Global Political Studies
International Migration and Ethnic Relations
Impacts of Colonialism in Africa:

A case study of Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Conflicts in Burundi.

Authors:
Tania Mwiza, Emmanuel Okinedo
Abstract

This thesis describes the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi communities in Bujumbura on the origin of ethnic conflicts in Burundi. With the use of a qualitative research method this thesis describes the history and origin of ethnicity and ethnic identity between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Focusing on the case study approach, both secondary and primary research methods are used in the process of data sources with emphasis on the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras of the country. The thesis findings show that ethnicity in Burundi has changed over the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. The ethnic structures in Burundi changed from that of togetherness in the pre-colonial period to that of hatred in both the colonial and post-colonial eras. The way forward for Burundi is to change the governance structures in the country so as to dismantle the colonial structures and shift back to the traditional precolonial structures.

Keywords: Burundi, ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic conflict, Hutu, Tutsi.
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## Contents

1. **Introduction** .................................................................................................................................................. 6
  1.1. Research Background ................................................................................................................................. 6
  1.2 Problem Area .................................................................................................................................................. 7
  1.3 Purpose of study .............................................................................................................................................. 8
  1.4 Research Question ......................................................................................................................................... 8
  1.5. Study Justification ......................................................................................................................................... 9

1.6. **Research limitations and Research Implications** ......................................................................................... 9
  1.7. Structure of the thesis .................................................................................................................................. 10

2. **Literature Review:** ......................................................................................................................................... 10
  2.1. The genesis of ethnicity and political violence in Africa .............................................................................. 10
  2.2. The impacts of colonialism in Africa ........................................................................................................... 12

2.3. **Theories** ..................................................................................................................................................... 14
  2.3.1. Theory of colonialism ............................................................................................................................... 14
  2.3.2. Theory of Colonial legacy: ....................................................................................................................... 15

2.3.3. **Definition of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity** .......................................................................................... 16
  2.3.4. Ethnicity: ................................................................................................................................................... 16

2.3.5. **Ethnic identity** ........................................................................................................................................ 17

3. **Methodology** .................................................................................................................................................. 18
  3.1. Qualitative Research Method ....................................................................................................................... 18
  3.2. Philosophy of Science ................................................................................................................................... 19
    3.2.1. **Interpretivism Epistemology:** ................................................................................................................ 19
  3.2. Data Collection .............................................................................................................................................. 19
    3.2.1. **Method of Selection** ........................................................................................................................... 20
    3.2.2. **Interviews** .......................................................................................................................................... 21
    3.2.4. **Data Analysis** ..................................................................................................................................... 23
  3.3. Ethics .............................................................................................................................................................. 24
  3.4. Our role as Researchers ................................................................................................................................ 25

4. **Findings:** ....................................................................................................................................................... 26
  4.1. The social, economic opportunities and exclusion ....................................................................................... 26
  4.2. The impact of Colonial administration in Burundi ....................................................................................... 27
  4.4. Ethnic identity and ethnic conflict ............................................................................................................... 28
  4.5. Mistrust between the Hutu and the Tutsi ....................................................................................................... 28
4.6. Were the conflicts politically motivated along ethnic lines .................................................. 29

5. **Discussion:** ......................................................................................................................... 31
   5.1. The Ethnic Structure in Pre-colonial Burundi................................................................. 31
   5.2. The ethnic structure in the colonial Burundi and the theory of colonialism............... 32
   5.3. The ethnic structure in the post-colonial Burundi and the theory of colonial legacy. .... 34

6. **Conclusion.** .......................................................................................................................... 35
   6.1. Recommendations for further research ......................................................................... 37

**References:** ............................................................................................................................ 38
**Appendix:** .............................................................................................................................. 42
1. **Introduction.**

1.1. **Research Background**

Varying arguments and propositions have been fronted on the impacts of colonialism on the African continent. Various authors have written on the social, economic, religious and political effects and influences of colonization in the continent. In most of the cases, there are varying and conflicting arguments. While some scholars are arguing for positive implications and impacts, others are arguing for negative effects and influences. For example, researches by scholars Shaw (2010) and Nachai (2010) argue from a positive point of view. In this case, the authors, in their separate researches argue that as a result of colonization, African countries developed socially, economically and politically. The scholars emphasize that Africans benefited from religious opportunities, urbanization and western education. Besides this, the authors argue that infrastructure development, such as the building of roads and ports were also realized.

Furthermore, the authors argue that with colonization there came social amenities such as: piped water, telephones and health care facilities.

On the other hand, other authors have presented an opposing argument to the aforementioned scholars by arguing about the negative effects of colonialism in Africa. For example, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) argue that colonialism has brought in uneven provision of social amenities. In their argument, the scholars contend that these social services deemed brought by the colonizers were concentrated areas of interest; majorly in big cities and towns. According to the authors, this has led to rural, urban migration, overcrowding, filthy and slump environment, poor hygienic condition, spread of epidemic disease, social vices, tribal and ethnic problems. In-fact, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) conclude their argument by stating that these amenities were concentrated in urban areas where the colonialists had interests.

Furthermore, the literature finds that communities have lived in harmony for centuries in the pre-colonial period in Africa (see, for example, Alemazung, 2010; Shillington, 1989). More so, other scholars such as Ewusi and Akwanga (2010, p. 170); Uvin (1999), find that ethnic communities in Burundi, comprising of the Hutu, Tutsi and the Twa had lived in harmony in the pre-colonial period.
However, as a result of the Berlin conference that took place between 1884-1885 that preceded colonialism, some scholars such as Alemazung (2010) and Ewusi and Akwanga (2010) argue that the patterns of harmonious coexistence among the African communities were greatly changed. The demarcation of the African continent into nations and subsequent colonization of the territorial divisions promoted disunity and hatred among the indigenous African communities.

According to the literature by Mahoso (2010) and Muething (2008) the boundaries that were created as a result of the Berlin conference did not take into consideration the cultural backgrounds and differences of the indigenous African people. According to the authors, this has given rise to the ethnic divisions and rivalry among nations and communities in the continent. This view is shared by other scholars such as: Taras and Ganguly (2002, p. 3); Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012). In support of this view these scholars find that there is a strong link between colonialism and ethnic conflicts in most of the African countries. Specifically, Taras and Ganguly (2002, p. 3) find and conclude that: “the polarization of ethnic communities and the outbreak of ethnic violence are a legacy of colonialism that ignored cultural differences during the creation of artificial state borders”. In this case, the authors argue that as a result of colonization, the indigenous people were separated into different ethnic entities and backgrounds. The authors further argue that this separation facilitated by colonization greatly transformed the nature and mode of conflict among the African societies. In conclusion, the authors find this transformation was highly contributed by the events of the Berlin conference of 1884 that led to the division of the African continent into nations and many ethnic groups were compelled to live together under the supervisory authority of the colonial masters without taking into consideration the cultural background of the people.

1.2 Problem Area

After gaining self-rule, some of the African countries have experienced internal conflicts to the extent where some have led to wars extreme violence and genocide. Cases in point include countries such as Nigeria in 1967, Rwanda –Burundi in 1994, Congo in 1960, Sierra Leone 1991-2002, Kenya in 2007, Sudan; 1983-2005 and the ongoing civil war in South Sudan that began in 2013. Most often, these conflicts are caused by political or ethnic issues (Brown, 1997). According to the available literature, these wars have majorly taken either political or ethnic dimensions.
Furthermore, these conflicts have led to the suffering of people without mentioning the destruction of the economies, the dissolution of the countries’ political institutions and most unfortunate the undermining of peaceful coexistence among the communities.

