles was put on the health ministry's account; and thanks to a flawed accounting system that allowed Rwanda to present old invoices for imported goods, the regime was able to finance massive arms purchases subsequently used in the genocide.

When the IMF finally did suspend lending at the beginning of 1993, it neglected to freeze the large sums of money held in accounts in foreign banks, and which President Habyarimana and his government used to buy arms. In this way, the Washington-based institutions were complicit in the Rwandan arms trade also on an international level. Between 1990 and 1994, Rwanda's main arms suppliers consisted of France, Belgium, South Africa, Egypt, and China. China provided 500,000 machetes; Egypt—whose joint minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for African relations was Boutros Boutros-Ghali—granted Rwanda a \$6m interest-free loan in 1991 to purchase arms for its infantry divisions; and France and the British firm Mil-Tec provided arms to the rampaging army via the Goma airport across the border in Zaire once the genocide got under way, thereby violating the 11 May 1994 UN embargo on arms sales to Rwanda.

From 1991, human-rights organizations had been reporting and condemning the massacres that paved the way to genocide. By continuing to provide financing until early 1993, the IMF and World Bank, alongside other military industries abroad, systematically helped enable the genocide that broke out following President Habyarimana's assassination (see Redpepper, 2004 in weblinks below).

### **3) The Rwandan economy post-genocide**

Even after the fall of the dictatorship in July 1994, and despite the full knowledge of what had happened among international elites, Western governments and the Washington institutions continued their destructive policies in Rwanda. A number of the genocide's key leaders were received by the French president and with the help of the French army set up the head office of the Banque Nationale du Rwanda in Goma. Until August 1994, the Banque Nationale disbursed funds to repay debts for previous arms purchases and to buy new arms. Private banks (including Belgolaise, Générale de Banque, BNP, and Dresdner

Bank) accepted payment orders from those responsible for the genocide and repaid those who had financed it.

In 1994, Rwanda's foreign debt had reached nearly \$1 billion, all amassed by the Habyarimana regime. In legal terms, this constituted 'odious debt': a financial obligation incurred by a despotic power to strengthen its own regime and repress the population. Legally this meant that the newly formed Rwandan government should have been exonerated from paying off the debt, as was the case in post-Saddam Iraq. However, the IMF and World Bank refused this claim, threatening to cut off funding if the new government persisted with this line. Instead, new loans were offered along with a promise of future debt cancellation if Rwanda kept quiet about the aid the IFIs had provided to the Habyarimana regime. Washington also demanded that the new Rwandan government limit the number of public-sector employees to just 50 per cent of the number agreed upon before the genocide. The new government complied.

The consequences of accepting this blackmail have been pernicious: continued structural adjustment with disastrous social and economic consequences, and an increase in foreign debt. Initial financial assistance provided by the US and Belgium simply went towards repaying the previous regime's debt arrears with the World Bank. Since then, Western financial aid has barely trickled into the country, despite the urgent need to rebuild its infrastructure and provide for the more than 800,000 refugees on its soil since November 1996.

Agricultural and industrial productions saw a significant decline following the years of the genocide. By complying, the Rwandan government gained 'good pupil' status in the eyes of the IMF, World Bank, and the government creditors cartel known as the Paris Club. Since August 1998 it has also become an accomplice to Anglo-American efforts to weaken neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo by taking part in the military occupation and plundering its natural resources. Yet the odious \$1 billion debt left in 1994 has increased by about 15 per cent, despite Rwanda undergoing "structural adjustment" programmes for the past 14 years. The IMF and World Bank together hold nearly nine-tenths of this foreign debt, the rest being owed bilaterally.

## Section 5: Post/colonial approaches to the Rwandan Genocide, 1994

*From reading Chapter 11 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Post-colonial International Relations (IR) theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

### Introduction

Mainstream theories such as Realism and Liberalism can seem persuasive when we take a Western-centric approach to global politics, but when focusing on issues in the Global South, and issues surrounding the interdependency between the Global South and the West, critical theories like post/colonialism are crucial to examining persistent underlying power relations at the global level. On a practical level, this strand of thought has exposed the ways in which former colonial powers continue to exert monetary, economic, political, and cultural power over their former colonies. On an intellectual level, post/colonialism has been critical of the ways in which such notions of 'development theory'—to mention but one example—remains premised on the same temporal and liberal assumptions of a 'civilizing process' that legitimized colonial rule until the 20th century. As such, post/colonial perspectives in international relations doctrines have been crucial in unveiling the link between the **formal** colonial past, and **informal** colonial present, a topic which continues to be most uncomfortable for many in the West today. To stress this ongoing questioning of the 'post' that marks the interventions of scholars' analyses of global politics in this context, I have chosen to refer, in following, to their theories as 'post/colonial' as opposed to 'post-colonial' and 'postcolonial', a terminology opted for in Chapter 11 of the textbook.

