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**The state and population mobility in the Great Lakes  
- What is different about post-colonial migrations?**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to raise a number of general points concerning the relationship between migration, population mobility and the state in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, with a focus on Rwanda and the Kinyarwanda-speaking populations in the region. Essentially I will do this by giving a broad overview over histories of migration. This is in the sense of broader societal discourses over real fictive migrations and in the sense of more academic accounts of actual migration phenomena. My basic contention is that migration is linked to the state in a variety of ways: As the nature of the state has changed over various periods of history, so have forms of migration. Both are important sources of identity; the state may be a causal factor of migration while the nature of the state often shapes forms of migration and the status that migrants acquire in the countries of destination. As the nature of the state has changed over various periods of history, so have forms of migration.

### 1. Situating the research

The paper is part of a wider research project that looks into the history of Rwanda's "Tutsi"<sup>1</sup> refugees, also known as "old-caseload" refugees in UNHCR jargon and as "59ers" among themselves. The research, titled "Exile and return. The state citizenship and the history of Rwanda's Tutsi refugees" takes "the state" as one the starting point of inquiry. Among the postcolonial states in the region (Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo and Uganda; Tanzania being to some extent an exception), same appears to reinforce and reproduce societal cleavages as well as produce new ones. Post-colonial states exclude and marginalize. Yet "exclusion" can take many forms. The narrow power base of many African governments, the neo-patrimonial<sup>2</sup> nature of

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<sup>1</sup> Among the first waves of refugees who left Rwanda between November 1959 and June 1962, were a significant if unknown number of Hutu. In some of the Congolese refugee settlements, they were thought to outnumber Tutsi (ILO 1967: 3, FN1). Partly, this assessment may be due to a confusion between refugees and other migrants, but many Hutu indeed joined the exodus – as clients of Tutsi patrons or staunch supporter of the king. Hutu members of UNAR were also targeted during periods of violence between 1959 and 1862, and again, in 1963 and 1964. Similarly, other groups associated to the royal court and the monarchists, among them some 50 Twa families and a number of "Swahili", also known as "Arabisés" were among the refugees (Holborn 1975: 963).

<sup>2</sup> Taking up Weberian terminology ("patrimonialism") and elaborated by writers such as Jean-François

many African states are an example of such forms of systematic exclusion. Put the other way, highly asymmetric and uneven strategies of inclusion and as such are not limited to migrants or refugees (See Lemarchand 1997, Wimmer 1996). Still, "exit", flight or outright expulsion are perhaps among the strongest signs of exclusion. Displacement and flight are in another sense strongly tied to the modern state, namely in that the very term "refugee" refers to the (nation) state and the modern state system in a number of different ways. Far from being a straightforward empirical category, the term refugee has both an empirical and a normative dimension. It is the latter which provides the linkage between the modern state and the refugee as a modern phenomenon.

In this paper, I employ "modern statehood" as a concept to distinguish modern forms of statehood from pre-modern forms of political organization such as the pre-colonial Rwandan state, pre-20th century empires or European medieval polities. Modern statehood is firmly rooted in western, and particular European historical developments since the Middle Ages. Yet neither its substance nor its expansion can be reduced to a simple and unilateral process of imposition of a particular normative model on non-European societies in the context of European expansion and imperialism. Rather, modern statehood is the result of a complex and contingent historical development, in the course of which a certain model of the state was universalised through various processes such as institutional learning, colonialism, and international law, but also by innovations of techniques of power (e.g. the development of standing armies and more elaborated systems of taxation in post-medieval Europe)<sup>3</sup> as a response to fierce competition both between and within states (See Thies 2004). While presently existing states remain highly heterogeneous in various

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Médard, Crawford Young and Jean-Claude Willame, the concept of the "neo-patrimonial" state tries to capture a specific kind of clientelistic politics whose main characteristics is that there is no distinction between the private and the public sphere in the sense that public offices are run like private estates ("patrimony") serving the profit of the office holder.

<sup>3</sup> This has been eloquently shown by Charles Tilly in respect to European processes of state formation (Tilly 1985). According to Tilly, widespread interstate-warfare in medieval and post-medieval Europe led to the emergence of professional, standing armies which at the same time also prompted the expansion of the hitherto rather limited revenue base of central states, mainly by direct taxation. Indirectly these developments greatly increased the autonomy and hence the power of central states, thereby altogether "strengthening" state capacity.

respects, there are a number of common elements that characterize modern states' institutional design, actual state practices as well as the normative underpinnings of modern statehood, such as the notion of public goods and the related notions of development and welfare, law and taxation, to name but the most important elements. (Kraler forthcoming).

The hypothesis guiding the research is that the history of Rwanda's early post-colonial refugees is indeed an expression of the modern, exclusionary state and perhaps, of modern state- and nationhood in general. In order to analyse the nexus between state, migration, identity and citizenship, I take a firmly historical approach. While the focus on the changing nature of statehood and its relationship to migration, status and identity, may indeed seem to produce a "grand narrative", it is important to emphasize the fragmentary, incomplete, changing and often, incoherent nature of the phenomena so described. "Rwandan refugees" were no homogenous group (nor were Rwandan migrants in general). There is no singly history of exile. Similarly, the meaning of categories has varied over time, as has the meaning of being a refugee/migrant.

## 2. Outline

As part of the wider programmes The purpose of this paper looks at the wider historical context of migration in the Great Lakes region and looks at the particular ways, that state-hood is linked to migration. In this way, it tries to set the stage for the exploration of the history of Rwandan Tutsi refugees, to be done in-depth elsewhere.

I will start with some general remarks on migration discourses in the Great Lakes. I will then go on to describe some of the complexities of Rwanda's migration history and explain how these are related to the ongoing processes of state-building. I will conclude by more systematically analysing how the state relates to migration processes and answering one of the sub-themes of this paper, namely whether the post-colonial context for migration is any different to that of the colonial era.

On a general level, I argue that the various transformations of statehood beginning with the late 19th and throughout much of the 20th century have had a tremendous impact on migration dynamics, but more importantly, on discourses on migration as well as on how these were played on in terms of identity and citizenship discourses and related practices. Conversely, the history of wider Rwandan "migrant" communities and the history of their often conflictual

relationship with both the state and host communities offers important insights into the changing nature of the state and of the regional and international state system(s). Migrations in the Great Lakes have to be seen as part of wider "political" developments - state formation, state building and the spread of capitalist "modes of production".

### 2.1 Migration as discourse

As has been shown by several recent critical appraisals of migration studies, "migration" is far from being a neutral, purely scientific concept. Rather, academic concepts of migration as well as the usage of the term in public discourses reflect systems of classification and categorisation, imposed and maintained by modern nation-states and hence reflect the modern political order at large (Wimmer 2002, Wimmer/ Glick-Schiller 2002). Put in more abstract terms and taking up a distinction suggested by Pierre Bourdieu, "migration" (as many other categories in the social sciences) is both a category of practice and a category of analysis. The two dimensions of a category do not necessarily correlate; but in any case, they are not independent of each other, and social scientists are well advised to bear in mind the "practical", that is, political implications of the analytical categories they apply. In other words, "migration talk" is not only an academic affair, nor is it simply about migration; rather, "migration" is employed or referred to by "ordinary" people to make sense of the world they live in, to make political claims, and to express their and other's identities (See a similar argument made by Brubaker/ Cooper 2000 in regard to the concept of "identity"). Often, such narratives of migration are more than just "empirical" accounts of migratory phenomena: they express social and political hierarchies, power relations, social values and identities, as well as social and political conflict in general. As academic reasoning about migration is embedded in wider societal discourses about migration, academic discourses can equally be read as doing more than just simply explaining particular social processes, namely as expressions of a particular social and political order. For example, by building upon state imposed systems of categorisation (e.g. legal categories that distinguish between different types of migrants) or by giving attention to particular forms of migration, but not to others (cf. the attention given nowadays to asylum- and illegal migration in industrialized countries), social sciences tend to take certain categories and viewpoints for granted, thereby "naturalizing" and "de-problematizing" them, and ultimately if often unwittingly, reinforcing and legitimising the existing political order that gave rise to these categorizations in the first place. In general,

therefore, both academic and non-academic narratives of migration can be seen as particular types of societal discourses that reflect and legitimise power relations and whose modern forms are intimately related to the emergence of the modern state.

## 2.2 The hamitic myth

In a sense, "migration" has been at the centre of discourses on Rwanda and on the Great Lakes Region for quite a long time and in a multiplicity of ways long before the genocide and the refugee crisis that followed.

