

4 The *Génocidaires*

Why individuals kill is a critical question for any observer of mass violence.¹ The question is especially relevant for the Rwandan case because civilian participation in the genocide was so high and so critical to the outcome. The question hovered behind the previous two chapters, but the analysis remained at an aggregate level: I examined regional and local dynamics of violence, which led only to indirect inferences about the factors driving individuals to kill. I face the question more directly in this chapter and the following two. I do so by examining the characteristics and motivations of perpetrators using my core research in Rwanda—extensive interviews with perpetrators.

Any search for a single motivation that causes individuals to commit genocide is surely a futile exercise. Motivation and participation were clearly heterogeneous in the Rwandan genocide, and Rwanda is not exceptional in that regard. Some Rwandans killed for multiple reasons. Others joined in the attacks for one reason, but then continued for other reasons; their motivations changed over time. Still other men

1. The question is salient in studies of the Holocaust, violence, and genocide. For three statements on this, see Dick de Mildt, *In the Name of the People: Perpetrators of Genocide in the Reflection of their Post-War Prosecution in West Germany: The 'Euthanasia' and 'Aktion Reinhard' Trial Cases* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1996), 15; Roger Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2; and James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

enthusiastically attacked Tutsis day in and day out, and they took the lives of many. Other men brandished weapons, searched houses for Tutsis, and maybe helped capture a Tutsi, but never actually killed. In short, motivation and participation varied during the genocide. There is no one reason why all perpetrators took part in the violence.

That said, certain patterns emerge from my research, and, on balance, the findings run contrary to many common expectations about which individuals committed genocide and why they did so. In particular, I do not find that preexisting ethnic animosity, widespread prejudice, deeply held ideological beliefs, blind obedience, deprivation, or even greed motivated the majority of Rwandan perpetrators. Nor do I find that most perpetrators were unattached young men, poorly educated, or militia members. There are exceptions, to be sure. Ethnic hatred drove some, as did ideological commitment, as did obedience, as did the desire to loot or seize land. Militias did play an important role in some areas. But in the aggregate my findings do not support these claims.

Rather, the overwhelming majority of perpetrators in rural areas were ordinary men. They were fathers, husbands, and farmers who had average levels of education and who had no prior history of violence. The evidence presented in this chapter shows that the demographic profile of perpetrators is very similar to the demographic profile of adult Hutu men at the time of the genocide. For the most part, Rwanda's genocide perpetrators—*"génocidaires"*—were regular citizens.

Their reasons for committing genocide are also, in the aggregate, quite banal. Many men chose to join groups of attackers because they feared punishment from other Hutus if they refused to take part in the violence. Other men were scared of the advancing Tutsi rebels and, after their leaders encouraged them to do so, attacked Tutsi civilians as a way to counter the rebels. Still other men opportunistically exploited the confusion of the moment to grab power or to steal from their neighbors. Rwanda's perpetrators may not be the Nazi careerists that scholars of the Holocaust have consistently found, but the Rwandan perpetrators' reasons for taking part in genocide resemble their Nazi counterparts in important ways. In particular, the Rwandans' motivations were considerably more ordinary and routine than the extraordinary crimes they helped commit.

All this is consistent with the findings from the previous chapter. The basic pattern that I find for rural areas is as follows. After Habyarimana's assassination and the resumption of war, a small core of local actors seized the initiative, consolidated control, and then mo-

bilized adult Hutu men to destroy the "Tutsi enemy." The actual war that was happening in the country was critical to the dynamics of mobilization as well as to the logic of killing. Common perceptions about state power and authority also mattered for the mass mobilization, as did expectations derived from preexisting institutions of labor mobilization. But the overall picture is not one that points strongly to a "culture of hatred" toward Tutsis, to a deep dehumanization of Tutsis, or unemployment and rage among angry young men. Rather, the main dynamics driving participation in the violence are pressure from other Hutus, security fears, and opportunity—and those mechanisms were salient in a context of national state orders to attack Tutsis, war, dense local institutions, and close-knit settlements.

The findings are surprising—at least they were to me—and I will take the next three chapters to present evidence to support and illustrate them. The discussion may occasionally be dry, but the point is to present and interpret evidence about individual-level participation in a careful and methodical fashion.

My starting point, again, is the gap in information about perpetrators. We know little about the basic facts of the perpetrator population in terms of who perpetrators were, how they compare to the rest of the Rwandan population, and how many perpetrators there were. This chapter focuses on these issues and, more specifically, three main concerns. First, I focus on methodology. Interviewing *génocidaires* raises obvious concerns about validity and credibility, and I want readers to understand my procedures, why I decided on them, and their limitations. Second, I focus on perpetrator characteristics such as age, education level, occupation, and other dimensions. I also test hypotheses about whether differences in various characteristics can explain differences in levels of participation. Were, for example, younger men more violent than older men during the genocide? Third, I focus on the attacks themselves. I discuss who led the attacks against Tutsis, as well as how large the attacks were. I use my findings here to estimate how many perpetrators there were in the genocide. Overall, the chapter helps clarify the dynamics of genocide at the local level and thereby provides an empirical base from which I try to interpret what drove the violence.

Methodology

I start with a brief discussion of methodology. The issue matters because a central problem for those who want to explore why individu-

als commit genocide is empirical, not theoretical. There is a large range of hypotheses that purport to explain individual participation in genocide (as I discussed at the end of chapter 1). However, with the exception of the literature on the Holocaust, where the evidentiary record is deep, there is little detailed and systematically collected micro-level evidence for most cases of genocide and mass violence. That lacuna is especially acute in the Rwandan case despite the volume of material published on the genocide.²

The need for more and better evidence is obvious, but the question of how to find and gather that evidence is less clear. Mass violence in a country directly affects almost everyone, and it traumatizes many. This is particularly true in Rwanda, where the rate of participation was high, where the killing took place in public locations across the country and where, after the genocide, more than two million citizens (nearly a third of the remaining population) fled the country as refugees. Moreover, mass violence often is subject to criminal proceedings and of enormous political importance to the authorities in power (again, especially so in Rwanda). For these reasons, empirical research on mass violence after the fact is a major methodological challenge, and no informant or method should be treated as unbiased or objective.

I chose to focus on perpetrators because I wanted to answer questions about the reasons that individuals commit genocide and the dynamics of mobilization. The method followed the research question. To be sure, the approach does not exclude other sources of data; triangulation is essential, as I have made clear. I also do not treat perpetrator testimony as unbiased. Rather, I consider the testimony to be self-interested narratives that need to be critically and skeptically examined.

In Rwanda, the justice system is the obvious point of entry to collect information about perpetrators. After the genocide, the RPF-led government chose maximal prosecution, meaning that the government charged everyone who participated in the genocide in some fashion. Rwandans who killed or participated in killing faced prosecution, as did those who looted during the genocide. By 2000, the government had arrested nearly 110,000 individuals on genocide charges, of whom about 6,000 had been sentenced by 2002 (the year I conducted my prin-

2. Many scholars recognize this gap in the evidence. For example, Neil Kressel writes: "No studies have addressed the question of why individual Hutus, from the militias and the general public, joined in the slaughter." Kressel, *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 112.

cipal research].³ One research strategy could be to analyze court documents from these cases. However, the only publicly available documents in 2002 were judgments, and I found the information therein too general for either reconstructing the dynamics of violence or hypothesis-testing. That being the case, I decided that the best method for generating theoretically relevant information about perpetrators was to interview them.

Given the large number of detainees and the methodological problems inherent in interviewing perpetrators, the matter of sampling is crucial. I had four main selection criteria. First, I chose to interview detainees who had been sentenced. Sentenced detainees have fewer incentives to lie than detainees awaiting trial. Moreover, guilty verdicts provide a modicum of verification, however imperfect, and that trials already had taken place meant that the material in them already had been publicly discussed (an important consideration for the university institutional review board charged with protecting "human subjects" whose approval I needed). Second, I interviewed detainees who had pled guilty.⁴ In 2000, I conducted a pilot study and found that interviewees who had not confessed were not helpful for the questions I asked. My objective in the interviews was to understand the dynamics of genocide, so talking to a respondent who denied doing or seeing anything related to the genocide would not make for particularly rewarding research. Third, I sampled randomly where possible. Here the issue was to avoid biases that would be introduced by others choosing respondents for me. In previous experience in Rwanda, I had seen how prison officials or prisoners had chosen specific perpetrators for re-

3. For the former, see Office of the Prosecutor, "Abantu Bafungiyemo mu Magereza Kasho na Burigade," Ministry of Justice, Kigali, Rwanda, August 2002. These statistics were the latest available when I conducted field research in Rwanda in 2002. For the latter, see Office of the Prosecutor, "Décisions judiciaires rendues par années (Déc. 1996–Juin 2002)," Ministry of Justice, August 2002. By June 2002, 7211 detainees had been judged, of whom 1,386 had been acquitted.

4. Rwanda's law for prosecuting genocide crimes included a provision for reduced sentences if suspected perpetrators confessed and pled guilty to their crimes. See Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda, "Organic Law on the Organization of Prosecutions for Offences Constituting the Crime of Genocide or Crimes against Humanity Committed since 1 October 1990," Kigali, Rwanda, September 1, 1996, 16–18. The confession process has four stages. First, detainees must indicate they want to plead guilty. Second, they must write out their confession. Third, the public prosecutor must read and accept their confession. Fourth, the confession is publicly handled in a court proceeding and either accepted or rejected by a three-judge panel. According to data provided to me by the Prosecutor General's office, in 2002, 25 percent of the prisoner population had confessed, which refers to detainees who were at any one of these four stages.

searchers or journalists to interview. I wanted to sidestep that problem. Fourth, I sampled nationally, meaning that I sampled in every prison where there was a population of perpetrators who had been sentenced and had confessed. Sampling nationally was important given the regional variation in Rwandan politics and in when the killing campaign started.