This case study will focus on two points: **1) Colonial creation of a politically significant ethnic identity** and **2) 'Informal'/continued colonialism in Western discussions of the genocide**

#### 1) Colonial creation of a politically significant ethnic identity

A colonial administration was established in Rwanda at the turn of the 20th century by Germany. Belgian colonists arrived in Rwanda in 1916. Much like the Germans before them, the Belgians considered the Tutsis to be of a superior race compared to the Hutus because of the former's alleged 'Hamitic' origin. The 'Hamitic Hypothesis' refers to a racial classification system, established by Europeans in the 16th century, which relies on earlier Biblical references to the 'curse of Ham', for its justification (Goldenberg, 2003; Braude, 2005). While later reconceptualized under the guise of 'scientific racism', the 'Hamitic' race was a label largely used until the widespread end of colonialism in the 1960s–1980s, serving to distinguish between the lighter skinned 'North Africans' and darker skinned 'Sub-Saharan Africans'. The 'Hamitic' race was a label largely applied to the former, who, as descendants of peoples such as the ancient Egyptians, it was thought, could not have achieved such significant historical contributions had they not, at least in part, been of the

Caucasian race, which was considered the most superior in (colonial) Europe. From this (though contested) conceptual genealogy to the emergence of race as a socio-political category in European thought, we can see that this distinction between 'North Africa(n)' and 'Sub-Saharan Africa(n)', reinforced through the writings of European philosophers throughout the centuries—most prominently among them G.W. Hegel in his *Philosophy of History* (see also: Little, 2017)—and still widely spread in contemporary references to the African continent in various academic and media settings, is a colonial construction of the world (both geographic and demographic) that relies on a hierarchical construction of race. Thus, while the existence of the 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' as two ethnic groups predates colonial rule, the European hierarchical racial construction highlighted here was crucial for colonial rule in Rwanda during the 19th and 20th centuries, exploiting the existence of the ethnic groups previously in place for their own political, administrative, and economic gains.

As such, it is hardly surprising that, much like in other post/colonial states in Africa, the ethnic classification imposed by the colonial administration came to decide the economic, social, and political fate of most Rwandans. The **self-perception of superiority** among the Germans and Belgians on the one hand, and the consequential demand for assimilation among Rwandans on the other, meant that those among the local population who more closely resembled the colonizer were considered superior to those of other ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> One way in which this was administered, particularly by the Belgians, was through the introduction of identity cards, which classified people according to their ethnicity.

This, in turn, facilitated **institutionalized racism** as the bedrock of colonial rule in Rwanda. Thus, Belgian decrees were issued determining that only Tutsis could become government officials, while Hutus were excluded from higher education and relegated to the labouring masses. In effect, this led to Tutsi monopoly over public life, which continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s and into later generations as well. For the next 20 years Tutsis enjoyed better jobs and educational opportunities than their neighbours. This segregation and blatant discrimination against the Hutus gradually created resentment that culminated in a series of riots in 1959. More than 20,000 Tutsis were killed and many more fled to the neighbouring countries of Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda. When Belgium relinquished power and granted Rwanda independence in 1962, the Hutus took their place. Over subsequent decades, the Tutsis were portrayed as the scapegoats for every crisis.

Thus, one's designation as Hutu or Tutsi—previously without great significance—became the defining feature of Rwandans' public identity and a crucial indicator for their socio-political and economic status under colonial rule. This example makes it clear that the ethnic divisions and tensions, which were the background for the devastation of 1994, were the explicit creation of a colonial power, decades before the onset of the genocide itself.