Burundi is one country that has experienced post-colonial conflicts with no signs of the conflicts ending soon. The country is made up of three ethnic groups. The Hutu and the Tutsi form the major ethnic communities in Burundi where the Hutu constitutes 85%, the Tutsi 14% and the Twa (1%) (Sullivan 2005:76). The available literature provides that these communities lived harmoniously for over 500 years and shared a common socio-cultural and linguistic heritage prior to the Colonial period. However, in the colonial and post-colonial periods the literature finds that these communities have had conflicts that have degenerated into ethnic identity and ethnic conflicts (Lindner, 2000). Based on the arguments fronted by the various authors on the impacts of colonialism in Africa and particularly in Burundi, there is no clear discussion in the previous research on how the Hutu/Tutsi in Bujumbura perceive the genesis of ethnic identity and ethnic conflicts in their country.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi communities in Bujumbura on the origin of ethnic conflicts in Burundi. This is done by hearing and qualitatively analyzing their subjective perceptions and experiences of the ethnic conflicts that have had a major impact on their ethnic identity and differences between these two major tribes while reflecting on the pre-colonial, and post-colonial eras.

1.4 Research Question

This thesis has a main research question and other sub questions which are posed based on the purpose of the study.

Main question:

- How do the (Hutu/Tutsi) in Bujumbura perceive ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Burundi and how can their perceptions help us understand the impacts of colonialism in Burundi?
Sub-questions:

- What are Hutu/Tutsi perceptions regarding ethnic identity structures in Burundi in the pre-colonial period?
- What are the Hutu/Tutsi perceptions regarding ethnic identity structures in Burundi during the colonial and post-colonial periods?

1.5. Study Justification
According to Nguyen (2010) ethnic conflict is a highly contested phenomenon which has emerged as a vibrant topic across various disciplines. This thesis tries to contribute to the existing literature by studying the Hutu/Tutsi perceptions on the origin of ethnic conflicts in Burundi that have a major impact in their ethnic identity. The study is necessary because by collecting data about the ethnic conflicts and ethnic identity pave the way for a new understanding of the situation in the community in Bujumbura. More so, there is the question of whether ethnicity is a colonial invention has been hotly debated over the last several years. The increase wave of ethnic violence since the Burundi independence can be traced to specific colonial policies and practices (Lemarchand, 1995). This study is equally relevant because it contributes to the development in the IMER field as it relates to ethnic minority, majority and inequality. This view is made due to the fact that the research is structured within the real-life situation of ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, patterns of cultural discrimination and social-political issues. In effect, the study is significant and justified.

1.6. Research limitations and Research Implications
The notion of ethnic conflict and ethnic identities is connected and considered as a highly contested phenomenon in the sense that, it is regarded as part of international politics throughout history (Nguyen 2010; Cordell and Wolf, 2010:4). This study sampled only a small part of Burundi. In-fact, it sampled a small part of the capital city Bujumbura. With only a sample of 10 participants in a capital city, it means that generalization of the results may not be fully and easily justified. Considering that, a more comprehensive discussion and output could be provided if only the perspective of other Burundi communities and the authorities are fully involved. Unfortunately, time and space constraints did not make this achievable because this research
focuses on perceptions and selecting appropriate participants for interviews is necessary. In addition, this research includes relevant literature from the perspective of the Hutu and the Tutsi conflict and their ethnic-social differences. This ideal notwithstanding, we carefully conducted this research for a few readers in order to lay the foundation for understanding other approaches to be explored and have a general description of the situation in Burundi ethnic conflict.

1.7. Structure of the thesis
This thesis is structured into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the research topic and the chapter further elaborates on the purpose of the research, highlights the problem statement and provides an explanation on the research limitations and implications. The second chapter is a presentation of the previous literature on the same topic and the relevant theories and concepts applied in the research. The third chapter described the research methodology used in this study. The fourth chapter puts forward the findings of the study and the fifth chapter presented the discussion while the sixth chapter presented the conclusion.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. The genesis of ethnicity and political violence in Africa

In a study conducted by Daley (2006), the author presents an analysis of ethnicity and political violence in Africa with emphasis on Burundi as a case study. In the analysis, the author focused on three dimensions which include: the rent-seeking elite, ethnicity and political violence. According to Daley (2006), Burundi reflects a post-colonial state where the post-colonial ruling elite mobilizes and operates around the ethnic communities for their economic benefit. The author further argues that ethnicity has been consistently used by the post-colonial ruling elites in Burundi to promote differentiation and exclusion. In conclusion, Daley (2006) finds that the ongoing negotiations to correct the ethnic isolations in Burundi by way of sharing political power and other institutions of governance can only succeed if the peace promoters can create an inclusive and broader non-ethnized political society.

Ntahombaye and Nduwayo (2007) on the other hand conduct a qualitative research on the role of colonialism in the promotion of ethnicity based on racist ideologies in Africa. Just like Daley
(2006), the authors focused on Burundi as a case study. In the analysis, the authors argue that in the pre-colonial period, the people of Burundi had lived as one cohesive society by being guided by the moral and social national fabric of love and oneness. However, the authors argue that, after independence, the post-colonial ruling elite in Burundi has continued to promote ethnicity for their own benefit while at the same time, pretending to eliminate the same vice of ethnicity that they are promoting. Consequently, and according to the authors, ethnicity in Burundi was brought by the colonialists. As the way forward for the modern post-colonial Burundi, Ntahombaye and Nduwayo (2007) propose for a structured approach that takes into consideration the political, institutional and cultural dimensions of the people of Burundi in order to solve the vice of ethnicity in the country. The authors finally conclude that peace in Burundi can be realized through initiating positive dialogues and advocating for strong democratic practices in the country.

More to the origin of ethnicity and political violence in Africa, Uvin (1999) analyses the issue of race in Burundi and Rwanda. In line with this, the author explains that when the Belgian colonizers set foot in Burundi and Rwanda, they completely changed the traditional political governance structures that were established by the locals in both countries. According to the author, the colonialists changed the hierarchical structure headed by the King, who was a symbol of national unity at the time. In place of the King, the colonialists introduced the positions of the local chiefs. The majority of these positions were given to the Tutsi who acted as colonial administration agents at the time (Uvin, 1999). Uvin (1999) further highlights that with the assistance of the Catholic Church the colonialists came up with a myth suggesting that the Tutsi were of Hamitic origin hence superior to the Hutu and Twa. Based on this view, the author concludes that the colonialists enhanced the differences between the Tutsi and the Hutu from an ethnic perspective to racial perspective where the Tutsi were considered as the superior race compared to the Hutu and Twa. This form of discrimination brought about the issue of class and tribal identity among the different communities (Uvin, 1999).

Further, in explaining the genesis of ethnicity and political violence in Africa, another research by Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) analyses the history and the effects of colonialism in Africa. From the historical background, the authors argue that the colonialists had three main purposes of colonizing African countries. The three reasons include social, economic and political exploitation. These reasons, according to the authors were due to the fact that the industrial revolution in the
western world had led to the demand of new ways of production that were to replace the outdated ways of production based on slavery. In addition, Nwankwo and Ocheni (2012) argue that the need for raw materials, the need for new markets, need to feed the growing western population and place to invest the surplus profits accumulated from the industrial revolution led to the colonization of African countries. The issue of colonizing African countries was made possible because according to Nwankwo and Ocheni (2012), Africa provided readily available raw materials for production purposes together with investment opportunities for the already accumulated capital as well as readily available cheap labor.

