

PART III

THE CONDITION OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

The Concept of Structural Violence

Almost three decades ago, Johan Galtung (1969) and later Pierre Spitz (1978) wrote about the condition of structural violence, in which the poor are denied decent and dignified lives because their basic physical and mental capacities are constrained by hunger, poverty, inequality, and exclusion. Galtung (1969, 168) defined violence as “those factors that cause people’s actual physical and mental realizations to be below their potential realizations.” As such, violence of this type can be built into the structure of a society, “showing up as . . . unequal life chances.” For example: “in a society where life expectancy is twice as high in the upper class as in the lower classes, violence is exercised even if there are no concrete actors one can point to directly attacking others, as when one person kills another” (Galtung 1969, 169, 171). According to Khan (1978, 836), structural violence can take four forms: “(a) classical, or direct, violence; (b) poverty—deprivation of basic material needs; (c) repression—deprivation of human rights; (d) alienation—deprivation of higher needs.” The latter category includes such intangibles as mental and emotional harm, denial of dignity and integrity, and the “destruction of the individual in a psychological or spiritual sense”—all issues that scholars of violence have studied over the ages and often included in their definitions of violence (Hoffmann and McKendrick 1990, 4–5). Two decades later, Galtung (1990, 292) defined violence as “avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally to life, lowering the real level of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible,” referring to survival, well-being, freedom,

and identity as the four basic needs categories diminished by structural violence.

In the scientific literature, the term *structural violence* is still occasionally used to describe situations that are characterized by a combination of inequality, repression, and racism. As such, the term can pertain to living conditions in Brazil, apartheid South Africa, and inner-city America, where high degrees of acute violence also exist. Mamdani (1996, 59) also used the term to indicate colonialism's impact on native people in Africa.

Researchers studying poor black adolescents' perceptions of violence within their communities in the United States were presented with structural violence, as manifested in a lack of employment opportunities and social facilities, as well as in the racial stereotypes faced by black inner-city youngsters (Kaljee and others 1995). Many of the youngsters and their parents saw an explicit link between structural and acute violence. Earl Shorris (1997, 37–39, 97), following his belief that “when anyone other than the poor defines poverty, the definition itself becomes a force against them,” asked hundreds of poor people in the United States to describe what poverty meant to them. In that discussion, factors such as lack of communication, unsatisfactory social life, exclusion from duties and rewards of citizenship, racism, and isolation turned out to be as important as hunger and lack of adequate housing. Poverty, then, is about privation as much as about oppression, the latter including “being despised (not hated) by the powerful” and “responses limited to passivity or violence.” Without using the term, Shorris is describing important elements of the concept of structural violence.

In writing about South Africa, Hoffmann and McKendrick (1990, 20) defined structural violence as “institutionalized inequalities of statuses, rights, and power,” adding that “these inequalities are not the result of freedom of choice by the individuals and groups who are victimized, but rather are the consequence of the more powerful group's use of coercion, which has become institutionalized into legal systems, and justified through mythology, religion, philosophy, ideology and history” (see also Van der Merwe 1989; Gil 1970). In the next chapters, I argue that the development ideology and practice constituted part of the superstructure of structural violence in Rwanda.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes's 1992 book about Brazil, *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, also discusses structural violence as observed in extremely high and widely accepted infant mortality among slum inhabitants. Talking about “unrecognized,

gratuitous and useless social suffering,” and describing such situations as “invisible genocides and small holocausts,” she rightly observes that “the paradox is that they are not invisible because they are secreted away and hidden from view, but quite the reverse. As Wittgenstein noted, the things that are hardest to perceive are often those which are right before our eyes and therefore simply taken for granted” (Scheper-Hughes 1996, 889).

What can be learned from this overview, then, is that the concept of structural violence draws our attention to unequal life chances, usually caused by great inequality, injustice, discrimination, and exclusion and needlessly limiting people’s physical, social, and psychological well-being. In the rest of this part, I argue that in Rwanda, the majority of the population lived a life characterized by great structural violence in its physical, social, and psychological forms. But before I do so, it may be useful to take a brief look at the notion of human development, which helps us further operationalize the concept of structural violence and links it with current development debates.

Human Development

In many ways, the concept of structural violence can be seen as the inverse of that of human development, which is now moving up on the development community’s agenda, drawing attention to oft-neglected issues of empowerment, social cooperation, equity, dignity, security, and sustainability.¹ Probably the most visible work is that of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which in 1990 began publishing its annual *Human Development Report*. Designed as an explicit alternative to the World Bank’s *World Development Report*, this series has generated much debate over the years, regarding both the factors to be included and the way to measure them. In its first year, human development was defined as “the process of enabling people to have wider choices.” Much attention was devoted to health, education, and nutrition, which had been neglected, if not negatively affected, during the structural adjustment decade of the 1980s. Unlike the World Bank, the UNDP treated health, nutrition, and education not as means of promoting economic growth—in the Bank’s parlance, investment in human resources—but as part of a much larger process of holistic improvement in people’s capacities to live free, dignified lives in the way they saw fit.

With each successive year, the team in charge of the *Human Development Report* has refined and redefined the concept, based on criticisms and suggestions received. By 1996, the definition of human development had become much more comprehensive, including:

- empowerment: basic empowerment depends on the expansion of people's capabilities—expansion that involves an enlargement of choices and thus an increase in freedom. But people can exercise few choices without freedom from hunger, want and deprivation. . . . Empowerment carries an additional connotation—that in the course of their daily lives people are able to participate in, or endorse, the decision-making that affects their lives. . . . People should not be passive beneficiaries of a process engineered by others. They should be active agents in their own development.
- cooperation: people live within a complex web of social structures—from the family to the state, from local self-help groups to multinational corporations. They are social beings who value participation in the life of their community. This sense of belonging is an important source of well-being. It gives enjoyment and direction, a sense of purpose and meaning. . . . If people live together well, if they cooperate in a mutually enriching way, this enlarges their individual choices. . . .
- equity: equity is usually thought of in terms of wealth or income. But human development takes a much broader view—seeking equity in basic capabilities and opportunities. . . . This applies in particular to women. . . .
- sustainability: sustainable human development meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. . . . What needs to be sustained are people's opportunities to freely exercise their basic capabilities.
- security: for too long the idea of security has referred to military security or the security of states. One of the most basic needs is security of livelihood, but people also want to be free from chronic threats, such as disease or oppression, as well as from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives. Human development insists that everyone should enjoy a minimal level of security. (UNDP 1996, 55–56)

Coming from a different perspective, Robert Chambers (1995), father of the rapid, participatory, rural appraisal approach to development research, synthesized decades of work with local communities throughout the world. He argues that, from the point of view of the poor, what he calls the condition of “deprivation” reaches far beyond a lack of income and can not be solved by simple economic growth. Deprivation is characterized by “social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation.” For the poor, actions that target only one of these aspects—usually lack of income—are too limited and often self-defeating, to the extent that progress on one characteristic (for example, increases in income) often goes hand in hand with setbacks in the other characteristics (such as increases in vulnerability and instability).

In short, it seems that the same elements appear over and over again: for poor people, meaningful development is not simply about increases in income but also about improved access to the means of production; reduction in insecurity and vulnerability, and the creation of a sustainable and hopeful future; empowerment through participation, justice, freedom, and access to information and education; overcoming physical weakness through access to health and nutrition; and social relations characterized by human dignity, cooperation, and a sense of equity. All these processes are not reducible to economic growth, nor do they automatically follow from it. Their systematic absence for certain groups, especially under conditions of macroeconomic growth, can be called structural violence.

Structural Violence in Rwanda: A Preview of the Argument

I argue that, notwithstanding positive macroeconomic indicators, a high degree of structural violence existed in Rwanda. This situation began long before 1990. Rwandan society—as well as many other African societies—is violent not only when massive physical harm is being done with arms by one group against another, as was the case from 1990 onward. The violence is continuous and structural and is exerted against the majority of the poor. It manifests itself in a deep and widening inequality of life chances; corruption, arbitrariness, and impunity; the permanence of social and economic exclusion; lack of access to information, education, health, and minimal basic needs; and an authoritarian and condescending state and aid system.

Structural violence, I further argue, provokes frustration, anger, ignorance, despair, and cynicism, all of which greatly increase the potential for acute violence. In the case of Rwanda, from the 1990s onward, the economic and political crises described in Chapter 4 combined with this basis of structural violence to push society over the brink of destruction.

As an aside, I believe that the same processes are taking place in other African countries, leading to similar results. To be sure, the occurrence of genocide is likely to remain unique to Rwanda, as it displayed certain features that are not shared by most other African countries. For example, in most other African countries, there is no tradition of institutionalized, state-sponsored, racism. Similarly, in most countries, there are more than two ethnic groups, and the balance of power among

them is much less unequal. However, in many African countries, the same processes of structural violence as in Rwanda are leading to instances of communal violence. The specific form this violence takes depends on each country's historical, political, and cultural circumstances, but the basic processes underlying it are similar.