In total, I interviewed 210 detainees in fifteen central prisons during a six month period, and the survey represents the largest study of perpetrators of which I am aware. My procedure was the following. At each prison, I made an advance request to prison officials for a list of sentenced confessors in a particular prison. On an agreed date, I returned to the prison, obtained the list, and then used computer-generated random numbers to select individuals from the list. In some prisons, the number of sentenced confessors was too small to use random numbers. One prison had only six sentenced confessors, and I interviewed all of them. In four other prisons, I simply interviewed every other prisoner on the list. For the remainder, I used random numbers.⁵ (The differences in the size of the sentenced confessor population per prison led me to weight my findings—more on this below.)

I also limited my sampling to men. To be clear, women did play important roles during the genocide. In particular, where women were in leadership positions at the national and local levels, they often were instrumental in organizing, promoting, and authorizing genocidal killing. Women participated in other ways during the genocide. Sometimes women looted, in particular after Tutsis were killed. Sometimes women told bands of killers where Tutsis were hiding. Sometimes women encouraged their husbands or sons to attack Tutsis.⁶ However, based on all my preliminary research I concluded that men formed the overwhelming majority of perpetrators. Prisoner statistics reflect this: in 2001 and 2002, women constituted only about 3 percent of the prisoner population.⁷ Of those, very few had both confessed to commit-

5. Nyanza prison (Butare province) is where I interviewed all six prisoners. The ratios of those interviewed to the population in my sampling frame are the following: Gitarama (1 of 2); Rilima (1 of 11); Gikongoro (1 of 2); Butare (1 of 2); Kigali Central (1 of 4); Kibungo (1 of 7); Nsinda (1 of 29); Byumba I (1 of 6); Byumba II (1 of 6); Ruhengeri (1 of 3); Gisenyi (1 of 6); Kibuye (1 of 3); Cyangugu (1 of 6); and Kimironko (1 of 2). To account for this variation in sampling, I weight all statistical analyses in the pages to come according to the sampling proportion per prison.

6. I base this statement on my research. For a thorough discussion of women's participation in the genocide and on the primary ways they participated, see Nicole Hogg, *"I Never Poured Blood": Women Accused of Genocide in Rwanda*, M.A. thesis, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Toronto, Canada, November 2001, 76.

7. Hogg, *"I Never Poured Blood,"* 58.

ting genocide and been sentenced. Since my sampling criteria were to interview sentenced confessors and since the overwhelming majority of perpetrators were men, I limited my survey to men. My findings thus pertain to male perpetrators.

To conduct the interviews, I designed a semi-structured questionnaire to test various hypotheses. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. The order of the questions and the way in which I asked them proved important to the respondents' degree of openness. I found it essential to begin the interviews with unthreatening questions, and I found that indirect, open-ended questions often elicited the most rewarding responses. I also found it important that I conduct the interviews myself so that I could evaluate, or at least try to evaluate, the respondent's veracity in each case. I also found it essential to ask follow-up questions to clarify responses I did not understand. The interviews were conducted in private rooms out of earshot of other prisoners, with only my research assistant, the respondent, and me present.

My research assistant was critical. Though French and Swahili are spoken in Rwanda, and I speak some of both, some 98 percent of the respondents in my sample wanted to speak in their mother tongue, Kinyarwanda, which meant I needed an assistant. After much thought, I decided that the best assistant would be a Rwandan who had lived in the country before and during the genocide and whom respondents would not associate with the ruling regime. The former mattered because the assistant could judge each respondent's credibility and, after the interviews, explicate his responses to me, if need be. The latter mattered because I wanted to create an atmosphere in which respondents would feel comfortable and not as if they were under criminal interrogation.

To meet these concerns, I chose an assistant whom respondents would identify as Hutu. In fact, my assistant was of mixed parentage, and he and various members of his family had been attacked, threatened, and robbed during the genocide.⁸ He also had prior experience as a human rights investigator and had worked in Rwanda's prison system. In short, by his experience and identity—and also by his intelligence and manner—my assistant put respondents at ease, gave me insight into their testimony, and overall provided a first-stage verification on the interview material.

8. His mother is Tutsi, but because Rwandan ethnicity is patrilineal, he was considered Hutu.

Credibility is, indeed, a major concern when interviewing perpetrators. Some responses (such as perpetrator characteristics, which I analyze below) are less problematic. But it is clear that prisoners may lie, misremember, or reconstruct events in order to mitigate their responsibility or justify their conduct. My research design reduced these risks because I interviewed sentenced perpetrators who had pled guilty and because I sampled in different prisons (thereby preventing prisoners' ability to coordinate deception). But important credibility questions remain, particularly concerning the ways in which respondents may reconstruct pre-genocide Rwanda and the genocide itself.

While in Rwanda, I took several other measures to corroborate perpetrator testimony. First, I sought out specific survivors whom perpetrators had mentioned in order to verify the latter's accounts. Second, I identified Hutu men who survivors and local authorities agreed had not participated in the genocide. I then asked them to describe their experiences during the genocide, again with an eye on corroboration. Third, where possible, I checked the survey results against existing secondary sources. Many documents and studies of the genocide contain anecdotes and informed opinion, which I used to crosscheck my findings. These are not foolproof measures, but they add a layer of verification to perpetrator testimony.

The representative-ness of the sample is another important concern. My conclusion is that the sample well represents the confessor population, which, when I was conducting the research, was about 25 percent of the overall prisoner population.⁹ Nothing suggests that the confessors the government prosecuted first were different from other confessors. However, whether my sample is representative of (a) the entire prison population or (b) the entire perpetrator population is unclear. The safe assumption is that the sample underrepresents the worst killers, who were more likely to have fled Rwanda for good, to have been subject to revenge killings by Tutsis, or to have chosen not to confess because of the scale of their crimes. This probable bias against hardcore killers should be kept in mind as I work through the results below.

Finally, I define a genocide "perpetrator" (*génocidaire*) as any person who participated in an attack against a civilian in order to kill or to inflict serious injury on that civilian. Perpetrators thus would be those who directly killed or assaulted civilians and those who participated in groups that killed or assaulted civilians. During the genocide, there were other kinds of participation. Many Rwandans joined state-mandated civilian night patrols. Sometimes the members of these pa-

9. See note 4.

trols killed civilians, and if they did they would be perpetrators under my definition. However, if they did not, they would not be. There also was a significant amount of looting during the genocide. If killing accompanied the looting, then looters would be perpetrators under my definition. However, if Rwandans looted property but did not join attacks in which civilians were killed, they would not be perpetrators. The central idea behind this definition is that a perpetrator is someone who materially participated in the murder or attempted murder of a noncombatant.

Perpetrator Characteristics

With that background in mind, let me now turn to the findings. I start with the basic demographic profile of the perpetrators: age, level of education, paternity rate, and so forth. Where possible, I compare my findings to national census figures before the genocide in order to determine how and whether perpetrators differed from the rest of the population.¹⁰

Age

How old were Rwanda's *génocidaires*? Many observers claim that young men and "unemployed city youth" were the genocide's main perpetrators.¹¹ If true, that might support a frustration-aggression argument: young people faced a future of meager employment prospects and a land shortage and thus, the argument goes, were prone to violence. To find out how old perpetrators were, I asked respondents to name the year in which they were born, and then I subtracted that number from the year when the genocide occurred (1994).¹² The results are reported in table 4.1, along with comparable census data.¹³

10. An alternative approach would be to create a "control group" of nonperpetrator Hutu men. However, when I conducted research in 2002, I could not be confident that non-imprisoned Hutu men were not perpetrators. Furthermore, in 2002 interviewing non-charged men about the genocide would have raised ethical concerns about whether I would put respondents at unnecessary risk and therefore would be unacceptable to my home university's institutional review board. In short, I chose not to collect data systematically on non-incarcerated Hutu men and instead I compare my results to national census data, where possible.

11. Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 11; for a reference to "unemployed city youth" playing an important role, see Waller, *Becoming Evil*, 69.

12. For example, if a respondent was born in 1965, I recorded his age during the genocide to be twenty-nine. The reason I asked for year of birth is that some respondents did not know the month or day when they were born.

13. The relevant census data are found in République du Rwanda, *Recensement*

Table 4.1 Age of perpetrators (N = 210)

Age range	Weighted sample	Rwanda adult male population (15+)	Rwanda male population
0-14	0%	~	48.2%
15-19	3.9	19.4%	10.0
20-24	12.0	15.7	8.1
25-29	11.6	14.4	7.4
30-34	28.6	13.3	6.9
35-39	18.5	9.9	5.1
40-44	11.6	6.5	3.3
45-49	6.8	4.3	2.2
50-54	1.0	4.0	2.0
55-59	2.4	3.4	1.7
60+	3.6	9.0	4.6
Median age	34	30	15

The results clearly show that my sample of perpetrators is not predominantly youthful. To the contrary, the perpetrators were primarily adult men: 89 percent were 20 to 49 years old and the greatest concentrations were men 30 to 39 years old. The median age was 34.¹⁴ Even more striking is the comparison to the census data. My sample's age profile is similar to and, if anything, marginally *older* than the profile of the adult male population. The sample is considerably older than the general population, partly reflecting Rwanda's high birth rate.¹⁵ I will return to these findings in a moment.

Paternity

The results for paternity rates are similar. Most perpetrators in my sample—some 77 percent—were fathers: they were not unattached youths (see table 4.2).

There are no precise comparative data on paternity rates in the census. However, extrapolating from data on maternity rates and my sample's medians for paternity and age, I conclude that the sample's

général de la population et de l'habitat au 15 août 1991: Analyse des résultats définitifs, Kigali, Rwanda, April 1994, 65, 84.

14. In a forthcoming study that includes interviews with perpetrators in two Rwandan prefectures, Lee Ann Fujii found a similar age structure. She has a sample of fourteen individuals, and the mean age was thirty-two years old. Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: The Social Dimensions of Genocide in Rwanda*, Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., forthcoming.