2.2 The impacts of colonialism in Africa

There are conflicting findings on the significance of colonialism in Africa. For instance, Shaw (2010) and Nachai (2010) argue for a positive impact of colonization. Specifically, Shaw (2010) argues that colonization brought about social, economic and political development in the continent. Socially, the author argues that colonialism brought in religious opportunities, urbanization and western education. In support of this view, Nachai (2010) argues that colonization led to the emergence and expansion of the major urban centers in Africa. According to the author, these urban centers came about as ports, mining and main administration joints. In this case, Shaw (2010) and Nachai (2010) argue and conclude for a positive impact of colonization in Africa. However, a research by Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) contrasts the findings by Shaw (2010) and Nachai (2010). In their research, the authors argue that the colonialists developed social amenities selectively by focusing on urban centers. According to the authors, this promoted selective provision of social services and amenities such as piped water, health care and educational facilities to urban centers where the colonialists had interests. These factors were essential services to everybody that led to rural urban migration. As a consequence, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) argue that the demand for these services led to rural, urban migration that eventually led to the overcrowding of the urban centers leading to the over-utilization of the scarce essential services at these centers. Furthermore, the authors argue that the uneven provision of social amenities to urban centers led to the poor hygienic environment, spread of diseases, increase in social vices as well as the emergence of tribal and ethnic conflicts. Consequently, in their research conclusion, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) noted that colonialism
created a distorted provision of social amenities favoring urban centers. According to the authors, managing these problems has since remained a major key challenge facing the current postcolonial African states.

Mamdani, (2001) also conducts a research on the significance of colonialism in Africa by analyzing the impacts of colonialism in Rwanda. From every indication, Rwanda and Burundi share the same colonial traits (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). In Mamdani, (2001), the author argues that when the colonies came to Rwanda, they created three identities that did not exist in the country before. That is the market-based identity, political identity and cultural identity. Cultural identity, according to the author created the ethnic identity which is currently happening in Rwanda and Burundi. Political identity, according to the author was seen as an economic opportunity in the sense that it provided a direct link between political violence and social redistribution of revolutionary politics in Burundi and Rwanda (Mamdani, 2001). This being the case, Mamdani (2001) concludes that the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi be observed from a colonialism perspective.

The impact of colonialism was further noticed following a research conducted by Shillington (1989). According to the study, the social lifestyle of the African communities in the pre-colonial period was different in terms of clothing, religion and housing conditions. The author furthermore argued that the African communities had rivalries and competition based mainly on economic gain and power which however did not take any tribal or ethnic dimension. The peaceful relationship, according to Shillington (1989) was due to the fact that most of the African communities used to live in harmony and peace in the pre-colonial period. This fact notwithstanding, Shillington (1989) further stated that during the colonial period, the colonialists created tribal connotations and tribal rivalries among the various ethnic groups in Africa. As articulated by the author, the main purpose of the tribal connotations was to create animosity among the communities in order to easily exert their colonial rule. However, the tribal connotations and rivalries created tribalism in Africa and due to the occurrence of genocide in Burundi and Rwanda (Shillington 1989, p. 356).

Another impact of colonialism in Africa is noted following a research conducted by Lindner (2000). The author focused on the role of humiliation in promoting cultural diversities and political divisions with a case study of Germany, Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi. The research was
conducted in 1997-2000 based on the concepts of humiliation, Holocaust and genocide. In the study, the author explains that in a situation where individuals are said to be humiliated, they construct and promote differences where they did not exist before. For example, the indigenous inhabitants in Rwanda and Burundi were the Twa followed by the Hutu and later the Tutsi. According to the author, despite the fact that the Tutsi is the minority and non-indigenous, they took control of the administrative structures in Rwanda and Burundi. As a consequence, the Hutu were viewed as mere servants. This act according to the author created ethnic identities, differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi. In analyzing the situation, Lindner (2000) expressed how the Tutsi believes that they were naturally “born to rule” and they feel that they should be in power at all times. This concept has left the Hutu feeling humiliated thereby creating cultural diversities that never existed before. They are identified as cultural diversities because in a similar situation, the Hutu feels humiliated while the Tutsi are comfortable doing in the act. Conclusively, Lindner (2000) finds that the glorification of diversity and “otherness” is harmful in cases where cultural diversities are founded on humiliation grounds. As the way forward, the author argues for a reconciliatory need as well as a common acceptance to all parties without glorifying those ethnic identities that are an outcome of humiliation.

The arguments fronted by the previous literature do not discuss how the Hutu and Tutsi perceive ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Burundi, leaving a gap in the research. The results of this study stress that the current ethnic conflicts in Burundi cannot end soon so long as the post-colonial ruling elites in Burundi continue to practice the same colonial administrative ruling styles that were left behind by the colonialists. In this case, this study supports governance structures as practiced by the precolonial Burundi based on; oneness, harmony and equality among the three tribes in the country.

2.3. Theories:

2.3.1. Theory of colonialism
Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) defines colonialism as a practice of direct or total domination of one country by another. According to the authors, colonialism takes place on the basis of state power and resources being in the hands of a foreign power- the dominant country.
According to Collier (1905), the theory of colonialism states that once the dominant country moves and settles in the new environment, it tries to modify the ways of life of the old community including; the institutions, the culture and all other characteristics of the old community to suit the new ways of life that suits the colonizers. According to the author, this is likened to “a transplanted flower or tree blossoms or fruits in new soil”. The implication here is that all the social, political and economic institutions as set out by the old community must change and start operating in a new way as spelled out by the colonizers (Collier 1905).

The theory of colonialism further provides that for the dominant country to achieve its objective of changing on how the old community should do things, it must look for ways to easily overcome any resistance that may arise from the old community (Shillington, 1989). In this case, Collier (1905) finds that when the colonizers came to Africa, they had to look for ways in which to divide the people so that they can have an easy way to rule over them. To achieve their objective, the colonialists tried to create fault lines among the different ethnic groups in Africa. In this case, fault lines were drawn among the communities along: tribal distinctions and rivalries (Shillington, 1989, p. 356); social class (Uvin, 1999; Deley, 2006) and Economic class (Ewusi and Akwanga, 2010; Deley, 2006).

Before African countries were colonized, there is evidence that communities used to live in harmony. For example, Shillington (1989) finds that communities in Africa had lived for centuries as one person despite the fact that they had differences relating to dressing, housing and even religion. This means that despite these differences, they never used to identify themselves as tribes. As the literature concludes, even-though there were rivalry and competition among these communities the rivalries were majorly focused on power and economic gain and no time did they take tribal backgrounds (Shillington, 1989).

2.3.2. Theory of Colonial legacy:

The online Oxford Dictionary defines a legacy as something that is left or handed down by a predecessor. According to Alemazung (2010) colonial legacy comprises of the sum total of all the political, cultural and general policies that were left behind by the colonial administrators in Africa and were taken over by the elite African nationalist rulers. The theory of colonial legacy states that after a country or a nation attains independence all the instruments of governance,
including the ways of administration, which were in place during the colonial period are taken over by the post-colonial leaders who takes over power (Alemazung, 2010).