The presence of three groups of physically distinct people - Hutu, Tutsi<sup>4</sup> and Twa - prompted Europeans crossing the Great Lakes region from the 1860s onwards to speculate about the origins and past migrations of the different groups they encountered. More importantly, they did so to account for the presence of highly stratified and centralized societies and within the framework of "diffusionist" theories of cultural change dominant in European anthropological thought of the time. Early European writers such as John Hanning Speke or Sir Harry Johnston and many others after them, saw in the pastoralists in the region, who formed the traditional aristocracy of kingdoms such as Nkore, Bunyoro and Rwanda, remnants of an ancient Christian people, "racially" related to the peoples of ancient Palestine and thus, to Europeans. Termed Hamites, they were thought to have immigrated to the Great Lakes region from the North and to have subjugated the "Bantu" people they encountered. The "Hamites" were portrayed as "natural" warriors, conquerors and state-builders whose supposed "racial" characteristics and dynastic histories were read as proof of the migration thesis. In the words of John Hanning Speke, writing about Bunyoro (1864: 241-3):

*In these countries the government is in the hands of foreigners, who had invaded and*

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<sup>4</sup> The ruling classes and pastoralists of the interlacustrine kingdoms were known under different names – Tutsi in Rwanda, Burundi and Uha (western Tanzania), Hima in Nkore and Bunyoro and Hinda in the Haya states of present day northwestern Tanzania. In Rwanda and elsewhere there has been a lot of confusion about the meaning of being a "Tutsi" or a Hutu (or being the "equivalent" of a Hutu or Tutsi elsewhere). Suffice is to say, that the equation Tutsi = ruling class has never been an accurate description of reality. Only a tiny minority of Tutsi were part of the ruling class. However, towards the late pre-colonial period and particularly in the colonial period, the term Tutsi was increasingly used as a synonym for the ruling aristocracy, irrespective of the quite different empirical reality.

*taken possession of them, leaving the agricultural aborigines to till the ground, while the junior members of the usurping clans herded cattle. (...) It appears impossible to believe, judging from the physical appearance of the Wahuma [Hima], that they can be of any other race than the semi-Shem-Hamitic of Ethiopia, (...) Christians of great antiquity. (...) [C]rossing the Nile close to its source, [they] discovered the rich pasture-lands of Unyoro, and founded the great kingdom of Kittara, where they lost their religion, forgot their language, extracted their lower incisors like the natives, changed their national name to Wahuma, and no longer remembered the names of Hubshi or Galla (...).*

A more limited, but equally powerful version of the hamitic hypothesis, still located the origin of pastoralist people in the Great Lakes "in the north" (Sudan or Ethiopia) but without invoking biblical or Semitic or European "racial" ancestry. Taking up a terminology originally developed by European linguists such as Wilhelm Bleek and Dietrich Westermann in the 19th and 20th century for the classification of languages<sup>5</sup>, writers such as the catholic missionary Julien Gorju (1920) and the Italian missionary Pasquale Crazzoralà (1950) believed that the Great Lakes pastoralists were "nilotic" in origin, rather than Hamites, "racially" related to the Luo and Galla people of present-day southern Sudan and Ethiopia. While the sweeping claims of the original Hamitic hypothesis were soon discarded by academic anthropologists and historians, the view that Hima (and Tutsi) were of different racial stock and had immigrated into the Great Lakes region, bringing along not only cattle but also various cultural techniques (like "the state"), remained largely unchallenged until the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Languages, though, were considered largely synonymous with people and any classification of languages therefore was read as a classification of people and "races" at the same time.

<sup>6</sup> More recent research suggests that pastoralists have been present in the Great Lakes area for at least 2000 years (Schoenbrun 1998). Thus, a large-scale and more or less sudden migration of pastoralists into the region, imagined very much along the "model" of the *Völkerwanderung* – the migration of Germanic tribes into the Roman Empire – never took place. Within the Great Lakes region, however, movement did take place, with pastoralists expanding into regions previously inhabited primarily by agriculturalists. The narrative of *Völkerwanderung* in Africa, continues to capture African intellectuals as well as academics, be it in respect to Bantu migrations, "Hamites" and "Nilotes", or more parochial examples of "great migrations" such as the Mfecane or the Great Trek in Southern Africa. See also the excellent summary of recent research on the

Far from being merely of historical significance, the narrative of the "hamitic hypothesis" has a strong resonance up to this date and has long since become part of ethnic identities and of narratives of "migration" in the Great Lakes region, and indeed, elsewhere on the continent (Jackson 2003: 59ff; Lemarchand 1999).<sup>7</sup>

The issue of citizenship in the Congo throughout the post-colonial period, and, to a lesser extent in Uganda, was indeed informed by the overarching concern to restrict participation, political office and access to resources such as land to so-called "autochthones", to the true natives of the country, often articulated in the very language of the hamitic myth (Congo *Fraternité et Paix* 2002, Mamdani 2001). In both contexts, the debate was sparked by the massive presence of Kinyarwanda speakers, only few of whom were actually migrants in any meaningful sense of the term.

### 2.3 First-Comers and Late-Comers

At the same time as European explorers, administrators and missionaries introduced the discourse of the hamitic hypothesis there were also powerful indigenous discourses on migration that were, on an abstract level and by their very nature as narratives legitimising power relations very similar to the discourse of the hamitic myth introduced by the Europeans.

The notion of "first-comers" and "new-comers", which distinguishes between the "owners of the soil", those "who cleared the land" on the one hand and "late-comers"/ "strangers" on the other, is a case in point. The discourse served in certain areas of Rwanda and elsewhere in the region to justify the status of "land-clearers" as those

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emergence of Rwandan social categories Hutu, Tutsi and Twa by Jean-Paul Kimonyo (Kimonyo 2001) and the careful analysis of human settlement of Rwanda on the basis of archeological, linguistic, anthropological and ecological evidence by Kanimba Misago (Misago 2002).

<sup>7</sup> A survey carried out by the Centre for Conflict Management of the National University of Butare (Ntaganda 2002), however, seems to suggest that the interest of ordinary Rwandans in the issue of human settlement of the region and the order of settlement by the different groups is rather limited; moreover, a majority of respondents subscribed to the myth that Rwandans are descendants of one ancestor (Gihanga), thus implicitly rejecting the narrative of human settlement altogether. The survey is problematic on methodological grounds, being biased towards a certain "harmonious" vision of pre-colonial society, promoted by the RPF regime. Nevertheless, the conclusion drawn from the results, namely that the discourse of "anteriority" is significant only to a small, educated elite seems plausible.

having control over access to land on the one hand and the status of new-comers/ strangers as clients who are given land within a patron-client relationship, on the other.<sup>8</sup> Like the hamitic hypothesis, the discourse was long taken at face value, but unlike the former, local traditions seemed to support its factual nature. A recent study of the pre-colonial Rwandan state, however, argues that far from reflecting the earlier settlement of "land-clearing" families, or, by implication, the expansion of human settlement into virgin lands driven essentially by pioneering agriculturalists, the discourse is a reflection of the changing nature of land tenure in Rwanda during the 19th century - in already relatively densely populated areas (Vansina 2001). While there is no doubt that migration played a role in the dynamics of land tenure and land-clientship, it was but one aspect of a much wider process (See Feltz 1975; Meschi 1974). Similarly, a study of the land issue in Masisi (North-Kivu) shows how political changes (creation of a centralized Hunde chiefdom where previously was none), a resettlement scheme for Rwandans "transmigrants" ("transplantés") and the creation of a large-scale European plantation economy not only dramatically changed indigenous notions of land tenure, but also how the relationship between people and place was imagined (Mararo 1990). While in this case the local Hunde population could in fact rightfully claim "autochthony" and in-migration had indeed taken place, the significance of the claim can only be understood if the wider historical forces at work - the changing nature of statehood, changing concepts of identity and the imposition of a capitalist type of economy - are taken into account. In the Kivu as a whole, the "Mwamisation" of the region - the colonial policy of ruling through "traditional" rulers ("Mwami") taken from ethnic groups deemed pre-eminent in a particular area, further tended to marginalize non-hegemonic groups in terms of land tenure and deepened the linkage between "ethnic citizenship" and access to land (Chabuka 1979; Mamdani 1996, 2001). Thus, without an ethnic homeland of their own, the "perennial" migrant status (or identity) of Kinyarwanda-speakers in the region was further entrenched (Jackson 2003: 55).

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<sup>8</sup> I refer here mainly to *ubukonde*-clientship in northwestern Rwanda. Patrons were known as *abakonde* and clients as *abagererwa*. As Fairhead (1990: 61) shows for Bwisha (Territoire de Rutshuru, Democratic Republic of Congo), the status of clients was by no means uniform. Those who were strangers and landless were at the bottom of the hierarchy and most dependent on their patron.