In Chapter 6, I analyze the presence of structural violence by examining development from three important perspectives that are rarely, if ever, on the agenda of any development institution (or, for that matter, of social scientists studying Rwanda). They are equity/inequality, inclusion/exclusion, and dignity/humiliation. For each of them, I present data drawn from project evaluations, conversations, surveys, and articles. The resulting diagnostic contrasts singularly with the almost idyllic dominant image of Rwanda as a nicely developing country. It shows that, for decades, Rwandan society was characterized by rising inequality; exclusion along social, regional, and ethnic lines; and structural humiliation. The conclusion analyzes the social impact of structural violence on society, describing how it leads to anger, cynicism, despair, and normlessness—factors that provide the fertile ground in which the seeds of hatred are sown. Chapter 7 then pays particular attention to foreign aid, seeking to tease out its role and its place in the processes observed and asking why development aid practitioners are so rarely aware of the condition of structural violence and their own role in it.

Note

1. Galtung himself, twenty years ago, spent much time on creating better indicators for development (see, for example, Galtung and others n.d.). He was working on a ten-dimensional concept of development that includes personal growth, diversity, socioeconomic growth, equality, social justice, equity, autonomy, solidarity, participation, and ecological balance.

FROM STRUCTURAL TO ACUTE VIOLENCE

The first section of this chapter discusses poverty and inequality in Rwanda. According to 1994 World Bank data, Rwanda was the most egalitarian country among all low-income and middle-income countries in the world. These data are wrong and greatly underestimate the problems in Rwanda. In actuality, poverty and inequality were high and rising dramatically from the mid-1980s onward. I demonstrate this by analyzing data on food expenditures and undernutrition and by looking in greater detail at a number of local studies on trends in land and income inequality in the 1980s.

In the next section, I demonstrate that this rising inequality resulted not so much from differences in natural resource endowments or individual dynamism but from the functioning of a sociopolitical system based on multiple exclusions. I document this assertion through an in-depth analysis of the functioning and impact of rural development projects—the main path of development for the masses in a poor rural country like Rwanda.

The third section of this chapter analyzes the processes of humiliation and disempowerment that characterize the interactions between the state/aid system and the large majority of poor Rwandans. I show that the system of top-down extension, and the associated imagery of development and the good life, deprives people of their self-respect and creativity, making them vulnerable to manipulation and simplistic ideas.

The picture that emerges, then, is very different from the one presented in Chapter 3. For the large mass of poor Rwandans, life was characterized by a constant reduction of life chances and increase of socioeconomic vulnerability; the absence of opportunities to acquire

information and education; oppressive, authoritarian, and condescending treatment by the development system; growing social, ethnic, and regional inequality; and a history of impunity, corruption, and abuse of power by local and national elites, often committed in the name of development.

Drawing on earlier work by Johan Galtung and others, I identify this condition as one of “structural violence,” thus drawing attention to the fact that such structures and processes are violent because they needlessly and brutally limit people’s physical and psychological capacities. The notion of structural violence allows us to focus on the “little people” who perpetrate the (acute) violence: the adolescents who—everywhere from Rwanda to Liberia—are the first to do the killing and to be killed, the ordinary farmers who take up arms against their neighbors, and the women who attack other women (Schoepf 1995). In the fourth section of this chapter, I discuss in some detail the mechanisms that link structural and acute violence.

Structural violence was a key component of the social basis on which the edifice of genocide was built. The condition of structural violence is intimately linked to impunity. Together, they undermine the legitimacy of the state and the normative structures that hold societies and states together. Structural violence also reduces the effectiveness of development interventions and makes it likely that any economic progress made will be ill distributed. As such, it creates anger, resentment, and frustration, which contribute to the erosion of social capital and norms in society. A population that is cynical, angry, and frustrated is predisposed to scapegoating and projection, vulnerable to manipulation, deeply afraid of the future, and desperate for change. It is this population that bought into racist prejudice in the 1990s and was willing to kill out of fear, anger, resentment, and greed. Although they do not take the form of genocide, similar processes, with similar outcomes, are taking place throughout Africa.

Poverty and Inequality

There are few nationwide data on poverty and inequality in Rwanda. The main data come from a 1994 World Bank report (1994b, i, 10) prepared before the genocide on poverty reduction and sustainable growth, which states that the proportion of the population living in poverty grew from 40 percent in 1985 to 53 percent in 1992. The same report

(1994b, 5, 60, 25) adds that “land is less unequally divided than elsewhere, . . . household expenditure is relatively evenly distributed in Rwanda, and . . . government expenditure and tax policies are income neutral.” Moreover, the Bank’s 1993 *World Development Report* indicates that the percentage share of consumption of the poorest 2 deciles of the population was 9.7 percent, and of the richest decile it was 24.6 percent. One has to move up to the level of Hungary to find a more egalitarian country (World Bank 1993, table 20).

These data greatly underestimate the extent of poverty and inequality in Rwanda. They are largely statistical constructs, part of the image that the development community liked to maintain for Rwanda. A closer look at both data on undernutrition and local-level studies suggests that the extent of poverty and inequality and their recent trends were much more dramatic.

UNDERNUTRITION AND ULTRA-POVERTY

The above-mentioned World Bank (1994b, 5) figures on poverty in 1985 and 1992 are based on a 1983–85 census, in which the category of the poor was defined as “the bottom 40 percent of the sample in terms of expenditures per capita.” In other words, poverty in 1983–85 was *by definition* set at 40 percent, while the nonpoor automatically constituted 60 percent of society. Although this kind of artificial cutoff may be useful for statistical purposes, especially for monitoring trends, it does not reflect the real conditions of life for Rwanda’s inhabitants. Specifically, I argue that the extent of poverty in Rwanda was much higher than 40 or 53 percent.

In recalculating the extent of poverty, it is useful to start from Michael Lipton’s (1988) definition of the “poorest of the poor” as those households that spend 75 percent or more of their income on food. For people to spend that much on food—to the neglect of other important things such as clothes, health care, education, investment, and leisure—implies that they are likely to be malnourished and, as a result, weak and often sick. For those people, life is likely to be a constant fight for survival—they can hardly invest in productive assets or take risks. This, in turn, means that they are typically unable to benefit from those policies and projects that may aid the “ordinary” poor.

The World Bank report (1994b, 6) tells us that “expenditures on food were 88 percent of total for the poor and 74 percent for the non-poor.”

Another study in 1991 found that rural households spent, on average, 80 percent of their incomes on food; in urban areas, that figure was 54 percent (Inter-Ministerial Committee 1991, 11). These data suggest that a very large proportion of the so-called nonpoor were in fact extremely poor. If we use Lipton's cutoff point, it seems that the incidence of ultra-poverty may well have been higher than 50 percent, and beyond that, another significant part of the population was poor as well.

Data on childhood malnutrition support this assertion. Although data on this topic have been inconsistent and incompatible due to different survey designs, researchers recently created a cleaned-up data series for Rwanda (Grosse and others 1995). These data on child undernutrition, an indicator that is often used as a proxy for general undernutrition (Mason, Jonsson and Csete 1996), indicate that approximately half of all children were stunted. Other World Bank data (1991c, 57) show that the average caloric intake of half of society was below 2,000 calories per person per day; they also demonstrate that the availability of calories was perfectly correlated with income and almost perfectly with farm size. Vis, Goyens, and Brasseur (1995, 374) argue that at least 50 percent of the population must be considered malnourished. Therefore, it seems that even though half of all households were spending more than three-quarters of their incomes on food, they were not getting enough food to feed their children. This seems to indicate that, following Lipton, up to half of Rwanda's population must be categorized as belonging to the poorest of the poor. Local-level data on land and income inequality confirm this picture and add more precision on recent trends.

TRENDS IN LAND AND INCOME INEQUALITY

From the 1980s onward, a process of land concentration began in Rwanda, in which wealthy farmers—usually people who earned their primary income in the administration—bought land from the poorest farmers. Although Rwanda has a policy that forbids the purchase of land by those with three or more hectares (and all land sales require authorization by the government), farmers were able to circumvent the law through long-term leases or by buying and selling in black markets (World Bank 1991b, 61; Ministère de l'Intérieur n.d., 10). In fact, Willame (1995a, 140) found that in one commune in 1988, 21 percent of the fields had been bought (mostly the result of distress sales by their

previous owners), but the official data were much lower. Also, André and Platteau (1995, 22) found that land sales were prevalent in the region they studied (in fact, they were the highest for any of the sixteen African countries for which data exist). According to them, the large majority of these land sales were distress sales, often being a matter of survival for the families concerned. And Uwizeyimana (1996, 20) reported that, on average, 15 percent of the cultivated land had been bought, but in some regions, the proportion of all cultivated land bought or rented was as high as 45 percent.

This suggests that real land inequality as well as landlessness were in all likelihood much higher than the official figures indicate (André and Platteau 1995, 7 ff). According to the World Bank (1991c, 3, 57), “there is an emerging group of landowners with 5 or more hectares, while the number of landless farmers is increasing apace.” According to data in the 1984 National Agricultural Survey, approximately 15 percent of the farmers owned half of the land, especially in the provinces of rural Kigali, Gitarama, and Gikongoro. The Rwandan NGO IWACU (1991, 51) stated that 26 percent of the population had become landless (see also United Nations 1991, 51). André and Platteau (1995, 7–19) also document a greatly increasing rate of landlessness in the late 1980s, adding that land sales contributed to half of all the land inequality observed by 1993.