The implication here is that the post-colonial leaders who takes power from the colonialists, continues to rule and administer their respective countries based on the ideologies that were left behind by the colonialists. This means that the post-colonial elite rulers take over the colonial policies as a legacy in their new administration.

According to Alemazung (2010), the major legacy that was left behind by the colonial administration in Africa is the ethnic divisions that were created in the colonial period. The post-colonial ruling elites have consolidated political power based on regional perspectives and dimensions. This has led to the formation of regional political parties that are also tribal based. As the literature finds, when a political party from a given tribe or region forms a government, those from the opposing political party from another region are isolated. This means that people from the isolated region or tribe cannot enjoy government services in equal measure with those in government. This finally is transformed into ethnic segregation rivalry and marginalization.

When communities feel isolated, marginalized and denied essential government services because of their political inclinations, they develop the feeling of hatred and revenge against those in power and their associates (Alemazung, 2010). This is because they observe those in power doing well socially and economically. In this case, Alemazung (2010) concludes that the postcolonial African leader’s way of ruling is not based on the will, consent and choice of the African people, but the continuation of the colonial style of ruling which was left behind as a legacy. According to this author, this has created regional and tribal dimension political parties. This has given rise to tribal hatred leading to tribal conflicts being witnessed in the African continent.

2.3.3. Definition of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity.

2.3.4. Ethnicity:

For the purpose of this study, the authors use the concept of ethnicity as defined by Hylland (1991). Hylland (1991) defines ethnicity as shared cultural practices, a way of life and the distinctions that sets apart one group of people from another group. According to the author, ethnicity can be reflected in shared values, language, beliefs, norms, tastes, behaviors, religion,
sense of history, memories and loyalties. While it is acknowledged that there are many other definitions which could be used, the authors believe that the definition by Hylland (1991) includes all of the elements that are important for this study. That is, the definition somehow explains the ethnic structure situation in Burundi which this study is concerned about.

2.3.5. Ethnic identity

According to Smith (2002, p. 22) Ethnic Identity is commonly defined as one’s sense of belonging to an ethnic group. There are two elements that provide the basis of identifying ethnic groups. These are described as the accentuation of cultural traits and the sense that traits distinguish the groups from the members of the society who do not share the differentiating characteristics. According to the author, ethnic identity is formed by both tangible and intangible characteristics such as common physical traits, which is significant and contributes to the group feeling of identity and uniqueness. The intangible factors are part of one’s perceptions, belief and behavior.

Weber (1996) defines “ethnic identity as that human group that entertains a subjective belief in its common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.”

According to Donald Horowitz (1985: 52) “Ethnic identity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with its traits believed to be innate. Some notion of ascription, however diluted, and affinity deriving from it is inseparable from the concept of ethnicity”.

For the purpose of this study, the authors use the concept of ethnic identity as defined by Weber (1996). The authors believe that the definition by Weber includes all of the elements that are important for this study. That is, the definition somehow explains the ethnic identity construction in Burundi which this study is concerned about. For example, from the literature, there has been the historical development of ethnic consciousness between the Hutu and the Tutsi of exclusions. For instance, the colonists first politicized the ethnic groups by identifying with the Tutsi as the
superior ethnic group over the Hutu majority judging from the physical characteristics. Therefore, the Tutsis accepted and internalized this ethnic label, thereby promoting the Tutsi ethnic identity. This signifies the importance of adopting Weber’s definition in this thesis.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the processes that the researchers have undertaken in order to answer the research question. The chapter presents the research method, data collection process, method selection, data analysis, ethical consideration and the explanations about the philosophy of science that were considered for this study.

3.1. Qualitative Research Method

In qualitative research, the researcher collects, and analyses data based on words and other observable features rather than numeric numbers. The qualitative research method also allows researchers to study the perceptions and experiences of a phenomenon (see, Saunders et al. 2012, p. 546). For example, this research is about the Hutu/Tutsi perceptions of ethnicity and ethnic identity in Burundi. This research therefore involves understanding their values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and relationships with regards to how they perceive ethnicity. According to Creswell, “Qualitative Research is a form of interpretive inquiry, where researchers’ make meaning of what they see, perceive and understand. Their interpretation cannot be separated from their own background, history, context and prior understandings” (Creswell 2009. p. 176). Based on this view, the data in this study is analyzed qualitatively.

The reason for choice of qualitative research method is because it always informs and influences the researchers’ personal disposition. Through the theories of colonialism and colonial legacy, this thesis will be able to qualitatively analyze and understand how the construction of ethnicity and ethnic identities in Burundi are perceived by the Hutu/Tutsi while reflecting in the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras.
3.2. Philosophy of Science

This sub-section shows how we, as researchers’ have constructed knowledge for this thesis and reflects the role of the researchers in the thesis. The Philosophical standpoints adopted by this research is the Interpretivism Epistemology.

3.2.1. Interpretivism Epistemology:

With Interpretivism epistemology, the researchers reflect and interpret the social world and its actions that take place around them and give different meanings according to the researchers’ observations and interpretations (Saunders et al. 2012 p. 137).

Through interpretivism, we as researchers are able to gain knowledge about how ethnic communities in Burundi used to live and solve their conflicts before the country was colonized. In this case, we ask questions such as where they are identifying themselves as tribes? Through interpretivism, we further have room to observe and interpret on how the Burundians who live in Bujumbura perceive ethnicity and ethnic identity. This shows that we as researchers, through the lens of interpretivism epistemology, have been given room through interviews to interpret and relate the events before, during and after colonization in order to gain knowledge about Burundi’s ethnic structures and conflicts (see for example, Moses and Knutsen, 2012, p. 200).

3.2. Data Collection

The data collection method involves both secondary and primary sources to answer the research questions. The main sources for secondary data collection include books, journals, articles, and other independent researchers. The relevant literatures have been accessed from various databases as listed in the Malmo University Library and other external sources that have relevant literatures. The primary data was collected in Bujumbura, the capital city of Burundi from those with firsthand experiences on the ethnic conflict; the data collection date was from September 2018 to October 2018.

Since the focus of the study is about ethnicity and ethnic conflict that has a major impact on the ethnic identity between Hutu/Tutsi, we were given an assistant from two well-known individual in the community. We ensure that our informants were picked from the community in Bujumbura.
According to the Lemarchard (2009) Burundi has two major communities, the Hutu 85% and the Tutsi 14%. In other word, very small sample size does not allow broad generalization. As advised by Patton (2015) we determined a sample size that captures the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi community in Bujumbura on ethnic difference in a sufficient manner. According to Creswell (2013) the small number of participants gives the advantage of obtaining extensive information from each subject.

The original reason for choosing the Bujumbura city of Burundi as a fieldwork site was that there would be different ethnic groups like the Hutu and the Tutsi present in the community. One notable advantage about this research is that the participants were more relaxed speaking about their ethnicity and ethnic identity differences. The first week of the data collection process was used to contact the informants and the following weeks in conducting an in-depth interview with the identified participants. Before, every individual interview, we introduced ourselves; and described the purpose of the study and this include our personal journals and diaries for documentation.

Table. 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
<th>Expected number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of the representation given on the sample size for the research.