But the discourse of "firstcomers" and "newcomers", had a much wider resonance and was not limited to land tenure or clientship, or to peripheral regions not touched by the various pre-colonial state-building projects. Pre-colonially, it also served, albeit in a more indirect way, to legitimise the hold on power of those on the apex of the states in the region, and thus, can be seen as a prototypical discourse, that served to justify all sorts of power relations. (Schoenbrunn 1998). The ruling dynasty in Rwanda, for example, successfully managed to manipulate oral traditions to support its claim that it descended from much earlier, often mythical dynasties, rather than being usurpers, or indeed immigrants, clearly reflecting the need to argue the exercise of power in terms of being a "first-comer" (Vansina 2001). While useful in the context of court politics, the discourse uneasily co-existed with the quite different "imperial" logic of the expanding pre-colonial Rwandan state, under which it was imperative for local leaders to become part of the centre or otherwise face extinction. In that context, claiming to be a first-comer quickly became irrelevant, a fact which Rwanda's pre-colonial "land-owning" elites in the country's northwest painfully had to learn, when the region was colonized by central Rwandan Tutsi sent by the royal court, largely already under German colonial rule (Lemarchand 1970).

Not unsurprisingly, the argument of "being there first" could also be made to work in the framework of the hamitic myth, with the latter, in a sense, turned on its head: In this reading, the supposed immigrant origin of Tutsi, was no longer a source of legitimacy (a claim addressed primarily at Europeans), quite on the contrary, it was used to question the dominance of Tutsi in the political realm, and later, to deny Tutsi any rights since they "had arrived last" and thus didn't meet the criteria of autochthony (Malkki 1995: 62ff).

### **3. The Colonial state-building project, the boundary, and discourses on migration**

The colonial state-building project introduced yet another layer of discourse - the discourse of boundaries and the territorial state, which is perhaps more of a discourse in a Foucauldian sense, that is both rhetoric and practice, or, to take up another Foucauldian term, a dispositive of power. Boundaries, seen as dispositives of power, not only structure political space, and as such are institutionalised by border posts, customs and tariffs, jurisdictions and territorialized structures of authorities, but they are a form of power-

knowledge, they produce meaning and give rise to particular discourses of power.

The real significance of boundaries and the territorial state as a socially effective discourse was only beginning to emerge decades later towards the end of colonial rule and particularly after Independence, even though the effects of boundary making were visible from very early on in the colonial period.

In many ways, the impact of these "new boundaries" seemed to be limited: goods continued to be freely traded across borders and people continued to move unabatedly; in some instances, pre-colonial polities continued to exercise authority over territories on the "other side" of the colonial border, in the Rwandan case, over Bufumbira in South-western Uganda and Bwisha in the Congo. In Bufumbira (Uganda), it was only after the local representative of the Rwandan monarchy who had sided with the Germans during World War I, was removed from office that the British administration ended the Rwandan king's rule over the territory. Tellingly, it appointed another Rwandan who fell out of favour with the Rwandan king and had fled to Uganda, as chief over the territory (Rumiya 1992: 49). Somewhat differently but with a similar outcome, the Belgian colonial authorities, who long had tried to sever Bwisha's ties to the Rwandan court, supported a local "Hutu" notable, Ndeze, to take control over Bwisha, and indeed the neighbouring Hunde area of Bwito as well (Fairhead 2003: 4). On a more local level, "native tribunals" along the Rwandan - Tanganyikan border, were allowed to operate across borders, settling disputes concerning livestock, marriage, handing over or restitution of dowries. Occasionally, they were used to "return[...] fugitives to the appropriate administering authority" (McEwen 1971: 41). By 1933, such tribunals were tightly supervised by European colonial authorities (ibid.). The imposition of colonial boundaries, however, also had an immediate impact on regional pre-colonial state-systems: With the beginning of a serious European presence in the region, tributary relationships and alliances between hegemonic polities and minor states (such as between the Haya kingdoms and Buganda) were gradually severed when these conflicted with the interests of the involved colonial powers (Austen 1967: 38). Similarly, due to the European presence, from the 1890s onwards, the expansion of powerful states as well as raids and military operations with more limited objectives either stopped entirely (as in the case of the frequent Rwandan raids on Bushi, following the Belgian occupation of Western Rwanda; see Honke 1990; Louis 1963: 43), or, as with the war between Rwanda and Nkore in 1895, drew in both the

British and German colonial authorities as third parties (Langheld 1909: 206ff). In the latter case, the German representative at Bukoba, Wilhelm Langheld, immediately travelled to the frontier region of Nkore and let Rwabugiri (the Rwandan king of the time) know that he would not tolerate any further military raids into Nkore and British Territory in general.

### 3.1 "Broadcasting power" - From frontiers to boundaries

Boundaries, however, were not colonial interventions. Boundaries or more vaguely defined frontiers were not unknown in pre-colonial Rwanda and in the other polities of the region. To a large extent, therefore, colonial boundaries followed established, though not uncontested, pre-colonial frontiers and boundaries. Far from being artificial, boundaries not only structured political relations, but also were imbued with meaning. For example, even though Rwanda's western frontiers were far from being unambiguous, oral traditions agree that there was a more or less definite boundary, separating the Rwandan kingdom from the Bushi kingdoms Kabare and Ngweshe in South-West of Lake Kivu as well as from the Havu kingdoms on its western shore. More important, the frontier was seen as a cultural divide, separating "Rwandan civilization" from supposedly "uncivilized forest cultures", from the "wilderness" and "barbary" of Bunyabungo or Bushi<sup>9</sup>, as the territories on the western shores of Lake Kivu were collectively known. As David Newbury (1987) has argued, the discourse was a reflection of the longstanding and complex relationship between Rwanda and the forest areas to its west, as well as of its westward expansion and in this sense, also an ideology of supremacy, power and authority. The discourse articulated notions of "Rwandanness" and "Non-Rwandanness", and most important, it played a major role in the emergence of particular forms of aristocratic identity, which in turn greatly influenced later constructions of Tutsi ethnicity.

Following Paul Nugent's (2002) advice, it is useful in this context to conceptualize boundaries not merely as divisive, as barriers, but also as bridges and linkages, even though of a peculiar sort. One such linkage was trade. In Rwanda, long distance trade linked regional trade circuits in North and South-Kivu with the periphery of the kingdom, where pre-colonial markets were located. The frontier, then, was a place, where all sorts of exchanges took place, of both goods and people.

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<sup>9</sup> The name "Bashi" (for the people) or "Bushi" (for the area) thus was used as a generic term, denoting all "those on the other side".

On Rwanda's eastern frontier, Haya traders and others acted as intermediaries for Arab controlled long distance trade to the East African coast (Chrétien 2003; Lugan 1977). For a short time in the mid 1860s, Arab traders were allowed to establish trade relations with the court. For much of the remaining pre-colonial period, however, they were barred from operating in the territory, earning Rwanda a reputation as isolationist and deeply hostile to foreign penetration (Vansina 2001). Trade patterns thus are linked to pre-colonial patterns of power and rule. Clearly, boundaries were by no means a novelty in the Great Lakes and territoriality, a defining part of the pre-colonial polity, even if quite different from modern territoriality, linked to the nation state.

Yet, pre-colonial boundaries were different from colonial ones in many respects: pre-colonial boundaries were ambiguous, there were no clear-cut borders but rather frontiers. Boundaries expanded and contracted whereas colonial boundaries were fixed and static; within the "boundaries" of the pre-colonial Rwandan state, only the core areas such as Nduga, Bwanacyambwe and Marangara were ruled in any "uniform" way; elsewhere, there were territories hardly under the control of the Rwandan court and others, whose independence was also formally acknowledged and respected by the Rwandan monarchy. Similarly, the status of peripheral and far-away territories was seldom clear and highly variable: they could be subject to heavy taxes or only nominal tributes; they could be highly autonomous or indeed tightly ruled. Power thus was broadcast from the centre in a very uneven and heterogeneous fashion, with direct influence generally diminishing with the distance from the centre. Also modes of rule varied greatly, and, during much of the 20th century, were subject to constant change. In Gisaka in eastern Rwanda, and Mpororo, straddling the border between the Uganda protectorate and northern Rwanda, which were both relatively recent additions to the Rwandan monarchy, power was consolidated by co-opting local elites and/ or disempowering former ruling dynasties, but Rwandan overrule remained contested well into the colonial period (See Newbury/Newbury 2000, Rutayisire 2002). In Rwanda's northwestern regions, where small "kinglets" ruled over primarily "Hutu"<sup>10</sup> populations or where there were no traditions of centralized rule at all as among the Kiga, central

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<sup>10</sup> An anachronism: Hutu as a general term for a category of people (as opposed to Tutsi) was probably unknown in this region before the onset of "Tutsi colonization" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly much later.