15. Rwanda's high birth rate means that the population frequencies will be biased toward younger populations.

Table 4.2 Paternity rates of perpetrators (N = 209)

Number of children	Weighted sample
0	22.9%
1	7.9
2	5.6
3	14.4
4	17.1
5	5.2
6	6.1
7	8.8
8+	12.2
Median	3

paternity rates are similar to those of Rwanda's adult male population.¹⁶ Again, the perpetrators look like average adult Rwandan men.

Occupation

I also asked each respondent to identify his occupation. Two tables display the results. The first (table 4.3) displays the labels that perpetrators themselves volunteered when asked to name their occupations.

After several dozen interviews, I learned that many who identified themselves as farmers had other ways of earning money, which led me to ask an additional question about whether they earned money in other ways besides farming.¹⁷ Of those to whom I put this question (N=128), a significant portion—55.5 percent—answered yes. Those activities included fishing, bricklaying, practicing apiculture, shepherding, riding a bicycle taxi, selling beer, being a domestic worker, being a farm laborer, being a carpenter, being a night watchman, and peddling wares in a market.

The second table (table 4.4) reorganizes the occupations listed in table 4.3 to correspond to the five occupation categories listed in the census.¹⁸

16. The steps in the logic are as follows: (1) the census reports "female fecundity" for women aged 15-49 years old to be 6.9 births; (2) of those births, 42.8 percent were born to women under thirty, which means that by their thirtieth birthday the average Rwandan woman had given birth to 2.95 children; and (3) men generally are older than women when they parent; and (4) in my sample I found that the median age was thirty-four and the median number of children was three. Hence I conclude that the sample's paternity rate was similar to national averages. For the census data, see République du Rwanda, *Recensement général*, 235, 247.

17. I thank Philip Verwimp for encouraging me to ask this question to respondents.

18. For the census data, see République du Rwanda, *Recensement général*, 108-9.

Table 4.3 Occupations of perpetrators (N = 210)

Occupation	Unweighted frequency
Farmer	77.6%
Driver	2.4
Builder/carpenter	1.5
Tailor	0.5
Mechanic	1.0
Business	1.0
Former businessman	0.5
Factory worker	1.0
Moneychanger	0.5
Cellule committee member	4.3
Cellule responsable	2.4
Conseiller	0.5
Political party leader	0.5
Associate director of schools	0.5
Teacher	0.5
Government agricultural agent	1.5
Medical assistant	0.5
Veterinary aide	0.5
Brigadier (head of commune police)	0.5
Reservist	0.5
Forest guard	0.5
Children	1.0
"None"	1.0

The census categories are ambiguous and overlap (especially since farmers sometimes had other ways of earning money), but I have done my best to reclassify my data accurately.¹⁹

Given some of the ambiguities in the census data and how the census categories correspond to the way that respondents identified their professions, it seems unwise to make too much of the reported differences. The conclusion to reach is that overall the sample's occupation profile is broadly similar to the national population. The main differ-

19. For first category, I include respondents who self-identified as "farmers," even if they were *cellule* committee members or *responsables*. For the second category, I include full-time salaried state officials, such as technical agents, *conseillers*, forest guards, and communal police. I also include teachers and factory workers in this category. For the third category, I include drivers, builders, carpenters, tailors, money-changers, and mechanics. However, it should be noted that some "cultivators" also were carpenters, builders, mechanics, and tailors on the side. That being the case, when comparing the sample's occupation profile to the national one, the first and third census categories probably should be added together. For the fourth category, I include businessmen and ex-businessmen. For the fifth, I include those who said they had no profession, children, reservists, and political party leaders.

Table 4.4 Perpetrator and national occupation profiles

Occupation	Weighted sample	Census frequency
Agriculture, fishing, hunting, animal raising	86.1%	91%
Technical professions, administration, and specialized workers	6.7	2.0
Service sector	3.4	2.3
Commercial sector	1.1	1.0
Other	2.2	3.6

ence is an overrepresentation of professionals, administrative cadre, and specialized workers in the sample, which could reflect a large presence of those whom, in the last chapter, I labeled the "rural elite." But the major finding here is that, with the exception of an overrepresentation of local elites, the perpetrators strongly resemble the adult male Hutu population of Rwanda at the time of the genocide.

Education and Literacy

The findings on education and literacy show the same. Some 60.8 percent of the sample was literate (N=196, weighted) compared to 61.7 percent of all Hutu males older than six years old.²⁰ Table 4.5 compares the total years of education for my sample to males older than six.

Overall, the perpetrators appear to be slightly better educated than the average Rwandan man, but the differences are slight and may reflect a skew in the census.²¹ Again, this evidence indicates that Rwandan perpetrators were representative of the adult male Hutu population at the time of the genocide and certainly were not undereducated.

Taken together, the findings in this section have important implications. Some theories posit that genocide perpetrators are different in some fashion. They might be sadistic, socially deviant, or otherwise predisposed to violence. Or perpetrators might be ignorant or deprived in some fashion. My findings run squarely against these arguments. Rwanda's perpetrators as represented in my random sample of sen-

20. République du Rwanda, *Recensement général*, 137.

21. The percentages in the census include all men from seven to seventy years old. However, almost by definition, boys under ten will receive less than four years of education. The census results thus slightly overrepresent lower education levels. République du Rwanda, *Recensement général*, 138.

Table 4.5 Perpetrator and national education levels ($N = 204$)

Years of education	Weighted sample	Rwandan males
0	32.2%	33.8%
1–3	13.5	22.9
4–8 (primary school)	48.6	36.1
9+ (post-primary school and up)	5.8	5.6

tenced confessors were quite ordinary. They were average adult Hutu men—in terms of age, education, paternity, and occupation. The average-ness of Rwandan perpetrators could mean many things. It could mean that there was a widespread culture of hatred against Tutsis. By this argument, since the average Hutu hated Tutsis, then the average perpetrator would look like the average Hutu man.²² Based on my findings that I present below and in chapters to come, I conclude otherwise: namely, that the logic of mobilization of Hutu men corresponded to preexisting institutions and that many ordinary Hutu men took part in genocide because of banal situational reasons such as pressure from other Hutus, fear, and opportunity.²³

Stated Political Party Affiliation

In addition to questions about demographic data, I also asked respondents about their social affiliations and networks. Here I wanted to find out both whether perpetrators came from particular political parties and whether preexisting social networks were the primary conduits for mobilization. There are no comparative national data for these findings, but the results are interesting in their own right. I start with political party affiliation (see table 4.6).

There is clearly a risk here that respondents might lie in answering this question. The expected bias would be to deny MRND and CDR party membership because those parties are especially implicated in the genocide. However, among those who said they belonged to a party, the MRND was the party most frequently cited. Moreover, the party affiliations generally corresponded to regional party strengths.

22. Such would be an extension of the argument in Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Random House, 1996).

23. And thus my arguments conform more closely to those found in Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

Table 4.6 Perpetrator political party affiliation ($N = 209$)

Political party	Weighted sample
MRND	37.5%
MDR	20.4
PSD	5.1
CDR	2.5
2+ Parties	2.0
None	32.4

Most respondents from northern and northwest Rwanda said that they were in the MRND and the CDR, while most from southwest and south central Rwanda said that they were in the MDR or the PSD. In short, the responses appear credible, and they suggest that party affiliation alone did not determine who became a perpetrator. Perpetrators belonged to every major party in the country.

Civic and State Involvement

During the interviews, I also asked a series of questions relating to civic and state involvement. I asked if respondents had a family member in the state administration or in the army—under the theory that civilian connections to officialdom might explain how and why Hutu men became *génocidaires*. The same principle holds for civic and commercial associations: since many Rwandans belong to collectives for borrowing money, for agriculture, for fishing, and for other activities, I wanted to see if those networks could explain how men came to take part in the violence. A third question concerned whether a respondent participated in a mandatory community service program for adults called *umuganda*. The program's activities included building schools, repairing roads, constructing bridges, digging anti-erosion ditches, and other community projects. The fourth question concerned whether a respondent participated in the nightly patrols called *amarondo*. These patrols were initiated in response to the 1990–94 civil war as part of a civil defense program, though the policy was implemented unevenly countrywide (see table 4.7 for results).

The strongest positive finding here concerns the *umuganda* community labor program: some 88 percent of respondents took part in the program. Without appropriate comparable data, I cannot say whether participation in the program predisposed men to commit genocide or

Table 4.7 Civic and state involvement of perpetrators (weighted results)

	<i>Did you have a family member in the state?^a</i> (N = 203)	<i>Were you in an association?</i> (N = 174)	<i>Did you do umuganda?</i> (N = 203)	<i>Did you do night patrols (amarando)?</i> (N = 187)
Yes	25.8%	36.7%	87.5%	35.1%
No	74.2%	63.3%	12.5%	64.9%

^a"State" here includes family members who were in government administration (not including teachers), the police, or the army.

whether the program itself was widespread. But at a minimum the finding demonstrates that a large number of genocide perpetrators had already complied with state orders to participate in unpaid labor *before the genocide*. Moreover, their compliance was apparently unrelated to the factors that many believe cause genocide participation, such as ethnic hatred or prejudice. I will return to this finding in chapter 8.

Nothing stands out among the other findings. Some respondents had family members in the government but most did not. Family affiliation with the government thus could explain how some men came to participate, but such affiliation appears not to have been the primary vehicle for mobilization. The same is true for associational membership. As for being part of the civil defense operation before the genocide, again this alone does not explain why most men took part in the genocide, but as with *umuganda*, here the findings indicate that the state had mobilized a significant proportion of perpetrators *before* the genocide to perform unpaid labor.

Disaggregating Participation and Statistical Analyses

Not all perpetrators were alike in their degree of participation. Some killed many Tutsis; others led the killing in their areas; others killed one person; still others joined attacks against Tutsis but did not kill. One way to measure different participation rates might be sentence length, but in reality this is not a valid measure. Based on my observations, Rwandan sentencing procedures were erratic. They varied year to year, region to region, and case to case, and they did not appear to correlate to the crime committed.