According to the National Agricultural Commission, the minimum farm size required to feed an average family of five persons is 0.7 hectare. Using that criterion, a UN seminar on poverty concluded that 43 percent of the farm households lacked the minimum land for survival and lived in a situation of chronic undernutrition (United Nations 1991, 29). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD 1990, 8), using a similar methodology, argues that in 1990 in the province of Byumba, 50 percent of the farmers had insufficient land—or no land at all—to produce the income required to meet essential nutritional requirements; for the region of the Buberuka highlands, this figure was an astonishing 75 percent (IFAD 1992, 8). These data, then, also confirm the observation made in the previous section that up to half of Rwandan households lived in extreme poverty.

Like elsewhere in Africa, the majority of these land purchases were not by small farmers who, through sheer hard work, managed to buy a few acres more but rather by “big men” with money earned as government or aid agency wages or in commerce (IWACU 1991, 41; United Nations 1991, 30; Reyntjens 1994, 223; Seruvumba 1992, 10;

Voyame and others 1996, 127; for the situation elsewhere, see Downs and Reyna 1988, 3–9, 15). Erny (1994, 80) and many others describe the population as “extremely unhappy with the accumulation of land by the privileged of the regime and the constitution of large pastoral domains.” Catharine Newbury (interviewed by Pace and Schoetzau 1995) adds:

In a country like Rwanda, where 90 percent of the population are very poor, and of those, the majority live under the poverty line, it is a zero sum situation. So you had the spectacle of people associated with the government becoming very rich and building big villas and driving around in fancy cars and a huge influx of expatriates coming in to manage various projects. . . . The unraveling of the economy left a new generation of Rwandans who were jobless, landless, and angry—in other words, fertile for recruitment into extremist militias that attacked the Tutsis in Rwanda.

In one of the few documents that present a farmer’s opinion about the causes of the genocide, asset and income inequality figure in first and second place (Mugwaneza 1994, 26).

Similar processes took place in the urban and periurban regions. It is widely known that the control of urban real estate provided great opportunities for personal gain to the well-connected (Pabanel 1995, 115). As Kigali and other cities grew, they consumed land from the surrounding farmers, often at extremely low prices, thus creating a growing army of mendacity (IWACU 1991, 10). These lands were covered with housing, often for a small upper class of technical assistants and local high cadres, providing enormous windfall profits to those owning the lands.

In addition, the state could and did expropriate land regularly, with very little, if any, compensation, causing extreme resentment and destitution among farmers. As a World Bank (1994b, 35) expert wrote on this subject with uncharacteristic bluntness, “these laws are not unusual in the world, but are carried to a rather severe extent in Rwanda. For example, if a local government decides to zone an area for industrial development or middle-class housing, peasants will have their land confiscated. As practiced, this policy is strongly anti-poor.” Yet almost all development projects are characterized by the construction of offices, houses for the staff, demonstration fields, access roads, and reforestation areas on lands that were similarly expropriated (IWACU 1991, 8; de la Masselière 1992, 112).

Not surprisingly, the available data indicate that income inequality was high and growing quickly in the 1980s. Data for rural areas are

rare, but it is known that rural incomes are strongly correlated with land distribution, which was discussed in the preceding paragraphs (Clay and McAllister 1991). Data are much better for people with formal jobs, earning wages. According to 1986 Ministry of the Plan data, the lowest-paid 49 percent of all salaried people in Rwanda earned 7.6 percent of the total salary mass, while the best-paid 1.1 percent earned 27.8 percent (Ministère du Plan 1988, 83). By 1988, the lowest-paid 65 percent earned less than 4 percent of all salaries, while the top 1 percent had increased its share to 45.8 percent (Ministère du Plan 1989, 95). According to Maton's (1994) nationwide analysis, the income share of the richest decile in Rwanda increased from 22 percent in 1982 to 52 percent in 1994, vastly higher than the World Bank data suggest. And according to data by Marysse, De Herdt, and Ndayambaje (1995, 46–47), in a rural region in the province of Butare, the richest 10 percent earned 66.4 percent of that region's income in 1992. The same team documented that the lowest eight deciles saw their incomes decrease, while the highest two deciles experienced increases between 1990 and 1992; the most severe income losses, approximately 60 percent, were found in the lowest groups. Average income of the lowest decile was RF 388 per month, and of the highest decile, RF 188,900 per month—in other words, 487 times more (the gap was “only” 185 times more in 1990) (Marysse, De Herdt, and Ndayambaje 1995, 46).

None of this takes into account the revenues of expatriates. Already in 1982, Marysse (1982, table 6) calculated that the average expatriate income was 114 times higher than that of one-third of the farmers (meaning more or less one-third of society, given that up to 95 percent of society is rural). By 1992, this gap had certainly risen. Caviezel and Fouga (1989), in the Burundian context, calculated that expatriate incomes were 600 times higher than those of average farmers in the early 1990s; the situation in Rwanda was probably similar.

FORCED IMMOBILITY

One factor that contributed to poverty was particular to Rwanda: the existence and systematic enforcement of a multitude of limitations on people's mobility and initiative. Through residence permits, zoning regulations, restrictive labor practices, copious taxes, and police harassment, the state was always present in the life of any person who sought to produce or sell a product—and it often discouraged that person from

doing so (World Bank 1994b, 37). Internal migration was made all but impossible through deliberate government policy. Residence permits were required for any stay anywhere, travel permits were needed to move, and “trading licenses are required even for those wishing to sell a basket of vegetables” (World Bank 1994b, viii; Guichaoua 1989). As the U.S. Department of State’s 1993 human rights report stated:

Freedom of movement and residence are restricted by laws and regulations which require all residents to hold national identity cards and residence and work permits. Police conduct periodic checks, especially in urban areas, and return all those not registered in the locality to their own commune. Property owners who do not require tenants to show valid documentation are subject to fines and even imprisonment. Undocumented tenants are subject to expulsion.

Guichaoua (1995, 3–4) adds:

The umuganda card [noting participation in the obligatory communal labor] was kept up to date by the communal authorities (or in many cases by the staff of development projects of the major foreign donors) and had to be presented at all police controls. Travel permits were required for all non-residents (and especially young, uneducated kids from the countryside) to come to Kigali.

The official justification for many of these policies was to combat urban poverty and slum creation—goals that were accomplished. After Bhutan, Rwanda was the least urbanized country on earth, with 95 percent of the population living in rural areas. Note that, like so much else about Rwanda, this is partly a colonial legacy: in 1953–54, the urbanization rate of Rwanda was 0.9 percent; the policies restricting internal population movements already existed; and the capital, Kigali, had a total population of no more than 3,000 (Voyame and others 1996, 50).

However, these policies had negative repercussions. According to the World Bank (1994b, vii), “restrictions on population movement and on urbanization have impeded the development of market centers essential for developing a market economy. . . . This has increased poverty by limiting options for the poor and reduced the potential for economic growth.” More generally, since opportunities for education, health care, small enterprise and commerce, and social mobility were highest in urban areas, the policies contributed to the further exclusion of the majority of Rwandans. Imagine the frustration of the tens of thousands of semieducated youth spawned by the education system each year when they were forbidden to leave the countryside, forced to stay on their meager plots, without hope for the future.

These data paint a very different picture from the one drawn by the World Bank, which suggested that inequality in Rwanda was low and government policies income-neutral. Poverty in Rwanda has always been higher than these data suggest, although it is impossible to know by how much. Moreover, trends over the last decade have worsened the situation. From my analysis, I can conclude that, by the early 1990s, approximately 50 percent of Rwanda's society was extremely poor (incapable of feeding itself decently or investing productively), up to 40 percent poor, 9 percent nonpoor, and perhaps 1 percent positively rich (consisting of a small elite of local "big men" at the highest levels of the state and in the business sector, as well as a few thousand mostly foreign technical assistants and experts). This distribution is confirmed by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) data that put 90 percent of Rwanda's rural population (and 86 percent of the total population) below the poverty line—the highest poverty figure for the whole world.¹ If Lipton's observation that the ultra-poor do not benefit from projects and economic trends that may benefit the poor holds true in Rwanda, up to half of society has not benefited from whatever progress has been observed in the macroeconomic data presented in Chapter 3. Data on the widespread nature of the famine at the end of the 1980s (IWACU 1991, 6) and the growing landlessness suggest that this may well be the case. This is admitted by some people, both in writing (United Nations 1991, 34–40) and in policy: I encountered one major European nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Rwanda that explicitly indicated that it did not seek to work with the poorest 30 percent of the people because they were beyond help.

Inequality greatly increased from the 1980s onward for a variety of reasons: the economic crisis brought increased hardship to the majority, but also new opportunities to a minority (through the purchase of land from distress sales, for example); the extent of corruption and clientelism increased; and the number of people at the top—technical assistants and the big men of the state—increased. This coincided with the dramatic reduction in life chances for the majority of the poor and created significant frustration and discontent in Rwanda.