3.2.1. Method of Selection

Our familiarity with the topic gave us some clues of the important ethnic and social characteristics incorporate that were necessary to understand the participants. With this in mind, the purposive sampling technique was applied to select participants that were reliable and willing to participate in order to ensure varieties. We followed a clear procedure for the selection of
participants. The target population for this research was adult between the age of 18-60 years, living in the city of Bujumbura. This implies that the participants selected for the data gathering were those with first-hand knowledge and experience about the Burundi conflicts and ethnic identity differences between the Hutu/Tutsi.

Therefore, the variables taken into consideration before selecting the participants were age, gender, educational background and marital status. These four variables help in meeting up with key social, cultural characteristics required to answer the research questions. More specifically, age was a key factor in the study because of those older generations who have personal experience in the inter-communal conflict and to distinguish other different generational perceptions of ethnic, and social division. Both males and females were invited equally to reflect the voices of both genders. We find it essential to have both sexes represent in our research sample given that we are interested to learn more about the cultural, gender roles and as a significant variable made up of married and single participants. The males and females have different roles in the Burundi culture. The educational background of the participants was also taken into consideration in order to have a mixed group of participants and to ensure reliability.

3.2.2. Interviews

The interview was carried out using qualitative semi-structured form in conducting the study to collect the primary data (Bryman, 2012). We have selected interviews to be our main data collection tools in order to capture the Hutu/Tutsi perceptions. The participants presented at the scheduled venue and possessed the characteristic described in the sampling earlier. Then, we proceeded to conduct ten face to face interviews. The length of the interviews ranged from 56 to 76 minutes per participants and was determined by the respondents as a mode of expressing themselves in their own terms.

Semi-structured interview was useful because it has emerging themes and categories incorporated alongside some pre-planned questions (Kwale, 2007, p. 82). The plan enables us to follow up and documents the data gathered, including the stories conveyed by the respondents. We examined and listened to the participants during the interview without imposing any prejudice or pre-conceived idea. In the interview process, new themes and patterns emerged that were not originally part of
the study guide. These themes and patterns were set aside for more interviews. The number of interviews were determined by the principle of the data saturation. When we started receiving repetitive responses and does not necessarily lead to more meaningful information about the research purpose. Saturation is justifiable as explained by Guest et al., (2006). The data collected is considered adequate and relevant to provide answers to the research questions. Table 2 summarizes the participant demographics given for the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Gender/Age/Codes</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Interview Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE-1</td>
<td>Male, 39 years Old</td>
<td>Married with 4 children</td>
<td>University Lecturer</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>27th September, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-2</td>
<td>Female, 24 years Old</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Undergraduate Student</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>28th September, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-3</td>
<td>Male, 60 years old</td>
<td>Married with five children</td>
<td>Secondary School Teacher</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>29th September, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-4</td>
<td>Male, 44-year-old</td>
<td>Married with 2 children</td>
<td>Graduate Nurse</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>1st October, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-5</td>
<td>Female, 29 years old</td>
<td>Single with a child</td>
<td>Undergraduate Student</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>2nd October, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-6</td>
<td>Female, 43 years old</td>
<td>Married with nine children</td>
<td>Not educated Business man</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>3rd October, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Summary of Participants’ Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BE-7 Male, 42 years old</th>
<th>Married with two children</th>
<th>Secondary school</th>
<th>Businessman</th>
<th>Tutsi</th>
<th>4th October, 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE-8 Female, 33 years old</td>
<td>Married with two children</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>5th October, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-9 Female, 30 years old</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Taxi Driver</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>6th October, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE-10 Male, 55 years old</td>
<td>Married with two children</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>University Lecturer</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>October 7th, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above stated demographic of the participants; the representation were two university lecturers, one government official who is representing the Bujumbura district in Burundi, one taxi driver, two business people, two students, one nurse and one lawyer. There were five females and five males. As for the ethnic composition of the ethnic groups; five were Tutsis and the other five were Hutus.

3.2.4. Data Analysis

After each interview, we listened to the interviews and drafted a summary, which helped us to reflect on what we have learned during the interview and gives us a general overview of the ideas of what the interviewee perceptions have expressed. The audio data recorded were subsequently transcribed carefully without losing its context. Thus, the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi community about how the ethnic conflict affects their social, ethnic differences have been prominent since the post-independence. First, a comprehensive review of the data analysis involving unrefined data for each of the interviews. The data review was done multiple times. Secondly, the themes were compared multiple times in relations to the overall research questions.
and the purpose of the study to identify the themes. Thirdly, immediately the themes were identified. We then set up the data and examine them through the existing theoretical.

Below is the summary of the seven themes identified and extracted based on the interview questions as well as the answers given by the Hutu/Tutsi participants in the community in Bujumbura. Each of the themes will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

1. The social, economic opportunities and exclusion
2. The impact of Colonial administration in Burundi
3. The differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi
4. Ethnic identity and ethnic conflict.
5. Were the conflicts politically motivated along ethnic lines
6. Mistrust between the Hutu and the Tutsi.
7. Way forward.

3.3. Ethics

According to Alan Bryman’s lists on ethics, that often arises in qualitative social research is the issue of ethics (Byrman 2012, p. 153). During the research process, we ensure that the ethical concerns were taken into consideration and practiced in our studies. Firstly, in terms of privacy and anonymity of their identity, the research considered and gave it a high priority. The study of ethnic conflict and the perceives impact of their ethnic identity that created differences among the Burundians is subject to such ethical concerns since it is considered a sensitive topic. At the beginning of the interviews we clearly explained to the participants the purpose of the study and ensured that the protection of their anonymity would be guaranteed. In addition, we strive to ensure transparency by providing the (interview guide) readily available to the interviewees and why we asked certain information and how the answer from the interview would be used. Furthermore, we made the participants to understand that the use of a recorder for the interview was not to be used against them and this also includes signing of documents. Before starting each interview, we requested for their permission to use the digital recorder and making sure that their names were not included in the recordings.
Moreover, we make sure that the participants were well informed about the research participation and also informed the participants that they have the right to withdraw from the process at any time if they so desire. Lastly, we did not have a problem with the gatekeepers because we agreed with the negotiator on a price to compensate them for their time; even though we did not want to impose money. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), the gatekeeper represents those that might have access to the research field such as persons, groups or organizations that enables negotiation and approval for the access field.

3.4. Our role as Researchers.

We constantly reflect on our role as researchers in this study with certain ethnic and cultural understanding. This might have had a bearing on us in the direction that this study has taken. It is important to note that despite the precautions undertaken during the interviewing of the participants. There were mutual relationship and understanding of the processes of this research in the community. We acknowledged that our personal experiences influence our decisions to research the experiences of those affected by ethnic conflict and the impact of ethnic differences in the community in Bujumbura. Further, we acknowledged that our experience also influences the way we chose to research this topic.

However, we as qualitative researchers conduct several interactions with the research subjects, the researchers' understanding of the phenomenon is highly critical. With such understanding it can have a significant effect on the data collections, description, observation and interpretation of the qualitative research carried out by having the researcher as a medium of communication (Maxwell, 2013:16). According to Stake (2010), the role of the researcher in the qualitative will be integral to the process of data collection stage through the interpretation, analysis and presentation of findings.