Rwandan attempts to colonize the region during the rule of Rwabugiri (c.1867-1895), barely managed to establish a semblance of rule. Very often, Tutsi notables from central Rwanda (known as Banyanduga) at best competed with "indigenous" power brokers. Thus, central Rwandan institutions of rule often co-existed side-by-side with local institutions of authority (Vidal 1985: 178). Central Rwandan penetration of these peripheral areas, however, was also crucial in forging ethnic identity, or more precisely, popular conceptions of Tutsi ethnicity. Central Rwandan Tutsi notables were widely seen as agents of "foreign" domination and a threat to local autonomy, and several uprisings in North-Rwanda in the 1890s seem to have had strong ethnic overtones, as did a major uprising in 1912 (Des Forges 1986; Vansina 2001: 177ff).

Colonial boundaries, however, were different. The imposition of colonial boundaries, as colonial rule in general, changed spatial patterns of political power in a fundamental way: the practice and theory of colonial boundaries erased the ambiguity so characteristic of pre-colonial patterns of rule, by clearly defining the jurisdiction of the Rwandan state, in terms of subject matter, that is, by defining what power was all about, as much as in terms of geographical scope. While early German administrators soon realized that the king's power over much of the territory claimed to be under his jurisdiction was a to some degree fictive,<sup>11</sup> they found these claims a useful myth and supported the "consolidation" of the court's power within the area of its present borders, a process that continued well into 1920s, when the last of the independent Hutu kingdoms was subdued (Reyntjens 1985: 95ff Vidal 1985: 174).

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<sup>11</sup> To some extent, the judgment of administrators seems to have been influenced by their own understanding what constitutes "rule". For example, Richard Kandt, a Jewish German explorer, physician and the territory's first *Resident* (administrator) concluded after his first journey through Rwanda that the Mwami's power over territories outside the royal capital was weak, because he hardly saw any chiefs in the countryside and because his caravan was plagued by bandits (Kandt quoted by Vidal 1985: 174). Still, some of the areas he travelled through may well have been tightly ruled – in the sense that the Mwami and his chiefs controlled access to land and cattle and levied taxes and other dues. "Security" or indeed, the welfare of the ordinary peasantry was not something Rwanda's traditional rulers cared very much about. On the contrary, many of their actions (like warfare and cattle raids as well as constant inter-elite struggles for powers) were a heavy burden for the peasantry (Vansina 2001: 231ff).

### 3.2 Boundaries and discourses of migration

As I have indicated so far, the drawing of colonial boundaries had immediate political effects, limiting the scope for military action and by doing so, restricting the scope for "traditional" modes of predation (mainly cattle raids), while during the first decade of the 20th century, colonial boundary-making drastically changed the relations of the central Rwandan court with the areas within these boundaries, often cited as an example of "internal colonialism". At the same time, boundaries also created new opportunities for "dissenters" and "rebels", for whom nearby areas across the colonial border provided a sanctuary from both their respective colonial governments and local rulers such as the Rwandan king. Colonial governments, however, soon responded to these unintended consequences of boundary making, and increasingly cooperated on the issue of "fugitives" and "rebels", organizing joint police raids<sup>12</sup> or arresting fugitives on behalf of one another in their respective areas of jurisdiction (Des Forges 1986; Kajjiga 1956; Vansina 2001).

From the perspective of the colonial governments, then, boundaries were not just expressions of their territorial claims to a particular territory, primarily addressed to rival powers, or of their adherence to a particular state model, but a crucial mechanism of control - over people, goods, and money, however limited their "real" impact seemed to be in terms of the daily lives of the majority of Africans (See for a general argument Herbst 1990; 2000; for a West African case study see Nugent 2002). The discourse of population control as expressed by the border, had several facets, the concern over certain "criminal" or "political subversive" elements, though prominent throughout the colonial period, being just one among others.

For example, the German colonial administration was so concerned about the insecurity, criminality, and exploitation supposedly brought about by foreign traders to which it attributed part of the blame for an uprising in 1904 that it effectively banned Indian and Arab traders from operating in the territory from 1904-1907 (Rutayisire 1987: 85).

In the 1920s, the Belgian colonial authorities who took over from the Germans in 1916 were

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<sup>12</sup> One of the best known examples, a punitive raid led by German and British members of the International Boundary Commission, resulted in the capture of Muhumuza, who was the leader of a major uprising in northern Rwanda in 1910, that was directed against both Europeans and the central Rwandan court (Rutayisire 2002: 136).

increasingly concerned about the large-scale migration of "able bodied adult men", that is, taxpayers, from Rwanda and Burundi to the British Territories. They felt that migrants were only trying to evade paying their dues in labour and kind, thus undermining the administration's development policies. Along with its long-standing ally, the Catholic Church, it vigorously campaigned against migration to the British territories (Chrétien 1993: 307; 2003). While there was little the colonial government could do in practice to stop these migrations from happening, the very fact that it was so concerned underlines how important it was deemed to control the movement of people for attaining its wider goals of social transformation and state-building, while clearly seeing spontaneous migration as a threat to "traditional" and by implication, the colonial order.<sup>13</sup>

On the other side of border, in Uganda, British colonial authorities, while happy about the abundant supply of cheap labour from the Belgian territories, were increasingly worried about the health risks supposedly posed by Rwandan migrants, and, in the inter-war period established a series of health check points along the main routes of transit. Colonial perceptions of Rwandans as medically problematic, as "bearers of disease" and "unhygienic" later came to inform "popular" perceptions of Rwandan economic migrants in Buganda, and later, in the 1980s, of Rwandans in Uganda in general, who were among other things accused of spreading AIDS in Uganda (Lyons 1996).

Boundaries were thus both important symbolical and practical devices of colonial rule, even though, in practical terms, they never quite delivered what they aspired to. With Independence, the symbolical and practical functions of boundaries were reinforced, as was the territorial nature of the state. Most importantly, Independence linked the territorial state to notions of sovereignty and democracy (however rhetorical and crude). In this way, international boundaries became a central device to define membership to the political community of the nation-state. All this contributed to a situation, where politicised ethnicity, struggles

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<sup>13</sup> Similarly, colonial authorities in Tanganyika were concerned about spontaneous migration both within the territory and beyond because of its implications for economic and fiscal policies. In particular, the authorities feared that migration and resulting absenteeism from homelands would endanger the collection of hut taxes, increase the desire for monetary income and thus would undermine the declared policy to massively expand crop cultivation (Chaulia 2003: 149)

over citizenship and struggles over legitimate access to the state became central to politics at large.

Thus, boundaries were "not only [the] geographical abstractions they appear[ed] to be": neat lines to demarcate the limits of a particular state's sovereignty, but "[t]hey create[d] political space in a more fundamental sense" and also served to structure social and political relations within these "bounded" territories (Newbury 1986: 87). It is no mere coincidence that the discourse of autochthony gained wide currency only after Independence, when the linkage between the territorial state, sovereignty, "democracy" and the state as primary resource became fully established.

As one Rwandan refugee in the Kivu explained ": "For a refugee who shows his Carte de Réfugiés [Refugee card], it is difficult to find employment. That's why the refugees try what they can to get the Carte pour Citoyens [Citizens' Ids]."<sup>14</sup> And in this, they often succeeded. In Uganda, dissimulation was the art of the day for long-term immigrants as well as refugees, and particularly in rural areas. They took on Ugandan names, invented Ugandan backgrounds and so forth. Again, many were successful in doing so. One refugee who was to become Rwanda's first ambassador to the UK after the genocide, even was appointed assistant settlement commander in a Rwandan refugee settlement - apparently, before Museveni took power.<sup>15</sup> However, as much as it was possible for "Rwandans" to bribe themselves into the possession of required documents (in the Congo) or to pretend to be Ugandans of a "truly Ugandan" ethnic group, their precarious status was in no way affected, even if in legal terms, it should have been beyond doubt.

Thus, discourses on migration are important not because they reflect a certain reality (which they often do not) but because they make normative claims of potentially much wider significance - over access to resources, power and membership to a particular community. I will return to this point later, when looking at Rwanda's post-colonial Tutsi refugees and, again, in the conclusions.

First, however, a brief sketch of Rwanda's migration history is warranted.

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<sup>14</sup> Ngrashebuja Binyurwama, Président du Comité Social des Réfugiés Rwandais au Zaïre, « Rapport Général sur les Réfugiés Rwandais au Zaïre », Daté du 22 Février 1982, UNHCR Fonds 11, 100/Zre/Rwa item 173, p.5

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Rwandan refugee, London.

## 4. Migration, past and present

### 4.1 Regions of "Rwandan" settlement in the Great Lakes

At Independence, large numbers of Kinyarwanda-speakers lived outside the country's borders, in Rwanda's neighbouring states. Many were migrants in the first or second generation. Many others, however were not and either were descendants of much earlier, pre-colonial migrants or happened to live in areas attributed to the Congo or Uganda when colonial borders were finally demarcated in 1911 (Louis 1963).