Thus, long before the 1990s, life in Rwanda had become devoid of hope and dreams for the large majority of people: the future looked worse than the already bad present (Bagiramenshi and Bazihizina 1985, 87; Willame 1995a, 137). Peasant life was perceived as a prison without escape in which poverty, infantilization, social inferiority, and powerlessness combined to create a sense of personal failure. One could

occasionally glimpse this pervasive sense of failure and hopelessness in direct interviews with farmers. In 1982, for example, a team evaluating an agricultural development program in Kibuye asked farmers if they wanted their children to be farmers; 77 percent of them answered no (Corrèze, Gentil, and Barnaud 1982b, 81; also personal observations and de Ravignan 1980, 16). Similarly, a 1985 reflection workshop with farmers in Gitarama, a widespread feeling that life was devoid of a future, both economically and socially, surfaced (Hétier 1985, 18; Groupe de Labeaume 1985, 81, 86). In both cases, a majority of respondents stated that only those who could not escape would remain on the farm—in other words, they equated their own occupation and lifestyle with failure and humiliation. Note that these interviews occurred before the mid-1980s; the economic crisis that lasted until 1994 worsened this situation. It is also in this light that one must understand the impact of the long-standing policies forbidding migration and rendering self-employment costly. These policies pleased many experts who appreciated the lack of shantytowns in Rwanda. For the rural population, however, they signified one more damper on hope for escape. Young men were hit especially hard: they had far less land than their fathers and were incapable of supporting families or even marrying. The number of the landless was increasing rapidly. By the early 1980s, according to one source, hundreds of thousands of young men could neither attain education nor inherit land and were in a permanent search for low-paid, temporary jobs, mostly in vain (CIDSE and CARITAS Internationalis 1995, 9). They were blocked in their educational advancement, were limited in their employment and migration options, and lacked the resources to make a decent life in agriculture.

The Forces of Exclusion

In Rwanda, like elsewhere in Africa, exclusion was embedded in the functioning of society. In Rwanda, this exclusion was social, regional, and ethnic in character. In a society where the development enterprise has been so central, in both ideological and financial terms, it comes as no surprise that exclusion was deeply ingrained in the processes of so-called development. In this section, I study rural development projects—the primary destination of aid money, and the central focus of the development discourse. I demonstrate how such projects act as mechanisms for exclusion and for reproduction of the privileges of a small elite.

THE MUTARA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (1974–87)

A rare insight into a particular development project's complicated social effects is afforded by combining an analysis by René Lemarchand, one of the world's foremost African scholars and an expert in the Great Lakes region, and the official World Bank reports on a rural development project sponsored by the International Development Association (IDA) that began in 1974 and ended, after two phases, twelve years later. The first Mutara agricultural development project began in 1974, after six years of identification studies and difficult negotiations. Its goal was to install 7,000 families on *paysannats*, government-sponsored farms started by the colonizer in 1953 and continued by the independent government, located in so-called underpopulated areas. Farmers were to be given fixed quantities of land with contracts that specified the agricultural techniques to be employed. A major innovation was the creation of ranches following a similar pattern: grazing rights as well as small plots of land would be given to 3,000 pastoralist (Tutsi and Hima) households in return for certain behaviors (destocking, payments, and so forth). A parastatal organization, OVAPAM, was created to manage the project.

The audit of the first phase observed that most physical targets of the project had been met. Indeed, 750 kilometers of roads had been constructed, and OVAPAM's own elaborate infrastructure had been built: forty-seven houses, two warehouses, offices, and other structures. Cars and office supplies had also been bought. The experts and employees could sleep safely, although the Rwandan director of OVAPAM never spent a night in the rural headquarters.

The rest of the project was a complete failure. A water supply scheme that was part of the original project was dropped because the cost of the above-mentioned constructions had greatly exceeded planned budgets. No social infrastructure for the population was built at all. According to the audit, this was "deeply resented by the population" (World Bank 1979, 10; 1981, 4). The crucial extension component of the project also failed: neither farmers nor ranchers adopted the proposed techniques.

Thus, after six years of study, five years of work, and \$4.5 million (to be reimbursed, albeit on soft terms), the project's sole output was an enormous infrastructure for itself (84 percent of total project cost; World Bank 1981, 6) and the creation of some 160 jobs (60 were evaluated as

necessary). Its economic rate of return was negative, its management was poor and conflict-ridden, cost overruns plagued the whole project, and consultants had not managed to train anyone because they hardly spoke French. The audit report also mentioned in passing that many pastoralists from the region had left for Uganda out of fear of the project and the intentions behind it (World Bank 1979, 14; 1981, 35; 1991a, 2) and that the rules on land distribution had been violated consistently. The so-called beneficiary committees set up to oversee the process of distribution never functioned; people from outside the zone (from Ruhengeri, the president's region) had in all likelihood benefited disproportionately.

Nevertheless, the audit report managed to conclude on an optimistic note: the project had created dialogue between the Bank and the government (World Bank 1979, 18; 1981, 44). As a result, a second phase was proposed, with the same institutional setup and an extension of the zone, as well as slightly adapted objectives: a primary focus on the creation of social infrastructures (water supply, schools, health centers), and improvements in the extension messages to farmers and pastoralists (World Bank 1979, 26).

The 1991 completion report, covering phase II of the project (1979–86), announced that the physical targets had been met, although with substantial cost overruns and a two-year delay (the water system was finally built in 1986, twenty years after the first mission, and twelve years after the project began). The bad news was that the “technical extension package had little to offer” to the farmers, and the research station did not create any outputs of relevance to them (World Bank 1991a, iii, 5). Most of the innovations proposed were either not adopted or abandoned after the project ended. The group ranches still were not sustainable; in fact, the ecological situation probably became worse during the project's life (World Bank 1991a, iv). Project management remained as conflicted and unclear as before.

Until now, the story has been essentially one of mismanagement, ineffectiveness, and ignorance—qualities often encountered in the development business. They produce dramatic consequences, furthering inequality, waste, and possibly even poverty. But a closer sociological analysis shows that these outcomes are not the result of bad luck or particular incompetence, but rather the result of profound forces of politics, exclusion, and maldevelopment that existed in Rwanda. According to Lemarchand, the above-described results of the Mutara project are not accidents but are directly related to the forces of exclusion that characterized the project zone and Rwanda in general. Lemarchand documents

a “more or less deliberate policy of ethnic favoritism on the part of influential Hutu politicians at the regional and national levels,” directed primarily against Tutsi but also against the Burundian refugees who lived in the region. He demonstrates that this policy primarily favored people from Ruhengeri and a select number of other “clients,” mainly Hutu (Lemarchand 1982, 25–26).

But the forces of exclusion were not solely ethnic; they also operated between the small urban, well-connected, educated sector and the peasant masses (Lemarchand 1982, 23). “Pre-existing differences have been further accentuated by the ability of the wealthier and better-educated recipients to supplement their income through a variety of jobs within and outside the project parameter” (traders, OVAPAM employees, workers in Kigali) (Lemarchand 1982, 59). These same people are the ones who managed to obtain much of the land distributed during these ten years; indeed, according to Lemarchand, up to 40 percent of the land was awarded to absentee ranchers, that is, people who do not cultivate the land but rent it to others. These absentee ranchers were mainly politicians, civil servants, and OVAPAM project employees themselves (Lemarchand 1982, 45, 58–59).

The final result of this project, then, was a great increase in inequality between regions, social classes, groups, and individuals (Lemarchand 1982, 27, 41, 58, 63; see also Newbury in Pace and Schoetzau 1995). It was a system in which a small group of people managed to obtain most of the advantages of the multi-million-dollar project: jobs inside and outside the project; free land to be cultivated by family members, renters, or political clients; and large herds overgrazing at the expense of the original Tutsi and Hima herdsmen. It is no accident that those who benefited were often from the president’s region, nor that almost all of them belonged to the usual class of *evolués*, urban people in the loop, with connections to the right people. These people also received most of the access to cars, foreign training, and the forty-seven new buildings. They, in return, fueled a system of clientelism, through which ordinary Hutu could get access to land, salaried jobs, agricultural inputs, and so forth.

In conclusion, Lemarchand (1982, 1, 4–5) writes about

the gap which inevitably separates intentions from results when, by accident or by design (in this case the latter), the sociopolitical dimension of rural development is left out of the accounting. . . . To view the OVAPAM project simply as an effort to improve the material conditions of the “poor” thus leaves out at least two major intervening variables: the manner in which ethnicity affects the definition of the “poor” and how traditional forms of social organization [Lemarchand refers here to clientelism,

which he considers a traditional social phenomenon] operate to incorporate the poor into the social matrix of the Mutara. . . . The social dynamics operating in the project area proved largely incompatible with the very objective of rural development as defined by the Bank, in effect denying the poor access to the resources, services and institutional support structure that might have allowed them to move up the economic and social ladder.