In this research, we developed the interview protocol along with open ended questions with the used of semi-structured format. We then selected participants and conducted the interviews, interpreted and analyzed the data and compile the report based on the findings. We used a recording device to record and capture all the interviews. Thus, we ensure that the data collected were analyzed and presented objectively. In view of this, all interviews were conducted in the Hutu/Tutsi community in Bujumbura, the capital city of Burundi.
4. **Findings:**

This chapter presents the primary data findings. The purpose of the study was to describe the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi community on the origin of the ethnic conflict in Burundi and how these perceptions can help us understand the impacts of colonialism in Burundi. The research questions focused on the perception of the Hutu/Tutsi community members in Bujumbura. In view of this purpose, interview questions developed, and the participants were asked to describe their perception regarding their ethnic identity and differences, conflicts, relationship, personal lives and other activities. Thus, the data findings through each question posed during the interviews with 10 members of the Hutu/Tutsi community in Bujumbura, Burundi. The Hutu were five in number and the Tutsis were also five in number both males and females represented. On the other hand, the data were analysed with a thematic approach to reveal the meaning of data captured from the Hutu/Tutsi participants.

4.1. **The social, economic opportunities and exclusion**

This theme describes the impact of the social, economic opportunities, exclusion, and extreme poverty on the life of the Hutu/Tutsi living in the community Bujumbura. The participants were asked to discuss how the social, economic opportunities, and exclusion are affecting their personal life as regard to ethnicity.

Participant BE-6 states emphatically that “we have experienced a volatile political and economic environment; and history helps us to understand that almost all the democratic elected president is dominated by military dictatorship or former rebels who have no knowledge of the socioeconomic problem of the state.” He added, these leaders have allocated public employment to benefit members of their group.

Participant BE-4 expressed that the large percentage of the population is excluded in public employment on ethnic lines or regional selections, so there have been a high level of resource inequality in the country. Participant BE-10 claimed that “I must say that the high ethnic tensions, and seemingly endless wars left the country's economy in shambles. I want you to know that Burundi
has one of the lowest telephone line connections in Africa and most of the few lines is connected in
the urban areas, so they do not help the rural economy, the communication infrastructure is very
poor and inaccessible to the masses. It affects the quality of life of an individual. He acknowledged
“that the peoples of Burundi are currently suffering today because of lack of good governance and
often shifting blame on ethnic favouritism and past colonial masters.”

4.2. The impact of Colonial administration in Burundi

This theme describes the perceptions of the impact of colonial administration in Burundi. The
Participants were asked to provide the perceptions about the impact of colonial administration in
Burundi.

Participant BE-10 eloquently expressed that, “the colonial administration in Burundi is a
blessing and a curse.” He added, “to me, it brought both the bad and the good”. For example, he
stated that “on the good, we have modern education. On the bad, it brought divisions, for
example, since independence, the Burundi state has never been a fully functioning sovereign state
compared to our neighboring state or the western counterpart”. “To me, the situation deteriorated
even more after independence”.

Participant BE-3 stated “The exact origins of the Hutus/Tutsis were unknown until the issuing of
identity cards was initiated and forced on us by the colonial power, which created racialized
identities between us (the Hutu) and them (the Tutsi).” The participant further mentioned that the
government of Burundi has abolished the ethnic identity cards without proposing a proper
alternative method of promoting a united country.

Participant BE-5 perceived that the identity cards introduced by the colonial power, then
brought about separation and division between the Hutu/Tutsi. He said, “look at our churches,
market places and the sports clubs; they have now been fractured across ethnic lines; this is a
problem, and no one is willing to operate out of the ethnic groups.”

4.3. The differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi

This theme describes the perception of the Hutu/Tutsi differences. Participants were asked how
one can describes if someone is a Hutu or Tutsi.

Participant BE-2 revealed that the Hutus and Tutsis are the same people, the same language; the
same culture; the same religion and they have lived for centuries on the same land. The stereotypical
variation in appearance -tall and thin Tutsi; and short Hutus were greatly emphasized by the colonial
rulers, creating this distinction as an instrument of colonial rule.
Participant BE-5 articulated that Hutus and Tutsis have been living together for many years, and there have been plenty of inter-ethnic marriages between the two groups. He further added that there is a policy in Burundi, being spread around in all the community that there is no such thing like ethnic group in Burundi; that we are all Burundians.

4.4. Ethnic identity and ethnic conflict.
This theme describes how does ethnic conflict affect ethnic identity in their community. Participants were asked to discuss how the ethnic conflict affects their ethnic identity in the community.

Participant BE-9 explained that “I know you will understand that the Hutus and the Tutsis have fought tribal wars; these wars have taken place in the post-colonial period, we are deeply fragmented, therefore, there is a strong presence of ethnic consciousness and divisions, because there are still bad neighbors and bad leaders who support the activities of the bad neighbors.”

Participant BE-6 inherently claimed that neither the Hutus are bad people, nor the Tutsis are bad people; it is our leaders, who are bad. It does not matter if they are Hutus or Tutsis in the government, when they want something to be in their interest, they will politicize ethnic identity to their own gain to advance the interests of a specific ethnic group.

Participant BE-1 opined that “the sense of belonging to an ethnic group is very strong in Burundi, it is nearly impossible to discuss Burundi politics without reference to ethnic identity”. She added that there is extreme discrimination, ethnic favouritism and harassment based on ethnic identity causing grievances and hatred.

4.5. Mistrust between the Hutu and the Tutsi.
This theme describes the distrust that exists between the Hutu/Tutsi in the community in Bujumbura. Participants were asked about the mutual trust and distrust that exist in the community, Bujumbura.

For example, participant BE-7 expressed “there is undeniably a wave of fear and suspicion in the street of Bujumbura, it is serious because it shows that the history of the past is coming back to haunt us.”

Confirming this Participant BE-4, expressed that everybody is always preparing for each other in the community, every moves and actions make is suspicious because we have witnessed the killings. He added, before all this problem, we (Hutu/Tutsi) were like families born of the same parents, not only
because we share the same cultural values, speak the same language and having the same ancestral roots together; we sit at the same table and eat food, which signifies unity and love.

Participant BE-3 elaborates that “from what I can tell, there is still a lack of trust, suspicion and ethnic disunity between the Hutu/Tutsi members here in Bujumbura. Though, there is an ongoing effort in the community between the Hutu/Tutsi to heal the wounds caused by the conflicts”. She stated further that, the lack of trust between us is breeding more fear and increasing ethnic crimes in the community.

4.6. Were the conflicts politically motivated along ethnic lines

This theme describes if the conflicts were politically motivated along ethnic lines. The participants were asked if the waves of the ethnic conflicts were politically motivated along ethnic lines.

Participant BE-5 expressed “It is very glaring that everyone in the country knows that we are divided on the issues of political power, economic wealth and ethnicity. Most of our political leaders, elected into position are based on ethnic lines; they are greedy, incompetent, corrupt and ineffective, these issues I mentioned generates grievances that have led to cycles of ethnic conflicts”.

Participant BE-2 expressed, “I believe the government of Burundi is too ethnically political, the government is supposed to represent all the ethnic groups in the country, and not divided along ethnic and tribal lines.”

Participant BE-1 claimed that the desire of the Hutus and Tutsis to control the same political offices, the same numbers of slots in the educational institutions, and the same slots in the civil service. He added, “the political divides in the pre-colonial eras between the Hutu/Tutsi has been stretched to the modern-day politics”.