A better measure is the number of people a perpetrator killed or

whether he was an avowed leader of the violence. This measure also has problems, chiefly credibility: there is no systematic way to verify whether the number of victims a perpetrator admits to killing reflects the actual number he killed.²⁴ Nonetheless, there is variation in my sample on how many people perpetrators admit to killing directly (as opposed to participating in an attack where one or more people were killed), and this variation can serve to measure degree of participation.

Can the results reported in table 4.8 be trusted? It is impossible to know for certain. Judging from my observations and those of my assistant, most respondents appeared not to be deliberately lying when answering this question. On the other hand, the respondents clearly had an interest either during the interviews or during their court cases in claiming they killed less than they actually had. That said, the results in table 4.8 have two important implications. First, the results indicate that the survey is biased toward lower-level killers, as argued above. Second, although the absolute numbers may not be perfectly valid, there is reason to believe that the relative degree of participation might be. In other words, if the numbers in table 4.8 do not accurately reflect the total number of victims these perpetrators killed by their own hand, they probably reflect real differences in the degree of violence respondents committed.

Measuring degree of participation matters for evaluating whether differences in participation correlate to differences in the characteristics discussed above. To look for these relationships, I use two different statistical procedures. The first is regression analysis, which I use for the variables whose differences can be measured by ordinal categories (such as age and education level). The second is cross-tabulation, which I use principally for those variables whose differences cannot be measured by ordinal categories (such as occupation and party affiliation).

Various regression analyses attribute statistical significance to age and paternity rates when degree of participation is regressed on those variables (see Appendix table 4.1 for various bivariate regression results). The correlation between education level and participation also looks strong enough to be worthy of further analysis, even if it does not have statistical significance. By contrast, literacy, associational

24. Court judgments do not help. The judgments that I read specify the number of deaths for which each defendant is held responsible. But most judgments do not distinguish between defendants who killed and those who participated in an attack. Therefore, the judgments cannot be used to check perpetrator statements about the number of deaths that each respondent specifically committed.

Table 4.8 Degree of genocidal participation

Weighted sample	N = 205
0 directly killed	71.5%
1 directly killed	20.4
2–4 directly killed	5.5
5+ directly killed	1.3
Self-identified leader of violence	1.3

membership, participation in the *umuganda* community labor program, and participation in the night patrols do not appear to be related strongly with degree of participation.

To examine these patterns further, I ran a multivariate regression analysis with the three variables—age, paternity, and education—that the bivariate analyses showed to be strongly related to degree of participation (see Appendix table 4.2 for results). The multivariate results indicate that age continues to have a statistically significant relationship with degree of participation when the other two variables are held constant. However, the paternity result changes: when controlled for age and education, paternity loses its statistical significance. By contrast, when the other two variables are held constant, education becomes statistically significant, but it has a negative relationship with degree of participation.

Why does all this matter? The regression analyses indicate that the younger perpetrators, those with fewer or no children, and those with lower levels of education tended to be the most violent during the genocide. The findings thus support some common wisdom about the genocide: namely, that Rwanda's killers were unattached youths and poorly educated. In other words, my primary finding in this chapter is that most perpetrators were ordinary men who broadly reflected the society in which they lived. However, the statistical analysis reveals that among perpetrators the most violent appear to have been younger, less well educated, and with fewer children, often no children.

Cross-tabulation analysis yields another nuance.²⁵ Of the self-identified leaders of the violence at the local level, all but one were between the ages of 33 and 37. All had finished their primary school education but had no further education, and all had between three and five children. In short, while overall the most violent individuals

25. I report the results from the cross-tab analysis but do not reproduce the tables.

in the sample tended to be younger with a low level of education (and had the fewest children), the local-level leaders of the violence tended to be well-integrated adult men with above average levels of education.

Occupation also matters. The self-described leaders were all administration officials, non-state rural elites, or farmers who had other ways to earn income (one was a tailor, the other a brickmaker). However, of those who killed two or more people, nearly 90 percent had preexisting firearms training (as in the case of an army reservist or a forest guard) or were farmers. These patterns suggest that the leaders of the violence tended to have some preexisting social status, while the most violent persons tended to be trained in firearm use or were young farmers.²⁶

These statistical results have important implications. They confirm a general pattern seen in the previous chapter. In particular, there was a core group of perpetrators at the local level. These included local elites who tended to take charge during the genocide, whether they held government posts or not. Working with them were the "thugs": a small group of younger men or those who had firearms. The thugs were political party youths, angry young men, reservists, and, in one case, a forest guard. They were local specialists in violence or those who used their youth and strength to their advantage, and they did the lion's share of killing. The stereotype of the unattached youthful militia may not characterize the perpetrator population as a whole but rather those who were most violent at the local level. Otherwise, ordinary Hutu men formed the mass of perpetrators. They had few distinguishing features; they were average, regular men, and their participation in genocide, I will argue, is due to situational and institutional factors relating to war, Rwanda's state, and the crisis of the moment.

Characteristics of Attacks

In addition to information about individuals' characteristics and their affiliations, I also asked respondents to describe attacks against Tutsis in some detail. Table 4.9 reports what respondents volunteered when asked who led the attacks in which they participated.

26. The differences were marginal for farmers who had some other means of earning money and for those who did not (N=126).

Table 4.9 Leaders of attacks (N = 184)

Who led the killings in your area?	Weighted frequency ^a
Civilian authorities (Commune, sector, and/or cellule officials)	47.3%
Army soldiers and/or gendarmes	35.7
Non-state rural elite (e.g. businessmen, teachers, ex-officials, doctors, engineers, university students)	12.0
"Peasants who made themselves strong" or "peasants"	12.0
Interahamwe or other armed militia	11.4
Local political party leaders	9.7
National leaders (parliamentarians, ministers)	5.4
Respondent does not know who led killings	4.3
Reservists, demobilized soldiers, commune police	3.8
"Youths"	2.7
"Delinquents"	1.6
No leaders	1.0

^aMany respondents identified more than one category of leader, such as a civilian authority working with a soldier or a teacher working with a militiaman. Recall, for example, how in the last chapter we saw that soldiers and civilian authorities worked closely in Kanzenze. The percentages reported in column 2 thus represent the incidence that any leadership category is mentioned. For example, if a respondent said that the burgomaster, soldiers, and a political party leader led the killing in his area, I would count each category once.

The evidence is consistent with the patterns seen elsewhere: the leaders of attacks tended to have preexisting social status—they were local authorities or local elites—or else they were officials in the army or the gendarmerie. Respondents also said that militias, youths, delinquents, and "peasants who made themselves strong" also led the killings. Taken together, the findings reported in table 4.9 provide further evidence that civilian elites and military personnel tended to direct the violence in rural areas, while aggressive young men—the "thugs"—acted as enforcers for the elites and the military. The evidence also shows how during the genocide, non-state authorities could opportunistically seize the initiative and lead the violence in their areas. All of these findings are consistent with the arguments made in the last chapter.

I asked a series of other questions to probe these issues further (see table 4.10).

Again, the findings show that civilian authorities and military personnel played a large role in the violence. Armed militias also played an important role, but their presence was less pervasive than is often claimed: they were present only in about a quarter of attacks. Moreover, according to the respondents, armed militias were in the attacks

Table 4.10 Perpetrator group compositions (weighted results)

	Were there members of the administration present in your attack? (N = 160)	Were there members of the military present in your attack? ^a (N = 166)	Were there armed militia members present in your attack? (N = 140)	Were there Burundians present in your attack? (N = 153)
No	26.6%	55.7%	73.4%	90.8%
Yes	73.4%	44.3%	26.6%	9.2%

^aThe "military" here includes members of the army, the Presidential Guard, and the gendarmerie as well as reservists.

without civilian authorities or soldiers in only 3 percent of the cases.²⁷ The perpetrators also indicate that Burundians were not strongly present in most attacks, a finding that runs contrary to the claim that Burundi refugees were key instigators of the violence. In short, the findings from these tables indicate that state authorities in the form of civilian administrators and military personnel played a large role in the killings. Authority and authorization were critical to the dynamics of mobilization.

I also asked respondents about the magnitude of the attacks in which they participated. The results are instructive in their own right, but I also use them to estimate the total size of the perpetrator population. The latter question has been subject to a great deal of speculation, and current estimates are widely discrepant: they range from tens of thousands of perpetrators to several million.²⁸ The high-end estimate—three million perpetrators—would mean that the entire adult

27. Valid N=133.

28. Senior government officials have estimated three million perpetrators in various interviews I conducted. See also Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998), 244. Mahmood Mamdani estimates "hundreds of thousands" of perpetrators. Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 7. Christian Scherrer claims that 40–66 percent of male Hutu farmers, 60–80 percent of the higher professions, and "almost 100 percent" of the civil servants participated. No substantiation is offered for the latter. If properly calculated, those numbers would total more than a million perpetrators. Christian Scherrer, *Genocide and Crisis in Central Africa: Conflict Roots, Mass Violence, and Regional War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 126. Alison Des Forges cites "tens of thousands" in *Leave None, 260*; Bruce Jones hypothesizes that 25,000 or fewer killers may have killed as many as a million over the course of a hundred days; see Bruce Jones, *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 41.

Table 4.11 Perpetrator group sizes during the genocide

Group size (# of persons)	Weighted frequency	Group size per cellule (# of persons per cellule)	Weighted frequency
1-10	23.7%	1-10	44.1%
11-30	28.6	11-20	25.4
31-50	17.5	21-30	15.2
51-100	11.1	31-40	7.2
101-200	3.8	41-50	7.0
200+	15.3	50+	1.1
Weighted average	116 persons	Weighted average	22 persons

Hutu population at the time of the genocide participated in it.²⁹ My findings can yield an imperfect but better estimate.

To create an estimate, I calculate the average number of perpetrators per *cellule* (the smallest administrative unit nationwide) based on respondents' statements about the size and makeup of their groups.³⁰ I then estimate the number of *cellules* where genocide occurred, under the assumption that mobilization dynamics were similar countrywide once violence started in a particular community. I start here with table 4.11, which reports both average group sizes as well as average group sizes per *cellule*.