BEYOND MUTARA

The above description is particularly worrisome if one looks beyond the specific project to uncover the persistent pattern behind decades of “failed” projects. To be sure, some projects created useful social infrastructures, albeit typically at great cost overruns and with low sustainability. They sometimes brought real benefits to a number of poor people. However, I argue that most projects—even those deemed successful by their promoters (and, rhetoric notwithstanding, there are probably few people in the World Bank who truly believed that the Mutara project was a success)—have results similar to those of the Mutara project. This outcome is more than unfortunate, more than “bad luck.” It is structural and relates to the pattern of interaction between the aid system and the state, the primary locus of the forces of exclusion. This repeated practice is the norm, the result expected both by the population at large and by the real beneficiaries, which partly explains the latter’s desire to repeat the same type of inefficient projects over and over again.

These assertions are not easy to document. Objective information about projects—especially if negative—is difficult to come by. Evaluations are rarely made and are usually limited in scope, excluding any assessments of the social and political aspects of projects. In most cases, those conducting the evaluations have built-in biases, blindness, time constraints, and mechanisms of self-censorship that make truly critical work all but impossible; in the worst cases, bad news is simply censored out, as Lemarchand’s evaluation shows.² Needless to say, the poor and the farmers are not the ones writing project evaluations or, for that matter, project identifications. Even when farmers are addressed more or less directly, their opinions are typically asked only about technical subjects related to project goals, and their responses are heavily filtered by the evaluator’s own biases, as well as farmers’ strategies and perceptions about what can be said without risk. Finally, apart

from the Swiss Development Cooperation agency, no major aid agency has published an independent, public, and critical review of its operations in Rwanda.

It is often said that the main positive impact of development projects is the creation of jobs. Indeed, those with paid jobs, no matter how insignificant, earn incomes much higher than what they could ever make in agriculture. In the early 1980s, for example, when the average farm income was approximately RF 15,000 a year and the average artisanal income around RF 25,000 a year, the *monthly* salary for drivers was RF 15,000, for secretaries and teachers RF 20,000, and for low-level military people RF 30,000. High-level project managers could make more than RF 1 million a year. Most of these jobs were part of the civil service, and people were assigned to them by central decision.

Virtually all major projects in rural areas³ begin their life with the construction of big and expensive houses—the biggest ones for the foreign technical assistants, so they can live in conditions at least equal to those in their home countries, and smaller ones for the Rwandan cadres working for the project—followed by garages, storage places, meeting rooms, offices, and, in most rural development programs, countless demonstration fields. The cost of these constructions, as well as the space they take up, is enormous, and the case of OVAPAM is by no means unique. As a matter of fact, resentment about the space taken up by development projects often comes up in discussions with farmers (Bugingo and others 1992, 35; CIDSE and CARITAS Internationalis 1995, 9; Godding 1983, 76; Michel 1984, 33 ff.; Nzisabira 1992).⁴ Plus there is the cost of the cars, many of which are used solely to drive a lucky few to and from the capital; others are abused for purposes other than their official ones. In most rural development projects, the purchase and maintenance of vehicles consume more than 20 percent of the total local funds. All in all, more than two-thirds of all project costs, especially in the first phase (if there is more than one phase), tends to go to technical assistant salaries, construction of project infrastructure, and cars. This situation prevails in most of Africa. Thus, quite remarkably—although usually unremarked—and contradictory to stated intentions, most of the development aid funds ends up in the hands of the richest 1 percent of people in society (Voyame and others 1996, 512; Godding 1983). No wonder Ngwabije (1995, 39) observes that, to farmers, most projects “benefit only those who promote them and those who work for them.”

Apart from aiding their own employees, many development projects end up supplying services primarily to the wealthy stratum of society. Many of the cattle-ranching projects of the World Bank, for example, had this effect. Thus a USAID study mentions, without any negative connotation, “the eagerness with which wealthy individuals are setting up cattle ranches to take advantage of new pastures and milk-processing facilities established under a World Bank project in Gishwati forest” (USAID 1991, chap. 2).

More broadly, clientelism, corruption, and abuse of power constantly intervene in project execution, determining much of the project’s impact on poverty, inequality, and exclusion. This starts at the drawing board of the project, when decisions are made on where to locate it. According to some data, from 1982 to 1984, nine-tenths of all public investment—the main proportion of it financed by development aid—was in the four provinces of Kigali, Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, and Cyangugu (the first is the capital; the others are provinces in the north); Gitarama, the most populous province after Kigali, received 0.16 percent, and Kibuye 0.84 percent (World Bank 1987, 12; Reyntjens 1994, 222). This is the same pattern of regional inequality observed by Reyntjens (1994, 33), who found that more than a third of the eighty-five most important government positions, as well as the quasi-totality of direction functions in the army and the security apparatus, were held by people from Gisenyi, the president’s native province.

The wheels of the machinery of social exclusion are further oiled when project-related jobs are allocated to the well-connected (Braeckman 1994, 87);^s when project employees use project cars, buildings, and work time for personal purposes; when farmers are required to pay kickbacks to get credits, and these credits go to the family members and friends of the project employees; and when significant proportions of the improved or reclaimed lands end up in the hands of local administrators, political cadres, provincial civil servants, military men, or traders (Kabirigi 1994; Nkubito 1995, 286; Nshimiyunurenyi 1993, 23; Ntezilyayo 1995, 324–25). The wheels turn further when such abuses are discovered and no sanction follows. The number of corrupt administrators promoted to better jobs and unprofessional or unethical managers protected against all evidence and eventually given better-paid positions, for example, is much larger than the number of those who are punished.

In this respect, it is instructive to look at the population’s attitude toward development projects. Anyone who has worked in Rwanda will

agree that distrust is probably the predominant attitude, combined with lack of involvement if not outright resistance. Thus another team of World Bank experts (1987, 12–3, 27) writes with a straight face:

The local population does not, in general, question the nature of the projects to be carried out, provided, i) they participate as paid labor (thereby earning extra cash income); ii) land developments do not affect their farm holdings (requisition of land or encroachment for infrastructure or other works); iii) the works can be reversed (erosion control measures); and iv) most of all the projects do not involve compulsory participation in the form of labor or result in heavy financial charges.

This paragraph should provoke some serious thinking: it states quite correctly that most poor people manage to live with and survive development projects and the associated administration as long as these projects do not hurt them or force them to participate. The main merit of projects for poor people seems to be that they create a plethora of (temporary) salaried jobs. This is a far cry from the original intentions of the development mission.

On occasion, people's sense of alienation and discontent with the way the development system works goes beyond passivity and distrust and moves into active resistance. Indeed, there are many documented cases of farmers destroying project realizations that were supposed to benefit them, such as wells, electricity generators, reforestation areas, and other project-created infrastructures (Nshimiyunurenyi 1993, 21). Other documents report farmers invading uncultivated lands owned by churches or dignitaries of the regime (Seruvumba 1992, 12). Some technical assistants have told me of stones being thrown at their vehicles by angry farmers. As a former student of mine wrote, "this resistance denotes a sense of disapproval, of indignation by people against the humiliation that is inflicted upon them in the treatment of 'their problems' and in the satisfaction of 'their needs' . . . and denounces the derailment of the integrated rural development programs" (Nshimiyunurenyi 1993, 22). From the moment in mid-1990 that multiple political parties were allowed and control by the single party (MRDN) was relaxed, peasants increased their acts of vandalism, defiantly pulling out coffee plants, destroying antierosion structures on their own lands, and invading communal and project demonstration areas as well as reforestation areas (Ntezilyayo 1995, 319, 323, 324). *Umuganda* (compulsory community labor) had to be abandoned totally, since nobody wished to participate in it anymore, and many of the infrastructures fell into disrepair. As USAID's 1992 annual report notes:

In the last 2 years, . . . people have attacked local authorities for launching development projects that brought little or no benefit to the community, for being personally corrupt, and for being inaccessible to and scornful of citizens in general. . . . Those who felt themselves injured by past communal decisions on such matters as land-holding are taking matters into their own hands to reclaim their rights. People are refusing to do compulsory community labor and to pay taxes. They are refusing to listen to the burgomaster and even lock him out of his office or block the road so that he cannot get there.

During the chaotic months of the genocide, there was further vandalism, including the complete and systematic destruction of most development project housing complexes, offices, storage places, and experimentation fields (Ntezilyayo 1995, 323–24).

EXCLUSION AND THE DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETY

These processes of exclusion have important social repercussions. It is clear that they contribute to the inequality documented in the previous section. But their impact goes further, undermining the moral fabric—or social capital, to use a popular term in development circles—of society. They do so through two mechanisms: impunity, and loss of credibility and legitimacy.

If there is only one point that almost all people in Rwanda are willing to agree on, it is probably that impunity⁶ was and is one of the key underlying problems in society (Groupe d'Ecoute 1995; Kabirigi 1994; Oxfam 1996, 8; Ugirashebuya 1996, 36; Guichaoua 1995a, 45–46). There were two types of impunity in Rwanda, and each contributed to violence in different ways. One was the well-known and oft-discussed impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of violence. After the pogroms in 1963–64 and 1972–73, as well as the killings of innocent people between 1990 and 1994, the organizers and perpetrators of violence were basically never punished (not surprising, as they usually worked closely with the powers that be). It is widely felt that if this kind of impunity for grave human rights violations does not end, the cycle of violence in Rwanda will continue, for unpunished violence provokes further violence (Nkubito 1995, 285).