Participant BE-4 specified that the most troubling situation since the last conflict in 2000, all the Tutsis elites have been systematically removed from all the key political positions, and social institutions in the country. He added that the government in power is in support of its own ethnic group and things like this can cause frustration and lead to more ethnic conflicts.

4.7. Way forward:

This theme describes the way forward for the country. The participants were asked about their opinion on the future of the country in terms of political, social and economic governance structures. While the minority of the participants advocate for the current structures, a majority of them said
the present structures adopted from the colonialists must be changed to the pre-colonial structures of oneness and unity.

4.8. Summary of main findings:

All the Hutu/Tutsi Participants stated directly and indirectly that ethnicity in politics is the biggest barrier to the national unity of Burundi and might lead to potential ethnic conflict. There was a general agreement among the participants that ethnicity and the identity cards introduction by the colonial masters in Burundi is divisive and the main source of ethnic stereotyping and bias among the Hutu/Tutsi. The participants have a view that colonialism has played a key role in influencing the social lives of Burundians. All the participants admitted that the differences between the Hutu/Tutsi were greatly emphasized by the colonialists as an instrument of colonial rule are partly to blame. However, there were some participants who were of the opinion that colonialism did also bring positive attributes to the society such as education and other social amenities.

The study findings show that ethnic resentment has surfaced among the Hutu/Tutsi living in the community in Bujumbura and created a we versus them mentality and affecting their social life, such as in the places of worship center, sports and other public areas. According to the findings in this research ethnic resentment is nothing new between the main communities in Burundi. However, the research findings show that there is general agreement among the participants that that animosities between the Hutu and Tutsi developed substantially during the colonial period onwards to the post-colonial times. The participants agree that the governance structures that were created by the colonizers were not changed after Burundi attained her independence. Instead, the post-colonial ruling elites who took power continued with the same governance structures as they were left behind by the colonial masters. This means that the same ethnic divisions that were created by the colonialists were taken over by the post-colonial ruling elites for their own personal and ethnic gains.

There is a general agreement among the participants that the only way forward for the country is for the political, social and economic governance structures to be changed to suit the local communities as they were in the precolonial period.
5. **Discussion:**

This chapter discusses the main findings of the data together with the theories and the key areas from the literature. The discussion is presented and discussed based on the research questions.

5.1. **The Ethnic Structure in Pre-colonial Burundi.**

From our data findings, there is a general view among the participants that communities in Burundi used to live together as one community in the pre-colonial period. This explains why some researchers failed to agree on the exact distinction among the ethnic communities of Burundi comprising of: Tutsi, Hutu and Twa during the pre-colonial period. For example, we find that, scholars such as Uvin (1999) and Shillington (1989) argue that researchers have had divergent views on the ethnic composition and distinction among these communities because these three groups of people led their economic lifestyle from different perspectives but lived a one uniform and homogenous social life.

The available literature provides that despite Hutu and Tutsi migrating to Burundi at different times they integrated well to the point of speaking the same language, having the same spiritual beliefs, and practicing the same cultural believes (Uvin, 1999). From the literature, we can observe that these three groups of communities moved to Burundi in different periods. However, despite this fact, these communities had a hierarchical political arrangement where the Tutsi was on top in leadership positions followed by Hutu and Twa. They used to live together as one community. Furthermore, we can observe that despite the fact that the Hutu were the majority in terms of population, we find that the Hutu had accepted to be ruled by the minority Tutsi (Uvin, 1999).

Based on the research findings and the literature, one cannot easily identify and pinpoint out any major conflicts among the three communities in Burundi. In this case, we find that there is no evidence in the literature and findings proving that in the pre-colonial period the people of Burundi used to identify themselves as Tutsi, Hutu or Twa (Uvin, 1999). That is, through the tribal affiliations. The implication here is that these communities used to coexist irrespective of
their tribal inclinations and only identified themselves as Burundians and there was peace in Burundi. In this way, we find that there is a general agreement in the literature and the data that the ethnic structure in Burundi in the precolonial period is one of togetherness, peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and conflict free.

5.2. The ethnic structure in the colonial Burundi and the theory of colonialism

The theory of colonialism deals with how one country controls another. The theory provides that ones the dominant country moves and settles in the new environment, it tries to modify the ways of life of the old community including; the institutions of governance, the culture and all other characteristics of the old community to suit the new ways of life as dictated by the dominant country (Collier, 1905).

From our data findings, there is a general agreement among the participants that the identity cards were introduced for the first time in Burundi by the colonialists. The introduction of these identification cards by the colonial masters in Burundi is divisive and is considered the main source of ethnic stereotyping and bias between the Hutu and Tutsi. The participants have a view that colonialism introduced these identification cards for the purpose of influencing the social, political and economic lives of Burundians. The data findings show that the Belgium colonizers used ID card classification as policy instruments to promote a social construct between the Hutu and the Tutsi. This ID narrative is in line with the theory of colonialism, which further states that for the colonizers to fully achieve their objective, they must create fault lines among the different ethnic groups in the colonized country (Collier, 1905). In this case, fault lines were drawn among the communities along: tribal distinctions and rivalries (Shillington, 1989, p. 356); social class (Uvin, 1999; Deley, 2006) and Economic class (Ewusi and Akwanga, 2010; Deley, 2006). The introduction of the ID cards is a fault line that colonialists used to create distinctions between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Our data findings are in line with the available literature, which asserts that the economic, social and political structures of Burundi were greatly changed during the colonial period. According to the literature the colonialists in Burundi promoted this tribal connotation by use of IDs in order to play one ethnic group against another to maintain a strong grip on power (Grabowski, 2006:163). Besides the use of IDs, the literature by Uvin (1999); Deley (2006); Lemarchand (1970) and Linden (1977), provides evidence on how the colonialists managed to break the unity among the Burundians during the colonial period. For example, from Uvin
(1999) and Lemarchand (1970), we find that the Belgians modified the political and justice systems of governance in Burundi. The modified systems were in favor of the Tutsi minority, but working against the Hutu majority. In this way, the colonialists created a social class (fault line) between the Tutsi and the Hutu (Deley, 2006). We observe that the colonialist achieved their objective of creating a social class in Burundi by developing a myth suggesting that the Tutsi were of a superior, partly Caucasian, a race that had moved to Burundi from the north-eastern Ethiopia and Southern Sudan. In this way, the colonialists managed to come up with the narrative that the Tutsi were a different race than the Hutu.

To further support the theory in the creation of fault lines for the purpose of dividing the people of Burundi for easy manipulation, the colonialists designed different schools where the Tutsi were given a superior education relative to the Hutu (Linden, 1977). This move was aimed at providing quality education for the Tutsi relative to the Hutu. In this way, this thesis finds that education was used by the colonialist as a tool to promote social inequalities by providing key policy making job opportunities such as a land dispute settlement to the Tutsi because of their quality education background. Based on the education perspective, this thesis finds and agrees with the literature by Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) that the services that the colonizers were offering in Africa were meant not to benefit the local people but the colonizer’s interests. It is our argument that if the colonizers were for the development of Burundi as a country, they could have not provided skewed education that promoted skewed standards. This is because the Tutsi with superior education have been taken to be superior in the society as well. However, it our finding that the main object of providing this quality education and positions was not necessarily for the benefit of the Tutsi, but was only meant to use them as a tool to oppress the Hutu, cause tribal division and finally benefits the colonialists.