In 1970, there may have been some 1.2 million Kinyarwanda-Speakers or 36% of Rwanda's then population who lived outside the country's borders, most of them in the Kivu region of the Congo and in Uganda.<sup>16</sup>

In 1959, 378,656 "Banyaruanda" lived in Uganda, over half of them (213,497) in Buganda (Helle-Valle 1989: 124). However, most of the remainder were in fact "indigenous" Kinyarwanda speakers, living in two districts of South-Western Uganda. They were lumped together with migrant Rwandans in a category that basically meant to record ethnicity rather than "citizenship" or a background as migrant. By 1969, swelled by a large number of refugees, the number of Banyarwanda in Uganda may have reached some 800,000 (ibid.: 159). Similarly, the 1969 census in the Congo, recorded some 335,000 Rwandans. The majority of these lived in the Kivu-Region, and particularly in North Kivu - the proportion of Rwandans reached 70% in one district in North-Kivu (Masisi), but a significant population of Rwandan background could also be found elsewhere in the Kivu (Saint-Moulin 1975; 1976). Again, it is not quite clear what was actually recorded (citizenship, ethnicity, language, or country of birth), even though "foreigner" was the actual category used. Presumably, many indigenous Rwandans will have been enumerated as "foreign immigrants", and vice versa. Generally, therefore, the overall number of

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<sup>16</sup> Own calculations, using figures given by Egerö 1979, Helle-Valle 1989, and Saint-Moulin 1975 and 1976. The large numbers of Kinyarwanda-speakers who live outside Rwanda repeatedly gave rise to irredentist claims by Rwandan politicians and academics. In reality, however, even those territories such as Bwisha and Bufumbira which had a tributary relationship with the Rwandan court, were only loosely "attached" to the pre-colonial Rwandan polity. In practice, local elites enjoyed a wide-ranging autonomy, albeit their position as ruling elites partly hinged on their allegiance to the Rwandan court and the military support they received from Rwandan armies.

Kinyarwanda-Speakers might have been much larger. In Tanzania, the 1967 census recorded some 35,000 immigrants who had been born in Rwanda, but again, the overall number of "Rwandans" is likely to have been larger, not least since the country's north-western region has had a long history of in-migration of Rwandans, both agriculturalists and pastoralists as well as close linkages between the population such as marriage, ethnicity etc. In addition, labour migration to Tanganyika was often of a temporary nature, and the number of migrants therefore extremely fluid and difficult to determine (Daley 1989: 165; Egerö 1979: 33). In Burundi, the situation was even more fluid, as Kinyarwanda and Kirundi, the languages of Rwanda and Burundi, respectively, are virtually only variants of the same language. Historically, there have always been strong linkages between the two countries, and particularly between adjacent areas along its present borders. Rwandans - except refugees - were recorded as "foreigners" only after Independence.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that figures such as the above are essentially constructs - they evoke a unity that may not exist and they may categorize in ways that may no longer be deemed relevant. In the Kivu, for example, hardly anyone today bothers to distinguish between Barundi and Banyarwanda, while the category "Rwandan" itself can take on different meanings: it can refer to both Barundi and Banyarwanda; only to Banyarwanda (Kinyarwanda-speakers); or only to Rwandans of either Hutu or Tutsi ethnic background (Jackson 2003: 40ff). In a similar way, some autochthonous groups in the Kivu such as the Bashi and Havu find themselves increasingly regarded as practically indistinguishable from Rwandans (ibid. 68). Thus, the various populations eventually to be categorized as "Rwandans" - in one way or another - are the product of quite distinct historical processes, to which I now shall turn.

### 4.2 Pre-colonial patterns of migration

To begin with, Rwanda's rich dynastic traditions are full of stories of migration and exile. But it is difficult to know to what extent these claims reflect a certain reality. Often, such claims only served to mask the usurpation of power by new dynasties, to "show off" with alliances with powerful neighbouring states, or to stake claims to neighbouring territories. However, what can be safely said is that pre-colonial Rwanda was part of a regional state-system, whose ruling elites were linked to each other in various ways, including migration and intermarriage.

More important, Rwandans, particularly pastoralists, fled the expanding and centralizing Rwandan monarchy by establishing a livelihood beyond the reach of the central state. This movement was, by and large, directed to the west, that is, towards the Congo-Nile watershed and beyond, into what is today the DRC. Paradoxically, it was often these refugees who paved the way for the westward expansion of the Rwandan monarchy. Not only did the "refugees" re-create ways of life, norms, ideologies and patterns of political alignment after a central Rwandan cultural model (Kopytoff 1987, Newbury 1987), but often these migrants retained all sorts of ties (clientship, marriage and friendship) with people in central Rwanda. Alternatively, they (re-established links to powerful patrons in central Rwanda when it was in their interest to do so later on (Newbury 1986, 1987; C.Newbury 1988). The Banyamulenge - Tutsi cattle herders of Southern Kivu/ DRC - are a particularly well-known example of such a pre-colonial refugee movement. They, however, settled too far away to be "recaptured" by the Rwandan state. Much later, in the post-colony, Rwandan politics again came to haunt them, pressing their leaders to re-invent themselves as an indigenous Congolese ethnic group under the name of "Banyamulenge" (Willame 1997)

Agriculturalists also migrated to the west, in a process that actually had been ongoing for hundreds of years (Newbury 1986). Thus, while there was a constant trickle of Kinyarwanda speaking agriculturalists into what is now the Congo up to the 1960s and beyond, long-standing centres of Rwandan settlement (e.g. Bwisha in Rutshuru) had been settled by Kinyarwanda-speakers for as many as 500 to 1000 years (Fairhead 1990: 38).

In Rwanda, yet another form of migration is linked to the expansion of the pre-colonial Rwandan state, which in a radically different form and in a much more pronounced way, continued during the colonial period. Pre-colonially, the Rwandan state expanded its administrative reach in essentially two ways:

- by forging bonds with local ruling elites or wealthy pastoralists (often refugees from the Rwandan state in the first place, as in Kinyaga, South-western Rwanda), or
- by placing newly conquered territories under the authority of powerful personalities from the centre who in turn often sent off their own clients and followers to act as their local representatives in those regions.

Thus, the expansion by cooption of local power brokers was essentially linked to earlier migrations while expansion by "colonization" involved the settlement of clients and followers as a strategy to consolidate power and authority over these areas (Des Forges 1986; Fairhead 1990: 78ff; Newbury 1988, *passim*).

Finally, in the late pre-colonial period, there are numerous examples of insurgents seeking refuge in the northern peripheral regions of the kingdom or independent polities such as Nkore or Karagwe (Rutayisire 2002).

### 4.3 Colonial migrations

In some respects, there are strong continuities between earlier "stress migrations" in response to famines, droughts, political fallout and landlessness and later waves of labour migration in the colonial period, in that migration was a strategy to secure livelihoods, particularly access to land, and migration did not necessarily involve movement over longer distances. In this context, "employment" mostly took place within the framework of patron-client relationships whereby labour as well as a share of the harvest would be exchanged for access to land. Colonial native policies, which often linked a chief's income to the number of taxpayers in his area acted as a further incentive to "invite" migrants to settle. The migrants' precarious status also promised greater rewards by much harsher terms of clientship as well as loyal followers who were much more dependent on their respective patrons (C.Newbury 1988: 145; Yeld 1968: 25).

However, the introduction of cash crops - earlier in the British territories than in Belgian Africa - greatly increased the demand for labour and brought migrants from far away to the centres of agricultural production: to Buganda (where migrants worked both on peasant farms and plantations owned mostly by Asians), to Bukoba, where migrants mostly worked on Haya peasant farms, and to plantations in central Tanganyika and along the East African coast (Daley 1989: 165).

Labour migration from Rwanda took off on a large scale after 1924, for various reasons: First, demand for labour began to soar after World War 1. Equally important, however, "spontaneous" migration abroad to the British territories and, to a lesser extent, to the Kivu, was a response to the growing demands the colonial economy placed upon peasants. Colonial development policies such as forced labour (public works programmes), the introduction of cash crops (notably coffee in 1927), enhanced taxation, compulsory anti-erosion measures and forced cultivation contributed massively to the rising number of

migrants, as did its administrative policies, based on an ideology of indirect rule. The latter tended to enhance the power of chiefs as well as greatly extending the scope of supposedly traditional "prestations" (taxes) and the extent of forced labour due to the chiefs. The streamlining of the traditional hierarchy further enhanced the power of individual chiefs. Abuse and exploitation by traditional authorities remained widespread up until the end of colonial rule and was often cited as a reason for migration by migrants themselves (Guichaoua 1999; Richards 1973).