Further, there existed in Rwanda, as in many countries, a second kind of impunity that was a matter of daily life and worked hand in hand with the process of exclusion. When judicial procedures often see the highest bidder prevail (Nkubito 1995, 283 ff.), when entry into secondary

and tertiary education is the result of money and influence rather than knowledge and perseverance, when the best jobs are allocated on the basis of not competency but connections, and when manifest incompetence or abuse of power often ends in promotion, people lose their faith in the system, become cynical, and are easily tempted to break laws themselves.

The repeated abuse propagated by development projects and the institutions that promote development has also tainted the notion of development itself, significantly decreasing its legitimacy. As stated in a document on education in Rwanda, “being successful at school or in life was not dependent on efforts made to work hard and fulfil one’s role, but only on effort furnished to find a ‘godfather,’ in all fields of life. . . . Young people could find inspiration only in practices of clientelism, cupidity, and the cult of mediocrity” (Nayigizente 1995, 43–44). Or, as Braun (1990, 37–38), a former technical assistant from the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Kigali, admits with rare candor:

Our projects tell the farmers and artisans that if they organize and work hard, they will develop. But what is for these people the real-life model of success? . . . Who is the person that becomes wealthier fast? . . . Most of the time, the person who becomes richer did not have to join cooperatives, did not have to attend training sessions, did not need project credit. He became richer very fast because he had “friends” in the right places, and because a little present given can always lead to a little present received. In that case, with our development model that takes so much time and effort, do we have any credibility at all?

Not surprisingly, then, besides cynicism toward the ideas of development and progress, structural violence also leads to an accumulation of anger directed at the institutions and representatives of the state and the aid system—for it is they who embody the development discourse that has lost its meaning, who transmit the humiliation, and who benefit from the processes of exclusion.

Prejudice and Humiliation

In this section, I deal with the third component of structural violence, focusing on processes that are more or less on the sociopsychological level. I argue that the mode of interaction between the state (backed up by the aid system) and the people was characterized by prejudicial and humiliating attitudes and structures. Following Avishai Margalit in his

fascinating book *The Decent Society* (1996, 1, 9), we can define humiliation as “any sort of behavior that constitutes a sound reason for a person to consider his or her self-respect injured.” Such humiliation, Margalit goes on to explain in a way that resembles our discussion of structural violence (to which he does not refer), can be institutional, resulting from the structures, laws, and practices of society. John Rawls, in his *A Theory of Justice* (1971), adds the social bases of self-respect as one of the primary goods of a just society. Together, these concepts refer to the sociopsychological aspects of structural violence: the disregard for people’s knowledge, abilities, creativity, self-respect, and, ultimately, humanity; and their exclusion from the basic norms of civility and respect. Again, I believe that these processes are crucial (although by themselves not sufficient) to understanding the structural basis on which genocide grew.

THE SECOND PREJUDICE

Prejudice existed in Rwanda in not one but two forms. One was the already discussed official Hutu ideology, which was quite different from the more usual African state ideology of national unity. The other was the prejudice of those called the *evolués*—the urban, educated, modern, “developed” people—toward their rural, illiterate, “underdeveloped” brothers. Through that prejudice, which is widespread in Africa and the rest of the Third World, the poor were considered backward, ignorant, and passive—almost subhuman—and were treated in a condescending, paternalistic, and humiliating manner.

A few authors have made passing reference to this concept. Destexhe (1994, 68; see also Vidal 1991) writes about a “‘fourth ethnic group,’ that incorporates those Hutu and Tutsi who have acquired an education and a European knowledge (*savoir-faire*). . . . All these people denigrate the rural way of living.” This group’s lifestyle was radically different from that of the majority of the population, inspired almost exclusively by the Europeans. Its members had a different language (in every conversation with ordinary people, they would make sure to use French words, incomprehensible to the latter, to remind them of the difference), were literate, traveled broadly, had access to cars (pens and paper, as well as car keys, casually displayed, were important symbols of the *evolués*), ate different food and drank different beer, and wore different clothes. The lifestyle, culture, language, and dress code of this group

were upheld as the only desirable, modern ones. In turn, the lifestyle, culture, and modes of expression of the large majority of the people were considered inferior and given no recognition or space. Some have spoken in this context of a kind of social apartheid with invisible boundaries.

At the individual level, this image usually goes hand in hand with a condescending and rude attitude toward “the masses.” As Ntamahungiro (1988, 12–13) writes:

A bad habit has installed itself in our mores, in which the rich, the powerful, the civil servant, the educated person always has priority over the poor, the weak, the non-educated, the “non-civil servant.” This can be observed in court, at the doctor, in the administration and even in taxis. . . . This lack of respect towards peasants manifests itself amongst others in the way they are addressed. They are spoken to in a commandeering tone, often with disdain. They are required to behave as inferiors, to make themselves very small. (See also Willame 1995a, 147.)

A large part of the population internalized these values, accepting this lifestyle as the only “good” one, and judged its own fate as primitive, inferior, and extremely undesirable. Little was left of the “traditional” pride of the African farmer in his culture, in Rwanda as elsewhere. Most farmers, especially the young, considered the need to farm a demonstration of failure and lowliness and would give up farming immediately to become a sentry, a cook, or especially a driver in any development project and to live in the city. The above-mentioned data indicating that most farmers hoped that none of their children would become farmers must be interpreted in that light. To a certain extent, this attitude was based on a realistic assessment of their chances of prospering with agriculture; yet it was also the result of a widespread sociocultural change that began under colonization (Willame 1995a, 137).

As Franz von Benda-Beckman (1993, 122) writes, “villagers resent the arrogance of bureaucratic power, which is not based on knowledge and skill but on power of the state and what state officials consider to be the law. They resent the arrogance of people who will not work with their hands anymore, who won’t lift a finger when work is to be done, yet exhort them to work harder; who ride around on scooters or cars and have villagers come to their offices on foot in vain.” This intellectual and social arrogance humiliates people and undermines the credibility of the development enterprise. What exactly do ordinary people think when they see employees of the development enterprise with their finely polished shoes and crisp white shirts coming out of their

air-conditioned cars to tell them how to develop? What unspoken yet loud messages are the habits, clothes, and attitudes of these people sending to Rwandan youth about their own lives (see Cart 1995, 469)? How credible are the slogans of development coming from foreigners with their foreign travel, nice houses, and drinks at the poolside of the Hotel des Milles Collines that cost more than the monthly income of farmers? It may well be that part of the answer to the eternal question of why they do not listen to our intelligent advice lies in the messengers' lack of credibility.

THE HUMILIATION OF TOP-DOWN DEVELOPMENT

Attitudes of disdain toward farming and farmers went hand in hand with a top-down, authoritarian mode of interaction between the state and aid systems and the majority of the people. The authoritarian, vertical nature of social relations was most noticeable in the agricultural extension system. Most critical observers describe the role of the farmers as mere executors in programs conceived without asking their opinion (Cart 1995; Derrier 1985, 613–4; IFAD 1990, 10; IRAM 1985; Netherlands Development Cooperation 1992, 53; Ntamahungiro 1988; United Nations 1991, 36; World Bank 1987, 86–7; 1989a, 7). But the problem extended beyond agricultural development to encompass the public administration system, the health system, and others. The previously quoted USAID report (1992) describes how people perceived communal personnel as “being inaccessible to and scornful of citizens in general.” A quote from a UN report (1991, 39) gives an apt example of the imbrication of vertical institutions: “without prior consultation, the authorities do not hesitate to communicate, during Sunday mass, the weekly calendar: reception of important visitors, meetings of the sectoral or the cell committee [local subdivisions of the single party], work in the coffee plantations, obligatory labor on roads, etc.” The Rwandan peasant, silent and hardworking, often resembled more an unpaid employee of a public enterprise than an independent farmer.

At the same time, the contents of the messages being forced on the farmers, and the competencies of those doing the forcing, were often unadapted to local needs. Most agricultural extension evolved from the promotion of a few export crops, foremost coffee, and not the food crops of prime interest to farmers (Little and Horowitz 1987). The

obligatory nature of coffee production is well documented: in many ways, it consumed the overwhelming part of the energy of the extension system, and it was the area where force and pressure were most used. Yet it was not limited to coffee; others document that farmers' adoption of compost pits, for example, was done more because of fear of fines than out of a desire to use them (USAID 1991, chap. 3.3).

In short, "the system is very vertical and authoritarian. . . . There is an enormous loss of content between the top and the bottom of the system. . . . Only some simplified messages arrive at the level of the farmer. Moreover, the extension agents tend to situate themselves hierarchically towards the farmers, and abuse their position" (Erpicum 1986, 22; Nkeshimana 1987, 85). As one of my Rwandese students, an agronomist with a Belgian-funded project, put it uncomprehendingly: "in our project, I asked myself the question why we always had to 'force' the farmers to listen to us, to adopt the new techniques proposed by the Ministry via the project."

