

Ethnopolitical conflict in rwanda assignment

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Ethno-Political Conflicts: The Rwandan Genocide The Rwandan Genocide was the systematic murder of members of Rwanda's Tutsi ethnic minority and moderate Hutu sympathizers in 1994. The diplomatic efforts to end the conflict were initially seen as successful but the rising tensions among the population made it difficult to come to a conflict ending agreement. Over the course of about 100 days, from April 6 to mid-July, 1994 at least 500, 000 Tutsis, and thousands of Hutus, were the victims of this atrocity. 1] To the extent that governments and nations elsewhere failed to prevent and halt the Rwandan killing campaign, they all share in the shame of the crime. The United Nations staff as well as the three foreign governments principally involved in Rwanda bear added responsibility: the U. N. staff for having failed to provide adequate information and guidance to members of the Security Council; Belgium, for having withdrawn its troops precipitately and for having championed total withdrawal of the U.

N. force; the U. S. for having put saving money ahead of saving lives and for slowing the sending of a relief force; and France, for having continued its support of a government engaged in genocide. [2] The United Nations neglect of the Rwandan Genocide, under comprehensive media coverage, drew severe criticism. France, Belgium, and the United States in particular, received negative attention for their complacency towards the extreme Hutu regime's oppressions.

Canada, Ghana, and the Netherlands, did continue to provide a force on the ground, under the command of Romeo Dallaire of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), but this mission had little actual power without support from the UN Security Council. [3] Dallaire had 450 ill-

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equipped troops from developing countries and consistent abandonment. Despite specific demands from UNAMIR's commanders in Rwanda, before and throughout the genocide, its requests for authorization to intervene were refused, and its capacity was even reduced. 4] " All that is needed for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing. " - Edmund Burke[5] The Rwandan genocide represents a failure not only of the United Nations but also of powerful states to respond to the genocide. In the United States, the Clinton Administration refused to label what was happening in Rwanda genocide out of concern that doing so would create political pressure for the government to respond to a crisis in which the United States had no clear interest.

After the genocide ended when Tutsi rebels recaptured Rwandan territory and drove out the Hutu extremists, President Clinton belatedly called what happened " genocide" and, during a brief visit to Rwanda in which he never left the Rwandan airport, made a speech in which he apologized for the failure of the United States and the international community to take stronger preventive measures. [6] Clinton also admitted that, " The people who brought him the information and Congress were still affected by the recent events in Somalia. By the time he personally had gotten more involved and focused more attention it was too late.

If the United States had invested just 10, 000 troops they could have saved hundreds of thousands of people. "[7] Clinton also stated, " I will always regret not intervening in Rwanda. "[8] Anthony Lake the U. S. secretary of Defense to the Clinton Administration stated, " The issue to intervene in Rwanda just never arose and it should have. "[9] " Injustice anywhere is a <https://assignbuster.com/ethnopolitical-conflict-in-rwanda-assignment/>

threat to justice everywhere . . . Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. ” -Martin Luther King Jr. [10] Ethnocentrism is in essence a psychological term, although it is also used generally in the study of society and politics.

It can be related to nationalism and racism, but its focus is strictly on the individual's relationship with an ethnic group rather with a nation or a race. Ethnocentrism gives a general and perhaps even universal basis for a type of behavior which also underlies nationalism and racism. It is essentially concerned with an individual's psychological biases towards his/her ethnic group, and against other ethnic groups. Such an example is that of the case of Rwanda where citizens were ethnically divided into Hutu and Tutsi. Favorable attitudes were held about the “ in-group” and unfavorable attitudes are directed towards the “ out-group”.

The intensity of ethnocentric attitudes and behavior varies from the mild and peaceful to the belligerent and megalomaniac as such in Rwanda. The causes of ethnocentrism in general and the explanations for its different forms are complex and have been the subject of various sociobiological, psychological and sociological studies[11] While nations have their origins in ethnic groups, it is not easy to determine how or when exactly they arose. The prevailing view is that nations came about in the modern age because of a special combination of political, economic and cultural processes and events[12].

Rwanda was a colony of Belgium. When Belgium chose to separate itself from Rwanda it shed light on the ethnic divisions in Rwanda as a scapegoat

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for abandoning Rwanda, thus, successfully, Ethnic Rwandans paid more attention to internal ethnic divisions than to the fact that Belgium was retreating. In Michael Hechter's book *International Colonialism*, he posited that internal colonialism. Hechter maintained that modernization and increased contact between ethnic groups within a state will not necessarily bring about ethnic unity, but will be just as likely to lead to ethnic conflict.

This is because of the inequalities between the regions in a country will relegate peripheral regions to an inferior position, leaving the core region dominant. The reaction to this in the peripheral regions will be hostility to the core, and if these regions are also national in character, this will take the form of nationalism[13]. This could very well be the ideal analysis for what transpired in Rwanda. There are three main general approaches to addressing conflict; the power-based approach, the right-based approach, and the interest-based approach.

The power-based approach involves dealing with conflict, using the means of force and coercion (military intervention, economic sanctions). The right-based approach resorts to law and the judicial system to handle conflict (ICJ). The interest-based approach advocates for the use of peaceful means such as negotiation and mediation to deal with conflict situations. [14] The power-based approach is a win/lose one: cost is most likely higher than benefit for both parties and a party ends up losing. The right-based approach is also a win/lose one: the party that loses is frustrated, and frustration might result into more violence.

The interest-based approach is win/win: the benefit is most likely higher for both parties (constructive relationship, sustainable peace). [15] There are five principles for managing ethno-political conflict. 1. States and civil society should recognize and promote the rights of minorities. 2. Democratic institutions are power-sharing are the best means for protecting group rights. 3. Conflicts over self-determination are best settled by negotiations for autonomy within existing states. 4. International actors should protect minority rights and promote settlement of ethno-political wars. .

International actors may use coercive means to stop civil wars and mass killings of civilians. [16] International doctrine and practice for managing conflict in heterogeneous societies remains a work in progress. They have evolved in a trial-and-error process that will continue for the foreseeable future. Each democratic institution in a divided society, each new diplomatic offensive aimed at a crisis situation, each new intervention and peace enforcement operation is in part a political experiment whose success or failure shapes and constrains future engagement. 17] “ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. ” ??? Matthew 5:

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