Some of these colonial policies, notably forced cultivation were actually meant to address the issue of food security and partly were a response to two major famines in the 1920s. In practice, however, the policies adopted aggravated the situation in many respects<sup>17</sup> and, by placing yet more demands on peasants, gave further ground to large-scale migrations. The Belgian administration estimated that over 100,000 emigrated from Rwanda as a response to the famine in 1927-1930. Yet, the population in the regions immediately affected by the famine hardly migrated, and if so, never over long distances. Migrants to the British territories thus fled the effects of the famine (including Belgian policies adopted as a response) rather than the famine itself (Cornet 1996: 39 and *passim*).

As we have seen earlier, Belgians were concerned about spontaneous migration to the British territories, partly for political reasons (Belgium was extremely embarrassed about the international attention given to the 1927-1930 famine). Partly, however, it was a genuine concern about "spontaneous", that is, uncontrolled migration, which it clearly viewed as undermining its authority and its wider plans of economic and social development. At the same time, and somewhat in contradiction to its own negative views about migration, the Belgian administration supported recruitment schemes of Rwandan labour for Belgian interests in the Congo. Recruitment for the Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK), later to become Gecamines; the Comité National du Kivu (CNKI) as well as individual white settlers and companies started in the early 1920s, when the somewhat makeshift Belgian occupation regime was replaced by a more formal and systematic administrative system, exercised on the basis of a mandate under the League of Nations. Alongside organized recruitment, migrants, particularly in areas close

to the emerging plantation economy in the Kivu (for example in Southern Rwanda) often ventured for employment on their own accords, since salaries were usually higher in the Congo than in Rwanda, but they were still higher in Uganda (Mararo 1990: 135ff). Those employed with European enterprises were exempt from forced labour and, by 1939, could substitute "traditional" dues by monetary taxes. Both acted as a further incentive to seek work abroad (Dorsey 1983: 90-157).

The Belgian authorities generally first turned to the chiefs when it came to labour recruitment. These in turn, often saw recruitment as an opportunity to get rid of opponents or to acquire additional land (C.Newbury 1988: 143). Later, their attitude became more sceptical as they were worried about the loss of tax payers, and hence about the loss of tax income and labour.

#### 4.3.1 Resettlement Schemes

In the mid 1930s, the Belgian administration initiated a grand resettlement scheme for Rwandan migrants in Masisi, North Kivu. The scheme has to be understood against the background of a much wider policy of resettlement and "social engineering", embarked upon from the 1920s onwards, in the course of which large numbers of people were displaced for various reasons, including the establishment of national parks, economic reasons (labour), on grounds of public health (malaria and sleeping sickness), for administrative reasons (regroupement and villagisation) and because of "overpopulation" and landlessness (Rukatsi 1988: 59ff). Along these lines, the resettlement scheme for Rwandans was justified as addressing "overpopulation" and relieving pressure on land in Rwanda. More important, however, it was to provide labour for North Kivu's emerging plantation economy.

The scheme departed in important ways from labour policies elsewhere - transmigrants were given sufficiently large plots to achieve self-sufficiency (between 2.5 and 5 ha); labour on European plantations was not compulsory; and last, migrants were put under the authority of a chief from Rwanda, himself answerable to the Rwandan king. The creation of a Rwandan chiefdom (Gishari) was, in a way, the logical outcome of the colonial administration's policy of cautious modernisation and its pre-occupation with the maintenance of supposedly traditional structures of authority. The idea was to "transplant" communities, with the least possible damage to the "traditional", and thus the colonial order. The policy was to have serious long-term implications, not only in terms of ethnicity: The majority of ordinary peasants gained access to

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<sup>17</sup> For example, the large number of porters required to deliver food aid drained those regions who produced surplus food of labour and had a potentially negative effect on food production (Cornet 1996)

land under "customary law", that is, through the traditional authorities. Towards the end of colonial rule, however, the Rwandan chiefdom was abolished and integrated into the larger Hunde chiefdom. As a result, land tenure became increasingly insecure for Rwandan migrants, but particularly for poorer ones.

Some 85,000 Rwandans were resettled between 1937 and 1955 - and many more may have come on their own accord, joining resettled relatives, friends and neighbours.

Two points are particularly noteworthy here:

First, the combined impact of native policies, the creation of a plantation economy and large-scale resettlement led to a process of territorialization of several crucial dimensions, most importantly, in terms of securing livelihoods and identity. The Congo's Masisi region is a particular good example, how colonial economic policies not only brought about a dramatically different kind of political economy, but how these ultimately shaped ethnic identity formation as well as notions of "autochthony" and citizenship. Before colonial rule, the local Hunde population practiced agriculture only as a secondary activity, with hunting and trapping being the primary economic activity. Population density was relatively low and land was used in an extensive way. Conversely, the population was highly mobile. Politically, the population was organized in rather small units, rarely extending beyond kinship groups. One of the first actions taken by the Belgians when they effectively colonized the region after 1910 was to create an amalgamated, centralized chiefdom, and for this purpose, named one notable, André Kalinda, Mwami (king) of Buhunde. When European settlement started in the mid-20s, land was bought from the Hunde "king" and his representatives. In a similar way, land was made available to Rwandan immigrants. As a result of colonization, the traditionally vague notions of land tenure changed drastically (Mararo 1990: 42). Permanent settlements became the norm, land became a primary economic asset; traditional forms of population mobility slowly disappeared, and agriculture as well as cattle keeping increased in importance. By the end of colonial rule, the number of conflicts over land had soared, and after Independence, soon acquired an ethnic nature, pitting immigrant Rwandans against autochthonous Hunde - at least in public discourse. By the 1950s Hunde intellectuals promoted a vision of pre-colonial land-tenure which saw all land as the exclusive property of the (Hunde)

"Mwami". While being quite at odds with the reality of land-tenure before colonial rule, such claims are a good expression of how land-tenure gradually became rephrased in terms of ethnic identity and "tribal ownership" of land; and ultimately, in terms of a conflict between "autochthonous" vs. "immigrants" (Mararo 1990, Rukatsi 1988). The fact that richer immigrants could still buy land, only fuelled popular resentment against "strangers". For example, in North Kivu, landlessness became particularly acute in the late 1970s, when, in the wake of Zairianisation and a general shift among plantation owners from crop cultivation to more profitable cattle herding, there was a veritable rush to turn communal and state land into private land and subsequently into pastures, often to the detriment of small farmers and small cattle herders (Rukatsi 1988: 21). Again, what was resented was not only the very process of land appropriation by a small elite, but particularly the fact that a considerable number of landowners were Rwandan immigrants. Similar processes can be observed elsewhere in the Kivu, as well as in Uganda (See Mamdani 2001 for an extensive discussion of the Ugandan case).

Secondly, resettlement schemes not only followed a certain vision of modernity and development that aimed to turn subsistence farmers into capitalist peasants. In addition, they also created a peculiar kind of "orderly" social space. Resettlement schemes had been implemented in the Great Lakes region and indeed, elsewhere, from the 1930s onwards. Their rationale in Masisi was basically to address 1) pressure on land and "overpopulation"; 2) develop sparsely settled and sometimes tsetse infested lands 3) and, to meet labour demands of European and other large-scale plantation farmers. But what is perhaps most characteristic of the schemes, is their pre-occupation with control, both in a technical and political sense. After Independence, colonial resettlement schemes functioned as a blueprint for refugee settlements established all over the region and elsewhere. In a much more pronounced way than more individual migrations, resettlement schemes (re-)created ethnic communities, which, in the case of Masisi, is emphasized by the way local government was organized. In post-colonial refugee settlements, the much harsher measures of control reinforced these tendencies: Settlements were often located far away from other villages, towns and major roads; refugees in most countries were in principle

not allowed to leave the designated areas and had to ask for permission for doing so. Interaction with locals was discouraged. The creation of separate spaces for migrants - "transmigrants" in colonial times, and refugees in the post-colonial period did in fact enhance their perceived difference vis-à-vis the local population. Perhaps, as Liisa Malkki suggests in her study of Burundian refugee settlements in Tanzania, these "closed communities" are in fact a fertile breeding ground for similarly closed, rigid identities and mythical historical narratives (Malkki 1995).

Labour migration and resettlement are but the most evident forms of migration, engendered by the colonial twin projects of state building and development. Other, quantitatively perhaps less important forms of migration such as educational migration or the migration of Christian catechists and clerics attached to the missions, were equally important in terms of their implications for social change in general as well as for the emergence of translocal ethnic communities in particular.