The numbers in the table have a number of important implications. First, violence during the genocide happened almost exclusively in groups. Of all the respondents I interviewed, only one said he launched on an attack on his own. The genocide was a group-perpetrated activity. Second, perpetrator groups varied in size, but many were quite large. Nearly 20 percent of all reported attacks had one hundred or more perpetrators, and some attacks exceeded a thousand persons.

29. According to the 1991 census, Rwanda had 2,813,232 citizens between 18 and 54. If 8.4 percent were Tutsi, the Hutu population was 2,576,920. Because of population growth between 1991 and 1994, the actual number was higher, and some perpetrators were younger than 18 and older than 54. Still, the estimate of three million accounts for the entire Hutu population. For the census figures, see République du Rwanda, *Recensement général*, 124.

30. I asked respondents the makeup of the attacks in which they participated. I assume an average of 4 *cellules* per sector, and 44 *cellules* per commune. Thus, if a respondent said there were 50 attackers from two *cellules*, I calculate a 25 person per *cellule* attack. If there were 100 attacks from all over the sector, the per-*cellule* average would be the same. For my administrative calculations, I used République du Rwanda, "Annexe à l'arrête présidentiel no. 251/03," Kigali, Rwanda, November 10, 1975.

As for the size of the perpetrator population, I estimate 5,852 *cellules* where genocide occurred, a number that I multiply by the estimate of the average number of perpetrators per *cellule*.³¹ The product of these numbers is 128,744 persons, which is a base estimate for the number of perpetrators (22 persons \times 5852 *cellules*). I also make a series of additional modifications. The most important is that respondents' estimates of group size were for single attacks, not for the genocide's duration. Often the same nucleus of perpetrators participated day in and day out, but group composition also changed over time. I know of no way to calculate this number systematically, but based on my research, my best estimate is an average of thirty to thirty-five perpetrators per *cellule* over the course of the genocide.³²

If we assume a baseline standard of thirty perpetrators per *cellule*, the total number of perpetrators would be about 175,000, whereas if we assume thirty-five perpetrators per *cellule*, then the total number of perpetrators would be about 210,000. The main advantages of this estimate are that it is based on (1) a national sample, (2) direct perpetrator information, and (3) an explicit methodology. Indeed, if any assumption made here is wrong or if new research yields different findings, the estimate can be revised. The main weaknesses with the estimate are that it is based on (1) perpetrator observations about group size and makeup and it is not clear how accurate those observations are, (2) an assumption of broadly similar dynamics of mobilization across regions *once genocidal violence started at the local level*, and (3) informed guesswork about perpetrators in those areas not well represented in my sample.

If the figure of 175,000 to 210,000 perpetrators holds up as more ev-

31. The estimate is that genocide occurred in 133 communes nationwide and that there were on average 44 *cellules* per commune. In addition to Giti, those communes where genocide did not occur, because the RPF controlled them or because there in the demilitarized zone, include Kiyombe, Muvumba, Kivuye, Cyumba, Mukarange [Byumba Prefecture], Kigombe, Kinigi, Butaro, Nkumba, Cyeru, and Kidaho [Ruhengeri Prefecture].

32. I make two other modifications. First, of the estimated 40,000 soldiers and *interahamwe* in the country at the time of the genocide, I estimate that some 10,000 played a direct role in the genocide. Second, several communes had few resident Tutsis prior to the genocide, and there the relative number of attackers would likely be lower. Even if the above calculations are based on a national average, the bias is against those pockets of the country where genocide did not exist because no Tutsis lived there, or because the RPF seized the communes extremely quickly. I estimate an additional eleven communes where this occurred. They are: Tare, Rushashi, Musasa [Kigali-Rural], Nyakinama, Nyamugali, Nyamutera, Ruhondo [Ruhengeri], Gaseke [Gisenyi], Tumba, Kinyami, and Rutare [Byumba]. For these communes, I use a base estimate of 15 to 20 perpetrators per *cellule*.

idence becomes available, the estimate has two important implications. First, the numbers run counter to allegations that the current authorities are governing a "criminal population."³³ The Rwandan census defines "active adults" as eighteen to fifty-four years old. As such, my estimate of the number of perpetrators equals 7 to 8 percent of the active adult Hutu population and 14 to 17 percent of the active adult male Hutu population at the time of the genocide.³⁴ It was not all Hutus who participated in the genocide, nor all Hutu men. It was only a minority who did.

Second, even if not all Hutu men participated in the genocide, a very significant number did. Rarely do governments succeed in mobilizing 14 to 17 percent of an adult male population to participate in state-sanctioned behavior. This is especially true for African governments, which tend to have weak roots in the countryside and generally have weak mobilizational capacity. Some scholars argue that in most genocides direct participation in the murdering of civilians is limited to a very small minority of the population.³⁵ If true, then the magnitude of civilian participation in the Rwandan genocide would be anomalous when compared to other cases of genocide. In short, the large-scale civilian participation (1) characterizes the Rwandan genocide, (2) runs contrary to expectations about the power of African states, and (3) is anomalous compared to other genocides. Civilian participation also was critical to the rapid character of the Rwandan genocide: with so many men taking part, Tutsis and other targeted individuals had little room for escape. All this points to the importance of civilian participation in the genocide and the need to explain it—a question I discuss more explicitly in the next chapter.

This chapter is an introduction to my research on Rwanda's genocide perpetrators. I discuss the methodology I used to select 210 sentenced and self-confessed genocide criminals to interview. The chapter also discusses my main findings about the identity of Rwanda's perpetra-

33. As has been claimed in many interviews conducted with RPF officials and as cited in Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 7.

34. Rwanda had 2,813,232 citizens between 18 and 54 in 1991. If 8.4 percent were Tutsi, the Hutu population was 2,576,920, of which 48.7 percent were active men. Thus, the total number of active adult Hutu men was approximately 1,255,960. (The actual figure may be slightly greater because of population growth between 1991 and 1994.) For the census figures, see République du Rwanda, *Recensement général*, 74, 124.

35. On this point, see Benjamin Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), esp. ch. 2.

tors at the local level, as well as the principal characteristics of the attacks in which they participated. The main findings are that the perpetrator population strongly resembles the adult Hutu male population at the time of the genocide. Rwanda's perpetrators were ordinary in all but the crimes they committed. There were, however, different levels of violence. Some men killed more than others; some men led and authorized the violence at the local level. On the whole, those who killed the most were young, less well-educated men, militias, political party youth, and the like; they were the "thugs" I identified in chapter 3. Those who led the attacks were Rwandans with preexisting status—the rural elite—and in almost every attack some member of the state was present. The collective dimension of the violence is another critical attribute of the violence. Men committed Rwanda's genocide almost entirely in groups, often of a fairly large size. Men killed in groups and usually under the direction of those with rural authority.

These findings all clarify what happened at the local level during the genocide, but what do they mean? The ordinariness of Rwanda's killers, the group dynamics of the violence, and the large-scale civilian participation could be indicators of a wide range of causal factors. The findings could mean that anti-Tutsi hatred was widespread, that there was a "culture of hatred," or that there was widely shared poverty. In other words, the average-ness of the killers and the extent of participation do not necessarily tell us what drove ordinary men to become *génocidaires*. To answer the causal questions, I turn to other evidence, in particular what I will present in the next chapter (as well as what I presented in the chapters 2 and 3). But to cut to the chase, I conclude that the evidence runs contrary to cultural and identity arguments. Rather, the evidence points to situational factors—choices were made in particular contexts—to the importance of fear and uncertainty in an acute war, and to preexisting norms about authority and civilian labor mobilization.

The findings from this chapter also square with what I found in my micro-comparative study. In rural areas, something like the following seems to have occurred: in a period of acute crisis and turmoil—after the assassination, the resumption of war, and national hardliners declared Tutsis as the "enemy"—a core of leaders took the initiative in their communities. The leaders tended to have preexisting social status or were armed, and they worked closely with a small group of very violent individuals—the "thugs." Once this small nucleus of actors consolidated control, they in turn mobilized as many Hutu men as

they could to join them, no matter who those Hutu men were. In doing so, the leaders and thugs claimed that participating in the killing was an "obligation" or "law"—it became synonymous with order and authority—and adult Hutu men were required to do their part. From there, the violence snowballed: once a man was incorporated into the killing, he expected the same from his peers. Thus, very quickly large numbers of men came to participate, and the violence spiked. Hence the perpetrators look like a random sample of adult Hutu men—most perpetrators were likely mobilized at random.

The analysis in the chapter does not adequately address three important problems. First, motivation remains an open question, as I have argued. The chapter shows that in the aggregate, perpetrators were not especially deviant, poor, or deprived; they did not have fewer social attachments or belong to particular parties. But clearly we need more precision and more specific information about motivation—points I take up in the next chapter. Second, we still are far from understanding the logic of killing and extermination. What rationales did perpetrators use to justify and support the mass murder of civilians? I will take up that question directly in chapter 6.

Finally, the evidence presented here shows that perpetrators were a minority of adult Rwandan males. The arguments presented so far cannot explain why. If my hypothesis is correct that the majority of perpetrators were mobilized at random and that social pressure and coercion played an important role, then why were there not *more* genocide perpetrators? I have some plausible explanations, but the matter deserves further research. For one, chance might explain why some became perpetrators while others did not: some Rwandan men may simply have been at the wrong place at the wrong time. That is, they might have been at a commercial center when a band of young thugs came there to find others to join in an attack. Others might have been on the path to a Tutsi home. In fact, as we will see in the next chapter, a huge proportion of respondents lived in close proximity to Tutsis. Still others might have lived near a local leader. I have anecdotal reasons to support the claim that luck mattered in who did and did not become a perpetrator, but I did not systematically investigate the question. Again, we need more research in this area.