In this case, one cannot miss to note the role of colonialism in creating tribal conflicts in a one united peaceful society- Burundi. In the colonial period, fault-lines were drawn, through avenues such as race, education and administration policies, which saw the major communities in Burundi, the Tutsi and the Hutu, start to identify themselves from tribal perspectives. In this way, this thesis agrees with the data findings and the literature that, in the colonial period, the ethnic structures in Burundi changed from that of oneness to that of tribal hatred, anger, revenge, and the emergence of tribal animosity. Through the perceptions of Hutu-Tutsi will understand the impact of colonialism in Burundi. In this case Colonialism promoted ethnicity and tribal hatred.
This makes us understand the tribal hatred and conflicts in Burundi some of the impacts of colonialism in Burundi.

5.3. The ethnic structure in the post-colonial Burundi and the theory of colonial legacy.

The theory of colonial legacy states that after a country or a nation attains independence all the instruments of governance, including the ways of administration, which were in place during the colonial period are taken over by the post-colonial leaders who take over the power (Alemazung, 2010). Burundi gained her full independence from the Belgians in 1962. From our data findings, there is a general perception among the participants that the tribal connotations and animosities between the Hutu and Tutsi developed during the colonial period were carried onwards to the post-colonial times. The participants agree that the post-colonial ruling elites who took power from the colonialists continued with the same governance structures as they were left behind by the colonial masters. This is in line with the arguments in the literature that finds that the same ethnic divisions that were created by the colonialists were taken over by the post-colonial ruling elites for their own personal and ethnic gains (Ewusi and Akwanga, 2010; Deley, 2006). This was the legacy left behind by the Belgians (Alemazung, 2010). Furthermore, from the literature, this thesis finds that all the governance structures were taken over intact as they were in the colonial period (Mamdani, 2001).

During the colonial period, the Tutsi were favored and were socially constructed as to belong to the special class and were given responsibilities over the Hutu (Linden, 1977). From the literature and the data findings, there is evidence that the post-colonial leadership in Burundi took over power together with the colonial legacies of tribalism, hatred and conflicts that were constructed and left behind by the Belgians (Alemazung, 2010). A case in point is that after independence, the Tutsi minority who took power in Burundi continued to advance the social differences of race and ethnicity that was created during the colonial period for their own political, social and economic benefits (Mamdani, 2001). From the data findings even, the provisions of essential services post-colonial Burundi have been ethicized. The Hutu aware of their majority in the country continued to fight a tribal war against the Tutsi. This degenerated into genocide in the name of fighting for rightful democratization space as one witnessed in the
early 1990s. In this way, this research finds that colonial legacy of tribalism and hatred that was created and left behind by the colonialist has played a key role in moving from ethnic identity to ethnic conflicts and finally genocide in Burundi.

From the data findings, this study shows that there is a high presence of ethnic resentment among the Hutu/Tutsi community living in Bujumbura that has created a WE versus THEM mentality. This has promoted mistrust, suspicion, fear and the presence of the strong ethnic divide and same is affecting their social life when they meet in places of worship, sports and other public areas.

Another legacy that was taken over by the post-colonial ruling elites was the retaining of the ID cards that were introduced in the colonial period. According to the literature the ID cards were used by the postcolonial ruling elites as a central tool for shaping and perpetrating the ethnic identity between the Hutu/Tutsi. Our data findings also show that after Burundi gained her independence, the country has continued with the same politics of extraction of divide and rule rather than unification of diverse ethnic groups. Thus, the ethnic conflict began with inequality of opportunity based on the criteria that formed part of the divisive policy rule which was adopted by the colonizer (Oketch & Polzer 2002, p. 122). Further to this, the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi expressed that it affected both ethnic groups negatively.

According to our data findings, there is a general agreement among the participants that the only way forward for the country is for the political, social and economic governance structures to be changed to suit the local communities as they were in the precolonial period. It is this research finding that this trend is starting to bear fruit as the current government has eliminated the issuance of ID cards based on ethnic classification and replaced the same with new identity ID cards without ethnic classification. This has been done as a measure to reduce discriminatory practices and ethnic group favouritism.

6. Conclusion.

This is the concluding chapter where the summary of the research and recommendations for further research is presented.

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the perceptions of the Hutu/Tutsi communities in Bujumbura on the origin of ethnic conflicts in Burundi. This was done by hearing and qualitatively analyzing their subjective perceptions and experiences of the ethnic conflicts,
which have had a major impact on their ethnic identity and differences. In order to relate their perceptions to the impacts of colonialism in Burundi, we reflected our discussion on the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras in Burundi.

The general perception of the Hutu/Tutsi in Bujumbura is that the ethnic structures in Burundi have not been the same in the three eras; pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. This view is also shared by the existing literature. In this case, there is a general agreement between the literature and findings that in the pre-colonial period, the communities in Burundi used to live in harmony as one community. They never used to identify themselves with tribes. This is despite the fact that there are three ethnic diversities in the country comprising of the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Based on these two viewpoints this thesis concludes that in the precolonial period, the Hutu and Tutsi lived together without noticing the tribal inclinations between them.

On the other hand, our data findings show that the ethnic structures in Burundi greatly changed in both the colonial and post-colonial eras. Again, in both eras, there were no major variations in the findings between the literature and the data findings. There was a general agreement between our data findings and the literature that colonialism has greatly influenced the ethnic structures in Burundi in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. However, the role and nature of influence in ethnic structures is different in both cases. Both the literature and data agree that during the colonial period, the colonialists were actively involved in the structuring the ethnicity in Burundi. On the hand, the legacy that was left behind by the colonialist has played a key role in shaping the ethnic ethnicity in the post-colonial era. This is majorly done by the post-colonial ruling elites who took over the governance structures and maintained them the same way as before. It is clear from this research that change in governance structures in Burundi is necessary. The main contribution of this research to the existing literature is on the way forward. The way forward for Burundi is to change the governance structures in the country so as to dismantle the colonial structures and shift back to the traditional precolonial structures. However, how this is to be done remains an area for further research.
6.1. **Recommendations for further research.**

This thesis recommends for further researches that are much broader in order to capture the perceptions of many Burundians. This could help in the generalization of the results. However, in this study, we suggest a further research on how governance structures in Burundi can be reverted back to the traditional precolonial structures without raising any suspicion among the communities.
References:


Gramsci, A. (1971) 'Selections from the Prison Notebook, Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare & Goffrey Nowell Smith'.


Appendix:

Interview Guidelines

Date time Interview

The interview guidelines

Background information:

Name.
Age.
Sex.
Marital Status.

Education.
Occupation.
Employment Status.
Ethnicity.

Getting to know the person (Introduction).

1. How do you describe your experience about the conflicts
2. What is your ethnicity?
3. What was it like growing up in this conflict area?

General Questions as regards to Internal Communal Conflict between Hutu and Tutsi

• What are the differences between the Hutu or Tutsi?
• What is your experience in the Conflict?
• Have you been able to build up a social relationship among your own community in Burundi.

Ethnic identity Aspects

• What do you see as your identity?
• How did you get along with the other ethnic group?
• What do you think that causes the ethnic divisions?
• What causes hatred among the Hutus and Tutsis?
• How has ethnicity in Burundi changed over time?
Political Aspects
  • Did the inequality in the state of Burundi cause the conflicts?
  • Were the conflicts politically motivated?
  • What is the impact of colonialism in Burundi?

Other Aspects.