The system of obligatory community labor (*umuganda*) was part of Rwanda's much-vaunted development machinery. Every Saturday, one adult male per family had to participate in community labor on projects chosen by the state: campaigns to construct primary schools, offices for the communal administration and its personnel, roads, markets, or antierosion structures. Even though absence could lead to fines and even imprisonment, discontent with and resistance to these obligatory work programs were strong, for people often saw no benefit in these works (sometimes they saw a clear loss) and resented their obligatory nature. There were many instances of abuses whereby *umuganda* works served the private interests of local authorities; also, the *evolués* usually managed to escape *umuganda* altogether (Derrier 1985, 618; Voyame and others 1996, 99). As most communal administrators chose not to risk further lowering their legitimacy, they rarely fined absentees, and participation was low (Guichaoua 1991; Willame 1995a, 142). When democratization began, *umuganda* stopped altogether.

The technical assistants in the country, even if they were ideologically predisposed to working in a bottom-up, participatory manner with farmers, more often than not found themselves trapped in the structures they worked in. Linguistically and socially handicapped, and caught in systems of expectations and misunderstanding, they found themselves unable to forge any meaningful contact with farmers (Nzisabira 1992). From the 1980s onward, following the realization in the wider international development community of the unsustainability

of many development projects, a desire to increase the beneficiaries' participation in the design and implementation of projects and policies became an increasingly regular part of the rhetoric of all development agencies, including in Rwanda. It is fascinating to trace that rhetoric—and its largely failed implementation—through a case study of one rural development program in the remote region of Kibuye.

The project,⁷ started in 1974, was limited to traditional extension, focusing primarily on coffee. Already, the word *participation* had the positive ring that it does today, and it was widely used. A 1981 credit request, reflecting on past experience, observed happily that “our system of training-extension that is based on true popular participation has produced very positive results.” A first major evaluation in 1982, however, extensively documented the low level of farmer participation in the project and suggested a reorientation as a capacity-building project. Yet by the end of the 1980s, a major reflection seminar still discussed at length the “weak participation” of farmers in the extension system, the “lack of farmer participation in research,” and the “absence of beneficiary implication in the fight against erosion.” In the 1990s, a new approach was launched, focusing on the commune, the so-called motor of development. In 1991, after fundamentally reorganizing (and renaming) the project, the agency managing the project wrote that “it is crucial for the success of the project that the peasants be the owners of the project, and not simply the executors of more or less constraining obligations emanating from above.” Yet in a report after the genocide, the same agency informed the world that a decision had just been made to continue the project while restructuring it along participatory lines.

The goal of this (admittedly brief) example is not to ridicule technical assistants or their superiors in Western capitals. Most of them (and this particular project had up to a hundred technical assistants living in Rwanda, plus a few hundred more experts on short-term missions) sincerely wished to involve farmers. Rather, it is to demonstrate the difficulties that well-meaning foreigners encountered in attempting to modify the nature of the interactions between Rwanda's peasant majority and the state system designed to “develop” them. As these people discovered, increasing participation in projects is not an easy matter, for it has a history and a context. The history is more than half a century old and includes forced labor to combat erosion and increase food security, obligatory contributions to “community development” projects, *umuganda*, and fines and punishments for cash crops not maintained according to central directives.

In this respect, it is fascinating to read a discussion of participation as defined by a high-ranking Rwandan civil servant in charge of communal development. After repeatedly stating the great importance attached to farmer participation by the government and the donors, he went on to outline that beneficiary participation had greatly increased and discussed the forms it took: *umuganda*, the dreaded obligatory communal labor; and *umusanzu*, obligatory financial participation in the construction and maintenance of infrastructures (Niyibizi 1986, 56). This is the same mind-set that allowed some of Rwanda's top development experts to write in a study on the role of the communes: "the key question is to create the conditions that ensure that development is not spontaneous and anarchic, but rather rational and systematic" (Bugingo and others 1992).

Under such an authoritarian and vertical system, even good-looking, progressive ideas on paper soon degenerate. In the 1980s, for example, a lot was said and done about an extension model working through "model farmers," in which supposedly dynamic farmers received intense support by extension services, the aim being that their highly visible (and hopefully successful) innovations would spread to their neighbors by example and imitation. However, many of these innovative farmers were the wealthier ones, and the exclusive attention paid to them basically equaled neglect of most of the other, poorer farmers. Moreover, the quality of the support that even the model farmers received was weak; their success was often due more to better access to inputs (improved seeds, for example, or fertilizer as a result of possessing livestock) than to advice and support (Michel 1984, 189).

A similar practice was to award prizes to those farmers who most faithfully adopted the agricultural packages being promoted by the extension services. This, too, was based on the idea of promoting spontaneous adoption of innovations by neighboring farmers impressed by the success of the innovators. Here again, the idea was deemed to be a progressive one. As a brochure for field-workers explained it:

The most common form of encouragement [to adopt the agricultural practices recommended by the extension system] in Rwanda is negative: farmers are punished if they do not obey the authorities. . . . Positive encouragement addresses itself to farmers who improve their cultivating methods. Its elements are various compensations for the efforts undertaken: prizes, visits by the local authorities to the fields of the farmers, publication of the names and pictures of the progressive farmers at the communal office, etc. Together with this, it is necessary to sensitize and train the farmers so as to render them capable of understanding and applying the new techniques. (PAK 1980)

This practice, too, suffered from a combination of authoritarian imposition of preconceived packages and corruption and clientelism among those who received the prizes. As the above quote illustrates, the notion that certain technical packages that had been preestablished by the specialists needed to be adopted by all farmers (who were not smart enough to do so by themselves) was never questioned; only the method to achieve this goal was changed. Practice has shown that the prizes often went to the same people year after year and that their impact on the social environment was small. As one person described it, “without seeking to understand why a certain recommended practice had not been implemented, sanction replaced dialogue. The award system thus became a nightmare for the farmer who, without the least conviction, worked to obtain points for the awards” (Kayitesi 1993, 51).

One of the effects of all this is the inconsequential impact that most development projects eventually had on their target groups. On the rare occasions when data are given, one is always struck by the extreme insignificance of the results, especially when compared with the magnitude of the resources invested. IFAD (1991, 91), for example, mentions that out of the 50,000 farmers targeted by one of its projects since 1970, “4,000 were participating in the implementation of the methods developed by the project, although only 70 had adopted the full package.” We have already seen how, in the Mutara project, whatever adoption there was of innovative farming or livestock practices disappeared a few years after completion of the project. An evaluation of another World Bank-funded project—the agricultural production project in Gitarama—explains that after two years of work costing \$12.7 million, about 10 percent of the farmers were reached by the new extension, and 5 to 6 percent adopted some of the themes; only 3 percent of them, however, received the vegetable seeds required, and 1 percent received the cuttings (sweet potatoes) (World Bank 1989a, 7). An evaluation of the Swiss-funded Programme Agricole Kibuye in 1982 (seventeen years after its inception, at more than \$1 million a year) observes that only 2 percent of the farmers entirely adopted the antierosion techniques proposed by the project—the cornerstone of its work (Corrèze, Gentil, and Barnaud 1982a, 42). As a matter of fact, an evaluation team observed that in this region, innovations *did* take place, but without the support of the project, and sometimes against the explicit wishes of the government (Voyame and others 1996, 87). A World Bank report on the matter concluded that “there are only a few examples of specific government interventions which can clearly be shown to have had a significant impact on

productivity to date” (World Bank 1983; 1989b, 30). Note that all these statements were written by professional aid evaluators, often employed by the very agencies that managed the projects being judged—in other words, people with a strong inclination to overestimate impact and put a positive spin on whatever trends they encountered.⁸

Much of what has been said about the top-down, vertical nature of the relations between the state and its citizens has been observed all over Africa. What is specific about Rwanda, however, are the omnipresence and strength of the state and the development machinery. Thus, paradoxically, it is in the “best” country—the developers’ dream location, where things were implemented the way they were stated on paper by a strong, well-endowed state committed to development—that life most resembled a forced labor camp, with questionable benefits.⁹

To sum up, relations between the administrative and technical state system and the population in Rwanda were vertical and authoritarian, making it almost impossible for ordinary people’s voices to be heard—assuming that anyone was interested in listening. A set of social attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles daily brought home the distinction between the failure of the farmers and the success of the *evolués*. Most of the development aid system also continued to function along top-down, externally defined lines, bypassing people’s own creativity, capacities, histories, and senses of value (Rader 1990, 229). Observers have noted how development in Rwanda infantilizes poor people, depriving them of their self-respect and their creativity (Hanssen 1989, 34; Braeckman 1994, 88; Guichaoua 1995a, 3–4; Willame 1995a). Thus the ideological tenets of the “developers” and the political requirements of the powers that be join in defining development largely without people’s input, without much respect for poor people, and often without much benefit to them (see also CIDSE and CARITAS Internationalis 1995).

It is uncommon for analyses of development to dwell at length on the factors discussed here: prejudice, humiliation, and infantilization. Questions related to these phenomena are not asked of farmers, and evaluators do not examine them. They are largely invisible and, at those rare moments when we may be aware of them, they tend to look unchangeable. However, harm is done by treating people in an infantilizing, condescending manner, by limiting their options, and by stripping them of their dignity and creativity. Disempowering people, even in the name of development, is not neutral: it has impacts on their minds and bodies.