As the chapter on post-colonialism discusses, the influential post-colonialist writer Franz Fanon wrote of the psychological effects of colonization on 'the native'. According to this

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the psychological effects of colonization on both 'colonizer' and 'colonized' see a discussion of the writings of Frantz Fanon in Ch. 11 of the *GoWP* textbook (pp. 176–177). See also: Memmi, Albert [1965] 1991, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

view, post-colonialist discourses colonize the minds of all involved so that the colonized people internalize the diminished status imposed upon them by the colonial power which believes its own superiority and imposes this belief upon those colonized.

### Box 5.1: Colonialism and the Rwandan Genocide

'If the postcolonial pursuit of justice turned into revenge and built on the colonial legacy, one needs to be aware lest postgenocidal reconciliation also turns into an embrace of the colonial legacy.'

Mamdani, 2001: 9.

## 2) 'Informal'/continued colonialism in Western discussions of the genocide

The genocide in Rwanda precipitated a deluge of academic literature analysing and discussing how this massacre could have happened. In such literature, these mass killings are generally treated as an historical anomaly, only ever compared to the Holocaust. However, there is a dark colonial secret lurking behind both the mainstream dialogue and the academic analysis on Rwanda, which is that most of the major colonial powers were responsible for some form of genocide during the process of colonization. While a limited amount of academic literature discusses genocide in wider terms, sometimes including the treatment of Palestinians by the state of Israel and the actions of the colonizers in Africa, most mainstream discussion reserves the term 'genocide' for the Holocaust, Rwanda, and more recently events in Darfur. The author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o comments on the existing colonial hypocrisy inherent in the hierarchy of the international system:

### Box 5.2: Colonial hypocrisy

'The worst instances of genocide and wanton massacres of other people have come from Europe.'

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 2009.

### Discussion question

Some could argue that this power imbalance, created in part through intellectual discussion, is an example of **colonialism**, albeit in a different form to that of the past.

Do you agree?

**Cultural chauvinism** on the part of Western nation-states can be pointed to as recently as 2008, when a Rwandan inquiry was conducted into French complicity in the genocide. The subsequent charges brought against France breaks up the dichotomy between the supposedly 'civilized' West concerned with morality and human rights and the 'brutal' nation-states of Africa, that still largely persists in both academic and public discourses

today. Indeed, both in its historical and contemporary approach, it raises important questions about the development of liberal values in 'Enlightenment Europe'. To remain with the French example is to demonstrate that France is, on the one hand, considered the birthplace of European Enlightenment<sup>2</sup>, where it is commonplace to study the French revolution as the beginning of liberal values, individual freedom and a greater place for international ethics. On the other hand, France constituted one of the largest colonial powers of the 19th and 20th centuries. This begs the question of how the development of a formally liberal state philosophy at home—underlined by the doctrines of 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité' ('Liberty, Equality, Fraternity')—coincides with colonial rule and genocidal conducts abroad?

In many ways, this question is at the heart of different post/colonial approaches to modern history, and post/colonial analyses of the inherent contradiction of European liberalism that underpins it, have offered various interpretations. One might be to reconsider the predominant legitimizing narrative of European colonial rule offered within Europe at the time: colonialism as a 'civilizing mission'. Sometimes this was referred to also as the 'white man's burden', the claim being that colonial subjects would not be capable of liberating themselves from their 'savage' and 'brutish' state. In other words, a kind of false humanity and/or generosity, indeed premised on liberal notions of universal human rights, was used to legitimize foreign rule. The fact that doing so at any cost and consequence led colonial powers to conduct an array of human atrocities that fit seemingly uncomfortable with much of the liberal values in whose name they were conducted was a marginalized afterthought.

Another approach has been to analyse the 'discovery' of the 'New World', the onset of capitalism, the beginning of the slave trade and with it the onset of colonial rule as co-incident events, which are both contingent on, and necessary for each other's development. Thus viewed, it is often the economic demands that the establishment of empire, and later state, building in Europe makes—by no means incompatible with notions of republicanism and capitalism—that is emphasized as an explanation for the seeming contradiction in the development of liberalism in Europe on the one hand and its brutal and illiberal conduct within its colonies abroad (see also Section 4 above). While set, of course, in a different temporal and political context, it might be argued that contemporary French involvement can be relegated to similar premises. We have seen in Section 1 that France's desire to maintain political and economic power in the surrounding region, as well