## **5. Refugee migrations – Rwanda's "old-caseload" refugees**

### **5.1 The origin of the refugee problem**

The origin of Rwanda's "refugee problem" can be traced to the period prior to independence. Colonial rule in Rwanda had come under increasing pressure from the 1950s onwards, leading to various but limited reforms. For the ordinary Rwandan, the chiefs and sub-chiefs embodied the oppressive "facets" of the exclusionary and authoritarian colonial regime. Most chiefs and sub-chiefs were Tutsi. Hutu were thus largely excluded from positions of power. In addition, the education system and the labour market for public offices discriminated against Hutu. In view of this situation, it was not surprising that Hutu politicians drawn from a rather tiny stratum of educated Hutu, picked up the "ethnic" theme and began to fight their political struggle along ethnic lines. Yet the Manichean picture of the oppressed and dispossessed Hutu masses against the "parasitic" leisured class of Tutsi had never been an accurate description of reality. Only a tiny fraction of the Tutsi population belonged to the privileged few and various other cleavages - region, class etc. - cut through "ethnic" categories.

A peasant revolt in late 1959 marked the beginning of a period of intense crisis, in the course of which the Tutsi monarchy was abolished and replaced by an increasingly "ethnically" defined republic. Already during the November 1959 uprising and the royalist counterattack that

followed numerous people were displaced. Violence was initially mainly directed against office holders and their families, and only later, during the election campaign for the communal elections in 1960s and afterwards, increasingly took on an "ethnic" character, fuelled by the fierce and often violent confrontation between the competing parties.

Still, "political ethnicity" (in terms of what groups or actions stood for) was quite different from the actual "ethnicity" of the actors involved. Initially, most refugees had remained inside the country, at least until the 1961 national elections and the campaign preceding it. Generally, the pattern of displacement was not straightforward: some of it was only temporary or recurrent. A camp for internally displaced was set up as early as November 1959 in Nyamata in Bugesera, as there had been earlier plans to establish a rural settlement scheme there (St John 1971: 219). Embarrassed over the presence of Rwandan refugees outside the country, the Belgian authorities attempted to prevent any "international"<sup>18</sup> flows, if necessary, by force, while its auxiliary troops - in 1960, a Rwandan National Guard was formed - were often those, who pushed Tutsi into exile (Adeney 1963: 45f).

By 1960, some 3,000 refugees had fled abroad. Many of those early international refugees were in fact political activists and/or office holders of the monarchy. Most of them returned, being encouraged to do so by the Belgian authorities and the provisional government, installed in October 1960 and more importantly, they did so to take part in the national elections scheduled for September 1961.<sup>19</sup> However, by 1961 the situation had badly deteriorated: the (illegal) declaration of a republic in early 1961, the Belgian authorities' indication that the Rwandan king was no longer welcome in Rwanda, and particularly the run-up to the national elections and the simultaneously held referendum on the abolition of the monarchy had greatly increased the tensions. In addition, the change of power at the local level, completed with the local elections of 1960s, intensified local power struggles rather than ending them as new and often inexperienced local office holders sought to assert their power,

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<sup>18</sup> Given that most countries involved (except the Congo) only received Independence after the numbers of international refugees soared (Tanganyika in late 1961, Rwanda and Burundi in June 1962, Uganda in October 1962), and two of the countries were under Belgian rule, the term "international" has to be qualified.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Pierre Mungarulire in Kigali, 10 September 2004.

by mobilizing against the representatives of the toppled regime, expropriation of their property and use of violence. As several observers have pointed out, the logic at work in the republic was in crucial ways very similar to that under the old system, in the sense that political office was intrinsically linked to control over land and other resources and the ability to use them to build and maintain a power-base (Gravel 1968; Reyntjens 1987).

Ultimately, and informed by the anti-Tutsi discourse of the leading Hutu Party on the national level, Tutsi at large were targeted and became victim to lootings, expulsions, expropriations and killings. Importantly, however, "ethnic conflict", rather than being the underlying cause of the so-called revolution, was a by-product of struggles over the control of the state, both on the local and the national level. By 1960s, however, an ethnic interpretation of the conflict had widely spread, even among ordinary peasants (Codere 1962).

On the part of some refugees (Hutu refugees and Twa), the decision to go may also have been politically influenced, that is, may have partly been an expression of loyalty towards the king and the major monarchist party, UNAR, rather than only a simple consequence of violence or expulsion (Hutu UNAR activists, however, were similarly subject to arson and violence). UNAR leaders such as Michel Kayihura in any case consciously opted for exile because they felt that UNAR had better chances to (re)gain power in Rwanda – if necessary by force – operating from outside than as a small opposition party from inside the country.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the decision of many refugees to stay in exile, particularly in the period between the aftermath of the elections in late September 1961 and Independence (June 1962) was to some degree also a political decision. Although largely informed by a concern for personal safety and a deep mistrust against the Belgian administration, the reluctance to repatriate was also fuelled by refugee politicians, who tied the fate of the refugees to the ultimate outcome of decolonization.<sup>21</sup> That refugees were able to exercise some choice - however limited, is

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Pierre Mungarulire in Kigali, 10 September 2004. For private reasons, Pierre Mungarulire, a senior UNAR leader and former chief in Bwancyambwe (the area around Kigali), also opted for exile.

<sup>21</sup> See Otto W. Gobius to High Commissioner, Geneva, "Burundi. Report No.9", 5 April 1962, UNHCR Fonds 11, 15/BUR/Rwa [1] Item 5; Jean J. Chenard (Catholic Relief Services) to Jamieson, Director UNHCR (cable) UNHCR Fonds 11, 15/BUR/RWA [1] Item 2;

a further indication that the overall context for politics had dramatically changed.

Thus it was not just the formation of a new state per se (Zolberg 1983) and Rwanda's accession to the "international community of nations" that was one of the root causes of Rwanda's first refugee crisis. Rather, it was the reconfiguration of power brought about by the "revolution", a crude ideology of democracy, and, crucially, the stakes involved in being able to control the state that lay at the root of displacement. Clearly, the transformation of statehood, brought about by revolution and decolonisation, was not just a cosmetic change on the apex of the state: it affected the whole polity, on the national as well as on regional and local levels.

By 1962 some 150,000 had been forced into exile to neighbouring countries. From exile, royalist rebels made several incursions into Rwanda. The most dramatic attempt of to regain power in December 1963 led to massive retribution against Tutsis who had remained inside Rwanda and involved mass killings, organized by "popular militias" set up after the attack. Tens of thousands of refugees fled the violence. By 1964 the number of Rwandan refugees may, according to one author, have grown to over 336,000 (Prunier 1994).

## 5.2 Not so different? Refugees vs. "ordinary" migrants

The reception of refugees in the host countries largely followed established patterns. For example, as with settlers in the framework of colonial resettlement programmes, refugees were seen as a means to achieve wider development goals. From the perspective of host governments, one of the major incentives to do so was that they could plead for international development assistance where otherwise none or much less would have been forthcoming. In Tanganyika<sup>22</sup>, a rural settlement programme for Rwandan refugees was initiated a few months after their initial flight, reflecting the eagerness of the Tanganyikan government to develop the county's poor west much more than refugees' own views on that matter. But it was not only governments who were keen to exploit the situation. In the Bukoba region in Tanganyika, local farmers were looking forward for a fresh supply of cheap, exploitable labour (Yeld 1963).

In respect to reception conditions, there were also crucial differences to previous waves of migration.

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<sup>22</sup> The United Republic of Tanzania was formed in 1964 as a federation of Zanzibar and Tanganyika (now called Tanzania mainland).

A somewhat banal difference, which, however, at the time of the refugee crisis was often overlooked, was that refugees themselves didn't expect exile to last for long; as a consequence, they were often reluctant to engage in more than temporary economic activities. Aid agencies, on the other hand, commonly attributed the unwillingness of the refugees to plant certain crops, engage in communal activities in the framework of settlement programmes etc. to the "inherent laziness" of the "Tutsi tribe" and the privileges they had supposedly enjoyed in Rwanda. Thus, whereas refugees did not easily give up the idea of going home one day, both host governments and aid agencies stopped thinking seriously about repatriation after Rwanda had achieved Independence in June 1962. A consultant for a ILO operated development scheme for Rwandan refugees in the Congo and Burundi told a conference in 1968:

*"The general idea followed from the [very] beginning was one of actively favoring their integration into the host country, for several reasons. In the first place, it seemed that no political or social stability could be obtained in Rwanda unless the emigrants [sic!] abandoned all hope of return. And for this they had to find conditions of living for a possible permanent settlement. Rapid integration seemed even more necessary, since considerable costs were being supported by the HC and the Red Cross. They had to be reduced as quickly as possible."*  
(M.P. Ballot, "Les réfugiés de Ruanda " Paris Symposium, Jan. 1968, quoted and translated in Holborn 1975: 1084)

Another, crucial difference lies in the very category of refugees applied to them, which involved a whole range of specific policies, which at the same time also indicated a changed attitude towards migrants in general. The most important policy applied to refugees was to confine them to designated areas (rural refugee settlements) and to make movement outside the settlements subject to permission by the settlement authorities. However, while the overall policies in general were similar in all the four major host countries, in practice there were significant variations. For example, Uganda apparently never made refugees subject to particular measures of control. However, in practice the location of some of the refugee camps (e.g. Kyangwale in Bunyoro) to distant and little populated areas had similar effects as more openly restrictive policies elsewhere. In Tanzania, on the other hand, the policies vis-à-vis rural refugees were not so different from policies vis-à-vis the rural population in general, including Ujamaa, which were, among other things, aimed

at restricting certain forms of mobility, but in particular movement to urban areas (See Sommers 2001). Indeed, the early refugee settlements established in Tanganyika served as laboratory for the elaboration of the Ujamaa policy adopted after the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (Daley 1993).