When people are denied the realization of their full human and intellectual potential, when they are deprived of choices and information, they are more easily manipulated. When people are treated in a humiliating and prejudicial manner, when they are made to lose their self-respect, the result is frustration and anger, as well as a strong need to regain self-respect and dignity. As Willame (1995b, 445) writes, “the population, who slid unnoticed from poverty to misery, is easily manipulable by forms of ethnicity in which the ‘other,’ the ‘stranger,’ or the ‘invader,’ becomes the scapegoat.” Recourse to ethnic identity, scapegoating, and the projection of hostility onto weaker groups constitute important effects of structural violence. According to Lindiro Kabirigi (1994, 2–3), “the lack of popular expression constituted a solid ground for violence. When people cannot express themselves in words or deeds within society because there always is an ‘intellectual’ to do it for them and to tell them what they should do, it is normal they accumulate a sense of resentment and demands which end up by exploding in an uncontrollable manner as soon as opportunity presents.” As Soedjatmoko, late rector of the United Nations University, wrote, “without freedom to dissent, responsibility for creative developmental impulses of a society disappears” (quoted in Tomasevski 1989, 155). Imprisoned in a system in which they were not free to choose their own development, devoid of information and choices, constantly at the receiving end of political and technical messages, people became unable—and indeed unwilling—to resist reductionist schemes and were tempted to be passive, fundamentalist, cynical, racist, or violent (Godding 1983, 82).

From Structural Violence to Genocide

For most of us, it is hard to imagine how tense and frustration-ridden a society must be when every day the large majority of the population is shown the lifestyle of the “developed” and exhorted to achieve it but is at the same time structurally excluded from this “good life,” with very little chance of achieving it. This can only have a profound impact on people’s attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. Many social scientists, particularly sociologists such as Robert Merton and Ted Gurr, have argued that such situations are major causes of resentment and, through that, violence. Similarly, others have shown how impunity, the flip side of inequality and usually occurring in tandem with it, creates frustration and a

sense of loss that lead to scapegoating and facilitate violence (Oxfam 1996, 8; Guichaoua 1995a, 38).

For many people, hatred of “the other” served to combat the low self-esteem caused by chronic unemployment and squelched aspirations; these young, frustrated men were the ones most vulnerable to the kind of ethnic appeals that led to genocide. It is generally suggested that they were the ones who made up the radical militia (Willame 1995a, 127, 154, 160; Kabirigi 1994, 10). Everywhere in the world, these men are the recruits for urban gangs and extremist militias. As Galtung (1990, 294) writes, “a violent structure leaves marks not only on the body but also on the mind and the spirit.” There is a profound need to make sense of life, to reestablish self-respect. And as Simpson and Yinger (1953, 61) wrote long ago:

Prejudice is an attempt to find meaning, to explain. . . . Prejudice may be an attempt to enhance one's self-esteem or to remove a threat to self-esteem. In a culture that stresses the opportunities each person has for success but prevents success (by its own definition) for a great number, it is not surprising to find a great many people creating a shadowy image of success by placing themselves, categorically, above all members of inferior groups.

I hold that anti-Tutsi racism fulfilled this psychological function for many of the poor Hutu, which is why the regime was so successful in using racism for decades to legitimize its hold on power. To understand the crisis in Rwanda, we thus need to see how the two types of prejudice worked together: the prejudice against the large majority of the poor that caused mass frustration, loss of self-respect, and a need for compensation through externalization; and the official, state-sponsored racism against Tutsi that provided a convenient, institutionalized scapegoat (and diverted attention away from the privileges enjoyed by a few in the name of the masses). As Staub (1990, 56) writes, “under such conditions [difficult life circumstances and a culturally established devaluation of a social group] scapegoating can diminish feelings of personal and group responsibility for problems, protecting self-concept.” Or as explained by Simpson and Yinger (1953, 51) in their seminal work on prejudice, “a person who is brought up in a culture that is rich with traditions of prejudice, . . . and who is insecure or frustrated will have a high probability for prejudice.” The benefits of joining in scapegoating include renewed comprehension of the world, hope, and feelings of purpose (Staub 1990). Anywhere in the world, this applies foremost to young men, who tend to suffer most from the contradiction between their self-images and the opportunities offered by society.

Furthermore, structural violence lowers the barriers against the use of violence. As the norms of society lose legitimacy, as people's knowledge base is reduced to slogans, as progress becomes a meaningless concept, as communities are riveted by conflict and jealousy, as people's sense of self-respect is reduced, and as segments of society show their contempt for the rules of decency as well as for farmers, people become increasingly unhampered by constraints on the use of violence to deal with problems.

To conclude, the physical (ill health, malnutrition) and psychological harm done through structural violence may not be as visible as the mass graves that sporadically fill our television screens, but its effects are equally profound and debilitating. If one recognizes the condition of structural violence, one can understand that profound racist prejudice and outbursts of murderous violence are part of a continuum of ever-present violence in which violence is the answer to violence, and in which victims temporarily become perpetrators and then victims again. The differences between structural and acute violence parallel those between public/indirect and private/direct violence, with the former referring to the system of oppression and exclusion operating through the mechanisms of the state, and the latter to individual acts of aggression, opportunism, and self-protection that result in part from the former. Typically, the violence of individuals—black youngsters in the U.S. inner city, street children in Brazil, shantytown dwellers in South Africa, and others—tends to be widely perceived, while the violent acts of the state are not recognized (Scheper-Hughes 1996, 894 ff.).

In many ways, then, structural violence lays the groundwork for acute violence. Under conditions of structural violence, acute violence can serve different functions: it is a tool for temporary personal gain, as culturally acceptable as it is common and necessary for survival; it is a pressure release from the frustration and lack of self-respect, as acceptable as it is encouraged by the political leadership; and it is a job opportunity for the lucky few who join militias and mobs, its gain potential vastly bigger than any legal opportunity available.

In Rwanda in the 1990s, the interaction between structural violence and racism created the conditions necessary for genocidal manipulation by the elites to be successful. Structural violence provoked a need for scapegoating among ordinary people; the existence of long-standing racism allowed parts of the elite to use this need to build a genocidal movement. Without the profound racism, we would find not genocide but "ordinary" communal violence, of which there is so much in Africa;

without elite manipulation, structural violence would lead to more diffuse, anomic modes of violence such as petty criminality, sorcery, or domestic abuse—all of which are on the rise in most of Africa.

Notes

1. USAID database, 1993 USAID proposition, subsection on poverty reduction. The countries that are close are Bangladesh, the Sudan, and Bolivia.
2. Lemarchand was originally part of the team that evaluated the first phase of the Mutara project. His report was deemed undesirable, though, and was not included in the final evaluation. He waited three years and then published it as a working paper.
3. In urban areas, technical assistants usually rented nice houses at exorbitant prices, which created an extremely lucrative market for the well-connected people who controlled urban real estate and construction.
4. A former student of mine wrote angrily about “the technical assistants . . . who transform the region in a veritable holiday colony and delect themselves in an insolent tourism on project funds under the angry looks of the hungry farmers.” Having done it myself—and always having felt uncomfortable under the scrutinizing looks of the locals who passed the high, guarded metal fence around my Swiss chalet in the middle of the *collines* (with hot shower, refrigerator, CD collection, garden, parking for my car)—I must admit that this description is not too far from reality.
5. Note that, among the people directly hired by the foreign aid agencies themselves, Tutsi were often highly represented. In many ways, in times of peace, the dominant form of exclusion in Rwanda was social rather than ethnic.
6. Defined by the on-line version of *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* as “exemption or freedom from punishment.”
7. I do not wish to identify the project by name and thereby single it out for criticism that it does not deserve. For that reason, there are no citations for the applicable quotations.
8. I have been guilty of the same. During the early 1990s, for example, I evaluated a rural development project in Burundi after more than a decade of existence. Although none of its central objectives had been adopted by more than 2 percent of the target group, I tried to convince myself that I could somehow write down something like 5 percent to at least give a slightly better impression of a project that I appreciated very much and had invested quite a bit of time in. I eventually dropped the entire issue from the final report, contenting myself with vague statements, taken from project employees, about positive trends of increased adoption. I presume that the previous evaluators had done the same, for I could never find any serious figures about adoption rates anywhere—only the same vague statements. Note that I was not afraid of losing my job if I did not report positive results. The people managing the project were open, committed, intelligent people. Rather, I was motivated by a spontaneous desire to see good things and block out doubt, to be a good team player, a positive, not-too-judgmental white person—in short, an ideal development professional. This is an aspect of the “normal professionalism” that Robert Chambers has not written about, although it is as dangerous as the tendency toward top-down, technology-driven development he criticizes: the

lowering of expectations, the fear of judgment, the desire to be liked by the locals and the superiors, the ignorance about what really goes on, and so forth.

9. This most clearly applies to the *umuganda*, as well as to the approach to coffee (Guichaoua 1991; Willame 1995a, 142).