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<sup>2</sup> I want to stress 'European' here, because the notion that Enlightenment values of Republicanism, civil and human rights alongside civil and human liberties developed first (in a chronological sense), or primarily (most significantly) in Europe has widely been contested. Indeed, the persistent (re)presentation of Europe as the 'inventor' of this strand of thought is a misconception that is itself embedded in a colonial and racist structuring of academic disciplines and underpins a narrative that liberal values must be exported, a narrative that persists to this day, not least in discussions on, and justifications for, international humanitarian aid and the industry it constitutes. At least two other geographic places saw previous and/or parallel developments with parallel underpinning values:

1. Palmares (1605–1694), founded in Brazil and populated predominantly by fugitive slaves and other persecuted ethnic groups. As such, it is known, among other things, as presenting one of the earliest forms of a 'multicultural' society. (see esp. Grovogui, Siba N., 2016; Anderson, 1996).

2. Haiti during the Haitian Revolution, also sometimes considered to be the only example of a successful Marxist revolution (see: James, 1938; Trouillot, 1995).

as on the African continent generally, was a crucial motivating factor for its engagement in the genocide. While the purpose should not be to conflate different historical and political contexts, we might think of this dynamic as one that falls within a contemporary reimagining of empire building and thus points to the contradiction of French liberalism in relation to its contemporary international politics.

Both approaches have led to invaluable post/colonial interventions in asking 'Who counts as human?' for the political and ethical purposes of granting such beings rights and liberties. At heart a critique of universalism as understood from a Euro-liberal perspective, it signifies that liberalism too, has historically failed to overcome a classificatory system which establishes that only certain bodies are (epidermally) recognized as deserving of such rights and liberties.

## 6) Feminism and the Rwandan Genocide

*From reading Chapter 12 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Feminist International Relations (IR) theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

### Introduction

Feminist Theories of International Relations have long argued that the discipline as it currently stands fails to account for the multiple and complex experiences of those who live international relations on a daily basis. Failure to do so derives mainly from the predicating of the discipline on particular underlying assumptions about the nature of the world, who the actors in this world are, and how they forge relations among each other. The prevalence of the state as the main actor in much international relations theory and international law, for example, has largely excluded the private sphere from theoretical considerations.

Yet questions about who the wives of diplomats are, who the person is that planted and/or packaged the coffee the US president drank that morning before his meeting with the diplomat, and whether s/he got into an argument with the house maid over the arrangement of his shirts the night before has potentially significant impact on the decision-making over state affairs. At stake is more than an account of the psychology of certain state leaders and their representatives. At stake in this truly relational representation of the world, that which connects the US president to the wife of the diplomat, the person picking and planting the coffee and the house maid, as well as their individual struggles and joys, is the unveiling of the continuous working of seemingly indefinite (power) relations at play in the structuring of the world we live in. It exposes the state system as one that, despite its privileged position within the IR discipline, is dependent on a number of other social systems and their various actors—whether accounted for by the state or the IR discipline, or not—for its existence and maintenance.

In this sense, one of the most revolutionary interventions that feminist theory has brought to the IR discipline is its claim that 'the personal is political' as much as 'the political is personal', and similarly that 'the personal is international' as much as the 'international is personal'. In doing so feminist theory exposes the conceptual limits of the discipline as it is currently defined and brings about new and alternative categories through which to analyse global politics, including the singular archetypal rational and autonomous hu/man that is taken to be the political subject. Analysing this in relation to the Rwandan genocide, this section will focus on **1) Gender and nation-state building;** and **2) Tutsi women as the 'subaltern': Theories of intersectionality**

## 1) Gender and nation-state building

If we employ the notion that nations are indeed constructed identities, as Benedict Anderson (see Section 3) suggests, then it is hardly surprising that gender plays a significant and distinct role as a political and politicized category in the creation, construction, and emergence of nation-states. This predominantly occurs on two levels. First, gender is deployed as a metaphor to describe the state and its body politic. Embedded in (Euro-centric) notions of the nuclear family, the state—the ‘public’—is often referred to as the patriarch, who rules over his children—its citizens. Derivative of the monarchical structure that prevailed in Feudal Europe, we continue to find such analogies throughout the centuries in references to the ‘body politic’; one’s ‘fatherland’, the ‘mother country’ (as the ruling country in relation to its colonies); etc.