A last difference, linked to the unabated desire to go home and the continuing "attraction" of home, is the political mobilization of refugees for repatriation. After the abortive attempt to invade Rwanda in late 1963, however, the factions supporting armed return and ultimately, the overthrow of the government, soon lost the support they still had had. But in the mid-1980s, the issue of return resurfaced - with a vengeance, and first of all, in Uganda.

### 5.3 Mobilizing for return

In Uganda, it seems, that the ambivalence of the position of refugees (partly a result of their status) in the 1980s reinforced or rather produced strong feeling of attachment towards Rwanda as their real homeland. Activism for return seems to have been most pronounced among those refugees who, in social terms, were the most integrated ones, either in the business community or in Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA). By 1986 the issue of return became the dominant theme in the Rwandan exile community in Uganda as well as in Europe and the U.S., prompting the governments of Uganda and Rwanda, under pressure from the UNHCR, to establish a bilateral commission on the issue of the Rwandan refugees and eventually leading to the violent invasion of Rwandan NRA soldiers under the banner of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in late 1990.

Already well before the war, the RPF had begun to mobilize the Rwandan diaspora in the various countries of exile, drawing recruits, raising funds and sensitizing refugees about the issues at stake. After the genocide, many of the refugees (and their descendants) returned - from all host countries and to the surprise of many observers.<sup>23</sup>

What distinguishes the early attempts of Rwandan refugees to force their way back into Rwanda in

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<sup>23</sup> A survey of refugees in Tanzania, carried out in 1991, concluded that repatriation had ceased to be an issue among refugees, an observation that was probably true at the time when the survey was conducted (United Republic of Tanzania/ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 1992). According to Government of Rwanda statistics (according to a Rwandan government official based on registration of returnees at entry points), a total of 811,415 "old caseload" refugees returned to Rwanda between 1994 and 1999 (UNHCR Rwanda 2000: 59).

the 1960s from the much more successful but at the same time ultimately tragic return of Rwandan exiles in the 1990s, is the emergence of a much more interconnected refugee diaspora that the exile-rebel-army successfully managed to organize. The particular circumstances in Uganda (the marginalisation and attempted large-scale expulsion of Rwandans under Obote in 1982-84, as well as the widespread participation of Rwandan youth in Museveni's guerilla war against the latter) certainly favoured the emergence of a radical and militarized refugee movement there rather than in the other countries of exile. Yet politically active associations of refugees were also emerging in other countries of the region and independently of refugee activities in Uganda, for example in Burundi and among refugees in North Kivu.

A number of factors explain the renewed and much more successful mobilization for return in the 1980s: in several countries of exile, particularly in Burundi and Uganda, discrimination had become particularly severe by the late 1970s and 1980s; also, by the late 1970s, sizable numbers of refugee youth had graduated from universities all over the region, who had begun to organize refugee associations at their respective institutions of higher learning and who later became the leaders of the movement for return; also, a small, yet important and much more mobile elite had emerged - clergymen in the framework of the established churches, businessmen, truck drivers etc. - who were increasingly travelling the region and who were important in linking the diverse Rwandan communities in the different countries of exiles with each other; a tiny, but politically very active Rwandan community had also emerged in the countries of the west, particularly in Belgium, France, the US, Switzerland and Canada. Again, the marginalisation and attempted expulsion of Rwandans in Uganda in the early 1980s was the trigger for many of the initiatives emanating from the diaspora, including the launching of a journal that published articles in Kinyarwanda, English and French (*Impuruza*, edited in Sacramento, California), the founding of numerous Rwandan refugee associations both in the region and elsewhere, and systematic attempts to link the various diaspora organizations with each others, in particular by organizing congresses, the most important of which were held in Washington (1988, organized with assistance from the US Committee for Refugees) and in Uganda (1989).

## 6. Conclusion

The general argument of this paper has been that the nature of the state had indeed a major impact

on "migration", in various ways and on different levels. The changing nature of the state gave rise to new forms of migration and had a tremendous impact on existing migratory patterns; the twin project of colonial-state-building and capitalist development greatly increased the overall level of mobility, and in particular, mobility related to employment.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the underlying normative dimension of modern statehood radically transformed the "semantics" of migration, and led to the elaboration of different statuses for citizens on the one hand, and ordinary migrants and refugees on the other. The impact of the changing nature of the state on migration can be most clearly seen in respect to refugee migration. To be sure, refugees have always fled persecution or more widespread violence and insecurity. However, while not entirely unknown in a pre-colonial setting, exile rarely involved movement to an altogether different polity, not least, since territorial rule did not yet imply the degree of internal administrative homogeneity, and externally, the strict demarcation of the limits of sovereignty, so characteristic of modern statehood. Pre-colonially, it was usually sufficient for individuals or groups to move to the fringes of the state or, in case of conflicts on a lower level, to a different area in the core of the same polity. The increasing power of the central state and the resulting centralization and homogenisation of political authority, particularly in the colonial period, as well as the colonial administration's desire to quell any kind of resistance and to go after potential challengers of the state's power at whatever level, however, dramatically changed the conditions of opposition and thus, exile. In Rwanda, the streamlining of the "traditional" chiefly hierarchy and the greater power given to chiefs during colonial rule, in addition to their enhanced status as primary agents of the colonial administration, made the choices available to both "political activists" and the ordinary population increasingly limited. For the latter, migration often was a deliberate choice of exit from a particular socio-economic nexus that characterised the political economy of colonial Rwanda (clientship, chiefly rule, forced labour, forced cultivation, and other obligatory activities) (Richards 1973).

The changed nature of refugee migration is due to the fact that the stakes of being in control of

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<sup>24</sup> See Rukatsi (1988: 51ff) for data on North Kivu in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1938, the mobility levels reached a climax, some 27% of the adult men (Hommes Adultes Valides) of the four administrative zones of North Kivu worked at medium or long distance from home (between 25 and 100km, and more than 100km, respectively).

the states have changed dramatically. In much of contemporary Africa the state has become one of the primary resources if not the primary resource, access to which (on whatever level - local, regional or national) means access to many other resources, including natural resources such as land (Englebert 2003). It should thus come not as a big surprise that conflicts over resource entitlements are at the same time often also conflicts over who can legitimately claim access to the state which in turn are often played out in terms of citizenship and ethnicity. Exclusion from state power or, for that matter, from equitable access to state organs at lower level, thus has far-reaching consequences. Conversely, the sheer centrality of power over the state (whether nationally or locally) also acts as an incentive for exclusion. Finally, the term "refugee" not only describes a certain empirical condition, but it also describes a legal status that entails a set of specific rights and obligations (e.g. to settle in designated areas only), legally distinguishing refugees from citizens. Similarly, a foreigner status sets apart the so described from nationals and "autochthones".

However, the modern state can be seen as an essential part of the semantics of migration in a much more general way. The normative underpinnings of the modern nation state, embodied in concepts like nation, democracy, welfare state, development, etc. are linked to migration via two key concepts - territorial boundaries and citizenship that serve to distinguish "natives"/ citizens from aliens, an equation in which citizens are set as the default value. Above all, the distinction implies different set of rights and obligations depending on one's status, as well differential state practices as a result of that. Moreover, and perhaps even more important, is the politics of identity engendered by the global order of nation states, or as Liisa Malkki (1995a, b) terms it, the "national order of things", under which each and everyone should have his or her nation(ality), that is, to have his or her place within the "national order of things". In this order, refugees, more than other migrants, appear deficient, they are stripped of an essential attribute (their citizenship) and the capacity, so it seems, to really belong (Malkki 1994). Thus, it is not just discriminatory state-practices or more generalised discrimination against refugees (and to some degree also ordinary migrants) in the countries of exile, but the normative and symbolical dimensions of modern statehood that lie at the heart of the political project of return of the Rwandan diaspora.

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