Another plausible explanation is that in many locations the killing ended very quickly because Tutsis were killed quickly in that area. If we take the example of Kayove commune from the last chapter, the killing ended within seven days there because, it would seem, there remained no Tutsis left to kill. I heard similar accounts in other areas,

particularly in Ruhengeri and Byumba Prefectures. Thus, the number of Hutu men who complied with participation in the war effort—through night patrols, especially—was probably greater than the number of perpetrators (those who took an active role in killing or trying to kill other civilians). I will revisit some of these issues in the next chapter, but the question of why some Hutu men became perpetrators while others did not is an important area for future research on this genocide.

5 Why Perpetrators Say They Committed Genocide

I focus in this chapter on the specific reasons why ordinary Rwandan men committed genocide. When I interviewed convicted perpetrators, I asked them a series of direct and indirect questions that would allow me to test several common explanations about participation in the genocide. The perpetrators' answers are valuable in their own right: they further flesh out what happened at the local level both before and during the genocide. But my main objective in analyzing the responses is to test hypotheses about why ordinary Rwandan men took part in mass violence, often against people they knew personally.

The findings are consistent with those in the previous chapters. Overall, I find little evidence to suggest that ethnic hatred, material deprivation, or a culture of obedience were widespread among the perpetrators I interviewed. Rather, two other factors were more salient. First, men participated in the killing because other men encouraged, intimidated, and coerced them to do so in the name of authority and "the law." Many respondents described situations where they believed that they faced a choice between being punished or committing violence, and many chose the latter. Second, men participated in the killing because they were scared and angry. Many respondents said that they feared the advancing Tutsi rebels and were angry about the president's death, which they blamed on the rebels. Those are the chapter's principal findings—in the aggregate. I also present a series of other findings that pertain to common arguments about the genocide's causes, and I discuss throughout explanations for the differences in levels of participation among perpetrators.

Credibility is an obvious concern in this chapter, perhaps more so than anywhere else in this book. Perpetrators are more likely to lie or to reconstruct events in their own self-interest when answering questions about their attitudes and motivations than when discussing their age and education levels. That being the case, I crosscheck the results whenever possible, and I explicitly evaluate the truthfulness of various responses at different points in the chapter. These are measures I take in addition to the sampling criteria discussed in the last chapter. In short, credibility is an important and unavoidable concern in the chapter, but I triangulate the findings as much as possible.

Social Conditions and Destabilization before the Genocide

I start here with a series of questions about life in Rwanda before the genocide. As chapter 1 showed, there were a number of sources of social upheaval in Rwanda before the genocide. There was the civil war with the RPF that started in October 1990, the introduction of multiparty politics, the assassination of Burundi's first Hutu president and the ensuing violence in that country, and general economic malaise. The changes contributed to the radicalization of the hardliners within the ruling party. But did these national-level issues trickle down to the local level? If so, did the events contribute to individuals committing genocide? Many authors claim that they did, and some prominent theories of genocide stress political upheaval as a key causal factor.¹ To get at the issue, I asked perpetrators a series of questions about pre-genocide Rwanda, starting with the 1990 civil war (commonly called the "October War" in Rwanda).

Table 5.1 shows fairly widespread upheaval at the local level. Multipartyism was clearly a significant source of change. Respondents frequently described violent contests for local-level control among parties. They told how party youths threw stones at each other and at opposing party leaders, how men forcibly pressured others to switch parties, how party activists tore down flags and posters of opposing parties, and how political rivalries escalated occasionally into brawls and murder. The overall impression was that political party activity significantly disrupted the local political arena—a result that is consistent with the findings from chapter 3, where I found that multiparty

1. Barbara Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003), 62; Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Table 5.1 Opinions about pre-1994 upheaval (weighted results)^a

	<i>Did the "October War" cause changes in your area? (N = 206)</i>	<i>Before 1994, were you afraid of the RPF? (N = 198)</i>	<i>Did multipartyism cause changes in your area? (N = 205)</i>	<i>Had you heard of political problems in Burundi in 1993? (N = 205)^b</i>	<i>If so, were you affected by what you heard? (N = 98)</i>
Yes	38.3%	50.3%	63.4%	48.2%	53.1%
No	61.7%	49.7%	36.6%	51.8%	46.9%

^aAll statistical analyses in this chapter are weighted as in chapter 4.

^bIn my initial interviews, I asked respondents if they were disturbed or affected by the problems in Burundi. In several interviews, respondents responded quizzically, saying that they did not understand the question. Thus, I created a two-stage question, asking first if respondents had heard of Burundi's political problems and, second, if what they had heard affected them.

politics helped set the stage for the competition for power among local elites once the genocide began.

Responses about the civil war were mixed. Unsurprisingly, in the areas closest to the war, respondents reported significant war-related changes, including troop movements, fighting, and refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs).² However, in those areas far from the front lines, respondents reported almost no war-related changes.³ At the same time, about half the respondents countrywide reported being afraid of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) before the genocide. They said that they had heard that RPF soldiers killed Hutu civilians, that the rebels disemboweled pregnant women, that the rebels were "snakes," and that they had tails. When I asked respondents how they learned this information, most answered radio broadcasts. Similarly, respondents from southern regions bordering Burundi reported the greatest concern about events in that country. But nationwide events in Burundi do not seem to have created deep resentment, fear, and anger among the perpetrators.

What do these results show? The war with the RPF and violence in Burundi clearly worried both Rwanda's national elites and ordinary Rwandans in regions where the effects of these events could be observed directly. But for many Rwandans, especially those engaged in

2. This was the case for respondents in Ruhengeri and Byumba Prefectures and in Bugesera (Kigali-Rural Prefecture).

3. This was the case for respondents in Cyangugu, Gikongoro, Butare, Kibuye, and Gitarama Prefectures.

Table 5.2 Opinions of the Habyarimana government (weighted results)

	<i>What was your opinion of the Habyarimana government? (N = 196)</i>
Opposed ^a	17.9%
No particular opinion ^b	32.1
Ambivalent ^c	1.3
Supported ^d	48.6

^aThe responses included "I didn't support it," "I opposed," "it was not good," "I did not benefit," "it was a dictatorship," "I was unhappy," "I reproached it," "I criticized," "it did nothing for me," "he wanted to stay alone in power," and "I did not benefit."

^bThe responses included in this category were "no problem," "I had no reproach," "OK," "it never bothered me," "it didn't concern me," "I was not interested," "it caused no problem," "there were no complications," "no opinion," "it was like others," "I didn't know anything else," "I obeyed," "I submitted myself," "one followed the law," "I was led," and "it caused nothing bad."

^cThe responses included "it was a good dictatorship," "it started out good and then became bad," and "it was good except for *umuganda* and taxes."

^dThe responses included "I supported it," "it was good," "it was very good," "I liked it," "I fought for him," "it united and developed the country," "it was a secure authority," "I respected," "I was happy," "there was no ethnic problem," "people had security," and "it was positive."

subsistence agriculture and who had low levels of education, these events remained distant concerns. By contrast, multiparty contests happened across the country, thus impacting more Rwandans. Similarly, negative propaganda about the RPF broadcast over the radio reached households across the country and would have been readily understandable to most Rwandans.⁴ In short, the main finding here is that the civil war and violence in Burundi created anxiety and fear in Rwanda, but these events are not sufficient to explain why ordinary Rwandans became violent. Similarly, multipartyism disrupted the local landscape nationwide, but it does not emerge as a direct driver of genocide.

I also asked respondents to rate the Habyarimana regime (see table 5.2 for the results). The question does not directly test a hypothesis, but it taps into perpetrators' attitudes before the genocide.

Not all perpetrators supported the regime, although many did. The range of responses, in fact, is itself a reason to have confidence in the credibility of the results. Respondents expressed neither total opposition to the regime (which might indicate that they biased their responses to please current authorities) nor total support (which might

4. The point about education holds up under further statistical analysis. Bivariate regression analyses show that respondents' levels of education correlate positively and in statistically significant ways with concerns about the war, multipartyism, and Burundi.

Table 5.3 Life conditions and the future

	When you look back at your situation before 1994, how was it? (N = 188)	At the time, how did you imagine your future? (N = 175)
Negative	6.5%	21.4%
Fine	31.6	30.3
Positive	61.9	48.3

indicate that they biased their responses to lash out at the current authorities and their living conditions inside prisons). Even the high number of respondents who had no opinion of the government makes sense: respondents with little social power before and during the genocide claimed they were not in a position to comment on high politics.⁵

More significantly, I asked respondents questions about their lives before the genocide. Here I sought to evaluate the argument that frustration caused by deprivation and "difficult life conditions" can lead to aggression and violence. The theory is common in studies of genocide, and since Rwandans are very poor, some scholars apply the argument to Rwanda.⁶ I asked respondents two specific questions: how was your life before the genocide and how did you imagine your future at the time (that is, before the genocide what kind of future did respondents imagine for themselves)? The responses varied, but I fit them into three categories in table 5.3: negative, fine, and positive.⁷

These responses are clearly subject to retrospective bias since at the time they answered my questions the respondents were serving jail sentences in overcrowded prisons. Their life conditions before the

5. Indeed, some 92 percent of those expressing no opinion identified themselves as "farmers," while all non-state local elites and all those with post-primary school education had an opinion one way or another.

6. Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998); Staub, *The Roots of Evil*.

7. For the question about life conditions, the category of "negative" includes the following responses: *bad, not good, not very good, insecure, fearful of war, and poor*. The category of "fine" includes: *OK, no problem, no opinion, fine, fair, middling, sufficient, like others, never bad, and very good before 1990*. The category of "positive" includes: *good, very good, well, very well, and secure*. For the question about the future, the category of "negative" includes: *bad, not good, fear, insecure, uncertain, no hope, afraid, worse, fear not enough land, no peace, lose power, not survive, war-related fear, problems, and no possibility for improvement*. The category of "fine" includes: *didn't think about it, did not know what could happen, same, continue, no change, didn't know, no choice, had reserves, no problem, prepare for it, live together, OK, and didn't imagine the future*. The category of "positive" includes: *very good, good, progress, hope for progress, hope, hope for Arusha, better, obtain everything, be rich, gain, buy land, happy, at ease, improve, advance, and peace*.

genocide were surely better than they were when the interviews were taking place. Nonetheless, the responses are instructive. Overall, the respondents appear neither dissatisfied with their lives before the genocide nor anxious about the future. Taken together with the findings from previous chapters—namely, that violence did not start in the poorest areas of the country and that the profile of the perpetrators was very similar to that of the adult Hutu male population—the evidence in table 5.3 runs contrary to frustration-aggression theories of genocide. Not only were the Rwandans who became *génocidaires* not comparatively poor, undereducated, or underemployed, they were also not necessarily angry about their station in life before the genocide.