Beyond the metaphorical, however, gender and indeed sexuality becomes significant for the notion of nation-state building and nation-state preservation on a (re)productive level. Thus, the introduction of kinship rights in relation to monarchical rule and the introduction of ethnicity as a defining element of the republican nation-state are closely tied up with the construction, definition, and administrative control of gender, sex, and sexuality (Foucault, 1998). The importance of both gender and sexuality in this regard was largely extended to European colonies during the time of European empire building, though approaches varied depending on the particular colonial contexts. While many Latin American countries saw advocating of such policies as ‘Mestizaje’ and ‘Blanqueamiento’— both of which propagated a ‘whitening’ of the local populations on both an ideological (see notions of ‘Coloniality’/‘Coloniality of Power’ by such authors as Anibal Quijano; Walter D. Mignolo; Sylvia Wynter) and biological level—racial mixing in such colonial settings as the United States was never officially facilitated through marital laws, a trend that carried through the era of slavery and beyond into US segregationist policies, officially upheld until the late 1960s.

In times of war and conflict, particularly that constituted among the ethnic and/or racialized competition for the state as a territorial and ideological entity, it is thus hardly surprising that gender and sexuality are significant factors, in which rape as a weapon of war has often entered the scene. This too was the case during the Rwandan genocide. Women were often targeted by the *genocidaires*, where broadcasts by the radio station RTLM conveying messages specifically about the potency of Tutsi women is indicative of the ways in which particular Hutus in power sought to incentivize female rape as a deliberate and specific policy in the Rwandan genocide.

## 2) Tutsi women as the ‘subaltern’: Theories of intersectionality

This serves to illustrate that Tutsi women were vulnerable in the context of the Rwandan genocide on at least two levels: their gender and/or sex; and their membership in the Tutsi ethnic group, in many instances constructed in terms of race. All of these categories—gender/sex and race/ethnicity—thus posed a simultaneous threat to the livelihood of Tutsi women, a phenomenon which is perhaps best explained by Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory on Intersectionality, a term she coined through her 1989 article ‘Demarginalizing the

Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics’.

Premised on her experience as a lawyer, Crenshaw argues that the ‘unidirectionality’ with which discrimination against women of colour is evaluated in US courts fails to recognize the particularity of their experiences at the intersection of both racial and gender discrimination. The comparison with white women thus falls short as much as the comparison to black men. Yet both categories are persistently used in the statistical analysis of representations of women of colour in relation to discriminatory politics in the public realm. And while, as Crenshaw argues, the discrimination faced by Black women is indeed sometimes analogous to those experienced by White women or those experienced by Black men, the particularity of Black women’s position as often located at the intersection of the two cannot be grasped by analogous references to these two discriminatory categories, which, in the experience of intersectionality, constitute more than the mere sum of their two parts. As Crenshaw writes:

**BOX 6.1: Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality**

‘The point is that Black women can experience discrimination in any number of ways and that the [supposed] contradiction arises from our assumptions that their claims of exclusion must be unidirectional. Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination [or discrimination that derives from notions of sexuality, class, etc.]’

Crenshaw, 1989: 149.

This notion of ‘intersectionality’ has proliferated in recent years, and has widely been taken up by post/colonial feminist scholars, such as Giyatri Spivak. For Spivak, like many post/colonial scholars, the subjugation of women (around the world but especially in the Global South) mirrors, and is partially a product of, overlapping hierarchies and relations of power, inherent in the global system. This too lies at the heart of her own theorization on the ‘subaltern’, a category that is often used to refer to those situated outside of, and therefore unrecognized by, the dominant political, economic, and social structures—a point of analysis that leads her to ask ‘Can The Subaltern Speak?’. In relation to the Rwandan genocide we might ask this question by analysing whether rape as a weapon of warfare was recognized as such both by local and international actors; what significance it carried for international deliberation on the genocide and potential intervention; and how it functioned in its representations of Tutsi women, the larger Tutsi ethnic group, and the conflict as a whole both in the wake of the conflict and in its aftermath.

Sabine Hirschauer's book on *The Securitization of Rape* (Hirschauer, 2014) is particularly insightful in this regard. Arguing that (UN) Security Council Resolutions 808 and 955—establishing the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia and of Rwanda, respectively—were the first instances in which wartime rape was internationally recognized as acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide, we might read this as indication that the violence that Tutsi women endured during the Rwandan genocide was recognized as a weapon of war by both local and international actors, even if belatedly. On the other hand, this impression might be complicated by the fact that this first international recognition of rape as a weapon of war emerged as such in the context of punitive measures taken against two non-hegemonic powers, one of which is located in the 'Global South'. The intent here is not to argue that wartime rape should not be prosecuted, but rather to question in relation to which powers and in which political context it is prosecuted. The fact that the use of wartime rape by other powers prior to the Yugoslav wars and the Rwandan genocide remained unmentioned in international war tribunals suggests that we are, once again, met with intersectionality in our analysis. Whether or not 'the subaltern' was heard thus remains a question with an ambiguous answer at best.

## Section 7: Post structuralism and the Rwandan Genocide, 1994

*From reading Chapter 10 of The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.), you should now be familiar with the basic tenets of Poststructuralist International Relations theory. You are advised to consult this key chapter if you haven't done so already as its contents will not be repeated here.*

*Bracketed chapter references, for example (see Ch. 2), refer to the relevant chapter in The Globalization of World Politics (7th edn.).*

### Introduction

Post-structuralism is arguably the most critical of all the theories in that it seeks to question and analyse the very assumptions upon which all the other theories are based. Post structuralism challenges not so much *what* you look at in global politics but *the way* in which you do so. Poststructuralism is probably best considered alongside the more mainstream theories rather than distinct from them.

Note: If you aren't familiar with the philosophical terms in this chapter, the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html> is an invaluable resource.

### 1) 'Genocide' and securitization theory: The power of a label

In the section on Social Constructivism, the power of the word 'genocide' was discussed and this would also be of great significance to poststructuralists. As you will know from reading the textbook, **discourse** is key to poststructuralist theory. In the case of the Rwandan genocide this goes to the root of language whose ability to create meaning, identity, knowledge, and consequently collectively accepted truth claims, lies at the heart of power: what is sometimes referred to as the 'truth/knowledge/power' nexus.

**Michel Foucault's** emphasis on the importance of harnessing and framing language used in global politics in order to have the **power** to persuade others that 'your' language is the 'natural' one, is particularly important in this sense. But how do poststructuralists understand power and how does this influence both the acknowledgement of 'genocide' and the consequences for doing so?

Poststructuralists' understandings of power diverge from that of other theories of power (primarily realist) in that they do not primarily think of power in material terms but rather in discursive ones (Rabinow, 1984: various chapters). Two important aspects follow from here. First, power thus conceived is not something that is held (possessed or had) by individual actors, but rather something that emerges in articulation. As such, it emerges from, and is embedded in all social relations, where power is granted to actors by others in the process. Underlining its transactional nature, this highlights power as both a constrictive *and* productive phenomenon, where power is never temporally, spatially, or indeed materially, fixed, but rather emerges both in, and out of social encounters. As such, it is permanently in flux.

The fundamental emphasis on social relations in this understanding of power means, second, that communication and language become indispensable. More than mere language, however, power is situated and emerges from the particular reference to certain discourses, which refers to the ways in which certain narratives emerge as socially accepted truth claims and establish themselves as 'knowledge'. Thus, establishing the truth/knowledge/power nexus referred to above, poststructuralist analyses of global politics are interested in the (effects of) deploying certain speech acts—the reference to certain narratives—in order to achieve one's goal through the representation of, and adherence to particular truth claims.

The significance of such analyses becomes particularly important in relation to the Rwandan genocide when we turn our attention to analyses of the conflict as those offered through the perspective of securitization theory. Fundamentally concerned with the ways in which international actors deploy speech acts to move from a stage of 'politics'—that sphere of negotiation and deliberation—to one of 'security'—that sphere in which the demand of immediate and urgent action prevails—securitization theory largely proceeds in three or four steps: 1) the articulation of an existential threat to a referent object, by certain securitization actors; 2) the acceptance of this threat by a credible audience; 3) the deployment of extraordinary measures to address this threat; 4) the de-securitization or returning of an issue from its emergency state back into a political or non-political agenda-setting.