What about degree of participation? Fear of the RPF, concerns about violence in Burundi, and negative life conditions are all statistically significant when degree of participation is regressed on these variables (though in a multivariate context none of the variables proves significant—the regression results are in Appendix table 5.1). In other words, the factors examined above did not drive participation as such, but they help explain which perpetrators instigated and led the violence at the local level. A frustration-aggression theory of participation in genocide is not bunk. It helps explain which perpetrators became most violent, but the theory is not a sufficient explanation of large-scale civilian participation in the genocide.

aggregate

Interethnic Relations and Genocidal Ideology

I also asked a series of questions about ethnicity, interethnic feelings, and racist beliefs. These are the factors that many assume caused the genocide and participation in it. Because I probed these questions in a number of ways, I divide the answers into a series of tables. I start here with a series of questions about interethnic proximity and intermarriage. One hypothesis might be that Hutus who committed violence were ignorant of Tutsis and thus had little interaction with them. In such a context, stereotypes and myths might flourish. Hence I asked whether respondents had Tutsi neighbors, whether they had a Tutsi family member, and whether they would allow their child to marry a Tutsi (if the respondent himself was married) or if they would marry a Tutsi (if he was unmarried). The responses are striking, as table 5.4 shows.

Almost every single perpetrator I interviewed had a Tutsi neighbor before the genocide. Even more remarkable, nearly 70 percent of the respondents had a Tutsi family member before the genocide. The responses to the question about prospective intermarriage show the

Table 5.4 Hutu-Tutsi proximity and intermarriage (weighted results)

	Before 1994, did you have a Tutsi neighbor? (N = 210) ^a	Before 1994, did you have a Tutsi family member? (N = 205) ^b	Before 1994, would you allow your child to (or would you) marry a Tutsi? (N = 195) ^c
Yes	96.0%	68.8%	98.9%
No	3.6	28.3	1.1
Do not know	0.4	2.9	

^aAll but one respondent was Hutu. This respondent had a Hutu identity card, he said, but his family was considered Tutsi.

^bFamily members include any relation by blood or marriage, from mother and wife to sister-in-law, son-in-law, aunt, grandparent, and cousin.

^cI asked married men and fathers whether they would allow their child to marry a Tutsi; for unmarried men, I asked if they themselves would marry a Tutsi woman.

same. Nearly all the respondents said that they would have no problem with interethnic marriage for their children or themselves if they were unmarried. Taken together, these findings run squarely against the claims that ethnic distance, ethnic hatred, or widespread dehumanization of Tutsis drove participation in the genocide.

If almost every perpetrator I interviewed lived near a Tutsi before the genocide, how were their relations with their Tutsi neighbors and did those relations change after the war with the RPF started in 1990? I asked respondents both questions; table 5.5 shows the results.

The results again strongly suggest that ethnic antipathy did not drive participation in the genocide. The overwhelming majority of perpetrators in the sample reported positive attitudes toward their Tutsi neighbors before the genocide. The war with the RPF that began in 1990 changed some attitudes—but relatively few. Taken together, the findings in tables 5.4 and 5.5 indicate clearly that something other than ethnic distance and antipathy led a large number of ordinary Rwandans to commit genocide.

That said, the descriptive statistics mask a strong relationship between degree of violence, on the one hand, and social distance and ethnic antipathy, on the other. In bivariate and multivariate regression analyses, three variables—whether respondents had a Tutsi family member, attitudes toward Tutsi neighbors, and changing attitudes after the 1990 war—were statistically significant with the level of violence committed. (The regression results are reported in Appendix table 5.2.) The finding suggests that the Rwandans who responded to

Table 5.5 Respondents' relations with Tutsi neighbors before 1994 (weighted)

	Before 1994, how were your relations with your Tutsi neighbors? (N = 200)		Did relations with your Tutsi neighbors change after the war began in 1990? (N = 185)
Positive ^a	86.5%	No	86.5%
"No problem"	11.2	A little	1.0
Negative ^b	2.4	Yes	12.5

^aResponses categorized as positive include "good," "very good," "truly good," "more than 100%," "we were friends," "we shared," and "we intermarried."

^bResponses categorized as negative include "not good," "we were friends before 1990," "not good after 1990," and "they were accomplices."

the hardliners' call, who took the initiative to kill, and who in fact did the most killing were those Rwandans who had fewer preexisting ties with Tutsis and who tended to look unfavorably on them. As with theories of violence that center on deprivation, theories that center on identity cannot explain participation in the genocide as such, but they might explain who drove and led the violence.

Racist Ideology and Propaganda

Many analyses of the genocide emphasize racial ideology and racist propaganda, which, according to various arguments, dehumanized Tutsis and created ethnic hatred. There is no denying that racist ideology was present at the national level and that there was much racist, anti-Tutsi propaganda in the Rwandan media before the genocide. The question is whether that ideology diffused to rural areas and, if so, whether rural Rwandans with little education and limited social status believed that ideology. In other words, was the discourse of ethnic nationalism and racist propaganda an elite phenomenon? Did commitments to nationalism and propaganda drive participation? To get at these questions, I asked respondents a series of questions that below I divide into three tables.

I intended the first question to determine whether "race" was a meaningful concept to respondents. However, "race" does not have an exact translation in Kinyarwanda. The best approximation is *ubwoko* (*amoko* is plural), but *ubwoko* also refers to ethnic groups, clans, the relative quality of a product, and even different car manufacturers. In short, *ubwoko* indicates categories, but not necessarily racial ones. To compensate for this, I also asked respondents how they could tell the difference between a Hutu and a Tutsi. Most commonly, respondents

Table 5.6 Race, nationalism, and the "Hutu Ten Commandments" (weighted)

	<i>In 1994, did you think Hutus and Tutsis were different "amoko"? (N = 201)</i>	<i>Had you heard of the Hutu Ten Commandments? (N = 204)</i>	<i>Was Rwanda a country for Hutus? (N = 181)</i>	<i>I heard in the United States that Hutus have hatred for Tutsis. Is that true? (N = 181)</i>
Yes	64.9%	2.8%	5.9%	6.5%
No	34.8%	97.2%	94.1%	93.5%

cited a physical characteristic such as height or skin color. Others cited activity preferences: some respondents said Hutus were generally farmers, while Tutsis tended cattle.

No matter how respondents said they understood the difference between Hutus and Tutsis, the result from the question about *amoko* is significant. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents said that they thought that Hutus and Tutsis were different *amoko*. In other words, awareness of ethnic/racial categories was widespread before the genocide and possibly even more widespread than the respondents reported. Why do I claim this latter point? After the genocide, the RPF-dominated government officially removed ethnic categories from public discourse, and officials frequently lectured prisoners about the unity of the Rwandan population (and thus about the nonexistence of ethnic/racial differences). Moreover, my assistant raised concerns about these answers. In his view, awareness of ethnic/racial categories was more widespread before the genocide than the respondents suggested. In short, while the answers do not necessarily tell us whether or not perpetrators considered Tutsis a different race—because that term does not have an exact translation—the results indicate a widespread belief among perpetrators that Hutus and Tutsis represented different social categories and that those categories could be distinguished by racial criteria.

That said, awareness of difference alone did not cause strife. Here is a typical excerpt from an interview with a perpetrator from Butare Prefecture:

Did you believe that Tutsis were Inkotanyi "accomplices"? I thought the accomplices were in the city. But with my neighbors, I did not think about it. At the time did you think that Hutus and Tutsis were different amoko? Yes, but there were no problems with that. What is the dif-

*ference between the amoko! Even if this was not true for everyone, you looked at the nose.*⁸

The excerpt shows how respondents were aware of ethnic difference between Hutus and Tutsis—expressed here in racial terms—but that such difference in and of itself did not produce antipathy. In fact, in this case, the respondent's wife was a Tutsi.

The question about the "Hutu Ten Commandments" refers to a Hutu extremist document many reference as evidence of a genocidal ideology in place before the genocide began (see chapter 1).⁹ The document undoubtedly circulated in Kigali and among national elites. However, again, it is unclear whether the "Hutu Ten Commandments" had diffused to rural areas and, if so, whether exposure to the propaganda is sufficient to explain participation. My findings indicate that the answer to both questions is no: only 3 percent of the respondents, all of whom were perpetrators, knew of the document, to say nothing of whether they subscribed to its doctrine. From outside Rwanda, the extreme language of the "Hutu Ten Commandments" looks like evidence of widespread extremist anti-Tutsi sentiment. Closer examination reveals that we cannot make assumptions about whether elite-level propaganda reached rural areas and whether that propaganda drove participation.¹⁰

I designed the question about the nature of Rwanda—whether it can be described as "a country for Hutus"—to probe ethnic nationalist sentiment among perpetrators. Again, the findings provide little evidence to support the idea that the perpetrators were committed ethnic nationalists: only 6 percent of the sample agreed that Rwanda was "a country for Hutus." Most respondents said Rwanda was a country for all three ethnic groups—Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa—an answer that reflected official discourse under President Habyarimana. In many instances, respondents expressed confusion at the question itself and

8. This excerpt (as well as long chunks of other raw interviews I did with perpetrators) can be found in Robert Lyons and Scott Straus, *Intimate Enemy: Images and Voices of the Rwandan Genocide* (New York: Zone Books, 2006), 47.