The theory can indeed be outlined in reference to the Rwandan genocide in two contrasting ways. First it is apparent that the reluctance by both the US government and the UN Security Council to refer to the Rwandan 'conflict' as 'genocide', deriving from the Greek word *'genos'* (family, tribe, race) and the Latin word *-cides* (to kill), in its initial phase overlaps with the two powers' reluctance to intervene in Rwanda militarily. As State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelley proclaimed on 28 April, when asked if what is playing out in Rwanda is an act of genocide: '... the use of the term "genocide" has a very precise legal meaning ...' with which there arguably come international legal and moral responsibilities, which both the US and by extension the UN were reluctant to have to act upon. We can see then how those who were trying to have the US and the international community acknowledge and use the word 'genocide' in relation to the Rwandan conflict ultimately failed in their attempts at securitization in that the deployment of their attempted speech-act—the use of the word 'genocide' and the concomitant legal discourse it implies—was not met by a credible or authoritative audience, with the possibility to deploy extraordinary measures.

In a second instance, however, we can see how the (re)actions by the international institutions and actors profoundly changed once a description of the conflict in legal terms of 'genocide' appears in UNSC 918, adopted on 17 May 1994. Despite the word 'genocide' itself never appearing in the text, reference to 'the killing of members of an ethnic group with the intention of destroying such a group, in whole or in part, constitutes a crime punishable under international law' can arguably be identified as 1) the identification of an existential threat to a referent object, the Tutsi ethnic group; in relation to 2) a credible audience (which is to say an authoritative audience)—the UN Security Council members—who, despite mentioned difficulties, initiated 3) the deployment of extraordinary measures to address this threat, by issuing the deployment of 5,500 further troops to Rwanda to contain the genocide, under UNSC Resolution 918. The formal withdrawal of

UN troops from Rwanda in 1993 can be seen as a phase of de-securitization, in which the conflict between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups returned to a 'political' deliberating stage that is dealt with on an internal, sovereign basis.

**Discussion question**

Consider how the term 'genocide' creates a certain picture not merely of the 'reality' of the conflict in Rwanda on the ground, but also of the legal and moral obligations of international actors in relation to this 'reality'. What might this contribute to analyses of the involvement of international actors in the genocide from the perspectives of such theories as realism (and its emphasis on state behaviour driven by self-interest) vs. those from the liberal camp (and their emphasis on international morality as integral to international politics)?

## Weblinks

<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/rwanda/index.htm#TopOfPage>

This is the detailed report produced by Human Rights Watch on how the genocide was executed, featuring first-hand testimonies. It includes analysis of the role of local and international media.

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/429/rwanda>

Article reflecting on key findings in the HRW 1999 report, including plenty of useful extracts. Anup Shah, 'Rwanda', Global Issues.org.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/09/bystanders-to-genocide/304571/>

Full article by academic and diplomat, Samantha Power, featuring exclusive first-hand testimonies from participants in the genocide. Samantha Power, 'Bystanders to Genocide', *The Atlantic* (September 2001).

<http://www.crimesofwar.org/commentary/two-sides-to-every-story-congo-and-the-rwandan-genocide/>

Article examining different views on the genocide. Katherine Iliopoulos, 'Two Sides to Every Story: Congo and the Rwandan Genocide', Crimes of War.org.

[Redpepper. 2004. 'Uncovering the Finances of the Genocide', 1 May. Available:](http://www.redpepper.org.uk/Uncovering-the-financiers-of-the-genocide/)

<http://www.redpepper.org.uk/Uncovering-the-financiers-of-the-genocide/>, visited: 13.09.2018.

Article on the role of international financiers of the Habyarimana regime—the IMF and World Bank—in the genocide. Eric Toussaint, 'Uncovering the financiers of the genocide', Red Pepper.org.uk.

<http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s7027.html>

Open-access first chapter to Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2009/ngugi040809.html>

or

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/interactive/protect/ngugi.pdf>

Full text of address by Ngugi wa Thiong'o entitled 'Uneven Development is the Root of Many Crimes' to the United Nations General Assembly 'Thematic Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect' (New York: The United Nations, 23 July 2009).

<http://c-spanvideo.org/program/Genoc>

(full version)

or

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_6CFNwJ9ww](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_6CFNwJ9ww) (edited version)

Video of President Clinton's address at Kigali airport to the people of Rwanda, March 1998.

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>

UN Charter

[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/1999/1257](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1999/1257)

United Nations Security Council: Report on UN's Role in Rwandan Genocide.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

United Nations: 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide',  
9 December 1948, available:  
[http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1\\_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf), visited: 11.09.2018.

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 'International Law', available: <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/international-law.html>, visited: 11.09.2018.

<https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/rwanda.html>

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