9. For examples where the document is cited and featured prominently, see African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance*, rev. ed. (London: African Rights, 1995), 42–44, and Jean-Pierre Chrétien et al., *Rwanda: Les médias du génocide* (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 141–42. Colette Braeckman claims "everyone knew by heart" the Hutu Ten Commandments. Braeckman, *Rwanda: Histoire d'un génocide* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 139.

10. As I note in the introduction and in chapter 1, Rwanda is overwhelmingly rural, and about 95 percent of my respondents lived in rural areas before and during the genocide.

indicated that for them, of course, Rwanda was a country for all three ethnic groups. Again, this result invites caution in interpreting a large-scale event such as genocide. The fact of a campaign of ethnic annihilation would seem to constitute prima facie evidence of widespread nationalist sentiment. However, these results suggest that even if perpetrators complied with those elites' program, most perpetrators were not ethnic nationalists, at least before the genocide.

The question about hatred is an indirect test of the same idea. If respondents denied having their own negative feelings toward Tutsis, they might admit that Hutus in general hated Tutsis. The question also tests validity. If other responses indicate minimal interethnic enmity, so too should responses to this question. Indeed, they do: only 6.5 percent of the respondents agreed that Hutus had hatred for Tutsis.

I asked still other questions that tested respondents' knowledge of and commitment to anti-Tutsi ideology. One question concerned the "Hamitic Hypothesis"—the idea that Tutsis were Nilotics who centuries before had migrated from the north to dominate Hutus (see chapter 1). Another question concerned propaganda characterizing the RPF as wanting to reintroduce the monarchy and enslave Hutus, as Tutsis had purportedly done in precolonial and colonial times. For both questions, I asked an initial question—if a respondent had heard of the idea—and then followed up with a question about respondents' opinion of that idea if they had heard of it (see table 5.7).

The results are mixed. On the one hand, they indicate that these ideas had reached a fair number of perpetrators. Of the two, the more concrete idea—that the Tutsis planned to reinstall the monarchy—was more prevalent. On the other hand, the results indicate that these ideas did not command widespread support. For instance, many respondents said that while they had heard of Tutsis being called

Table 5.7 The Hamitic Hypothesis and the RPF's monarchist intentions

	Before 1994, had you heard Tutsis were Hamites who came from the Horn of Africa? (N = 204)	Before 1994, had you heard that the Tutsis planned to reinstall the monarchy and make Hutu abagaragu (servants)? (N = 197)
No	58.3%	48.5%
Yes, but did not believe the idea or had no interest	27.7	31.8
Yes, and believed it was true	14.0	19.7

Table 5.8 Hutu Pawa and the "Great Majority" (weighted results)

	Before 1994, had you heard the term "rubanda nyamwishi"? (N = 196)	Before 1994, had you heard the term "Hutu Pawa"? (N = 179)
No	32.1%	28.7%
Yes, but meaning unknown or different from extremist propaganda	40.6	58.8
Yes, and meaning similar to extremist propaganda	27.3	8.6
Yes, understood meaning, and supported Hutu Pawa	n/a	3.9

Hamites, they did not know what a Hamite was. Others said that they did not understand the idea that Tutsis had come from northern Africa because they (the respondents) had always lived next door to Tutsis. Similarly, many respondents acknowledged hearing that Tutsis planned to reinstall the monarchy. However, many said that they thought this was impossible. In short, certain ideological elements were prevalent, but belief in them appears to have been much less so. Not all perpetrators necessarily heard or believed the racist and nationalist claims made in the extremist media before the genocide.

For other questions about ideology, I initially asked if respondents had heard of a term and then followed up with a question about the term's meaning. The first question concerned the term "rubanda nyamwishi," which means "great majority." Many commentators point to the phrase as evidence of the hardliner's incitement campaign. The connotation was that Hutus were the majority and had to fight the Tutsi minority. The second question was about Hutu Pawa, the extremist political party coalition formed in 1993 (discussed in chapter 1).

These results indicate fairly widespread familiarity among perpetrators with certain aspects of racist propaganda, as measured by the terms "rubanda nyamwishi" and "Hutu Pawa." However, relatively few respondents appear to have understood these terms in a racist way. Asked what "rubanda nyamwishi" meant, many respondents said that they did not know or that it referred to "the population," not necessarily to Hutus. As for Hutu Pawa, many respondents said that it referred to an internal split in the MDR party. Others said that "pawa" was a foreign word they did not understand, while still others said that

"pawa" referred to the party with the greatest number of supporters. It is worth noting that only 4 percent of the respondents both understood Hutu *Pawa* to refer to an anti-Tutsi, pro-Hutu coalition of parties and supported it.

Are these results valid? Their internal consistency is one indication that they are: no one finding substantively contradicts another. Another indication is that the results are consistent with the profile of the perpetrators: most respondents were poor farmers who thought in practical terms about their lives. Many had never traveled outside their home region, and many had very limited education. As such, one way to check validity is to correlate the respondents' education levels with their answers about ideology, under the assumption that the most educated respondents had the most knowledge about and therefore potentially the most belief in anti-Tutsi ideology. The results from various regression analyses clearly show this relationship: the better-educated respondents demonstrate greater awareness, understanding, and belief in racist ideology than the less-educated respondents.¹¹ That finding does not prove that the results are valid, but it is another indication that they are.

Further regression analyses do not indicate that belief in or knowledge of anti-Tutsi ideology and propaganda drove the most violent perpetrators—with one exception. The respondents who said that they had heard of the "Hutu Ten Commandments" were among the most violent in the sample. Even though very few respondents had heard of the document, those that did—presumably those most tuned into the most racist propaganda—were the most prone to initiate and drive the violence.

In sum, my interviews with perpetrators show that most Rwandans did not participate in the genocide because they hated Tutsis as despicable "others," because they adhered to an ethnic nationalist vision of society, or because racist propaganda had instilled racism in them. The perpetrators had an awareness of different ethnic categories, but that awareness did not create ethnic hatred or directly lead to violence. As such, explanations that center on social distance, ethnic antipathy, racist culture, and propaganda are insufficient explanations of participation in genocide. At the same time, the results show that ethnic hatred and distance, as well as exposure to some of the most virulent

11. I ran six bivariate regressions with education levels as the independent variable and answers about ideology as dependent variables. Of the tested relationships, all had positive coefficients and all but one (the question about Hutu Ten Commandments) had a statistically significant result (at the .05 probability level).

propaganda, do explain which perpetrators were the most violent. Theories of genocide that center on racism and propaganda cannot be discarded; rather, they help us understand who responds to the call to violence and who leads it. But such theories do not explain why there was large-scale civilian participation in Rwanda's genocide.

Motivation

What do perpetrators say about why they participated in the genocide? I asked that question at several points in the interview, both directly and indirectly. I asked respondents to describe how the violence started in their community and then I asked how they became involved in that violence. Most often, these questions elicited specific statements about motivation. In other cases, a point made by the respondent led naturally to a follow-up question about motivation. In all cases, I asked respondents for the details of the attack or the attacks in which they participated, and at that point I asked them specifically why they joined each particular attack. Finally, near the end of the interview, I asked respondents to state the most important reason for their participation.

These separate questions, asked at different times in the interview, allowed for triangulation during the interviews and after. Sometimes respondents described different but simultaneous motivations. Other respondents explained how their motivations changed over time. Some entered violent attacks for one reason but continued in them for another. All this presents a coding problem, which I handle first by identifying the main categories of motivation and then, for those cases where respondents expressed distinct motivations, by identifying the primary, secondary, and tertiary motivations.

To account for the fact that some perpetrators cited more than one motivation, I create two separate tables on motivation. The first (table 5.9) summarizes the frequency with which a respondent volunteered any one motive. The categories correspond to ones that the respondents themselves offered. I organize them not according to which was most frequent but according to what I believe should correlate to degree of participation (more on this below). The second table (table 5.10) aggregates motives and, in contrast to table 5.9, assigns only one motive to each respondent.

The categories in table 5.9 require some definition and explication. "Intra-Hutu coercion" refers to those cases where respondents described participating because they feared the negative consequences

Table 5.9 Respondents' stated motivations (weighted results)

Respondents' stated motivations (N = 209)	
Intra-Hutu coercion	64.1%
Obedience	12.9
Protect Tutsi family members or hidden Tutsis	5.2
Copycat	4.8
Accidental integration	6.2
Material gain (looting)	5.2
War-related fear and combativeness	22.0
Anger at or revenge for Habyarimana's death	4.8
Interpersonal revenge	1.0
Claimed no active participation	15.3

from other Hutus of not participating. Those negative consequences included physical harm and death but also property damage and financial penalty. Some said participation was an "obligation" (*agahato*) that "everyone had to" comply with or they would face serious repercussions. By and large, the coercion that respondents described was the result of direct, face-to-face mobilization: individuals, leaders, or groups directly solicited the respondents' participation at commercial centers, on roads and pathways, or at their homes. Sometimes the threat of noncompliance was implied; other times, it was explicit. On occasion, respondents described being beaten before they agreed to participate.

Here is how one respondent described the process:

Anyone who did not go on a patrol paid a penalty. That is where people were killed. The people who killed first, afterward they obliged others to kill.

Here is another example from a man from Ruhengeri:

I was in an attack, and this attack killed one person. *How did you find yourself in an attack?* We heard whistles; we went to see, and when we arrived we went with the others. *Why did you go?* When there are whistles, no one stays in the house. *When you arrived, why did you go with the group?* It was necessary, because anyone who did not go with the others was asked for money. *How much?* More than 5,000 FRW [Rwandan Francs, about \$35 at the time of the genocide], but if you negotiated, maybe 2,000 or 3,000 FRW. *Why not do that?* It was not possible. *Why?* When you refused, they said you were an accomplice and you hid Tutsis. They could destroy your house, and if you were young [and hence living at home] you created poverty for your parents.

dehumanization not from racial ideology but from gov

"Obedience" is quite similar to intra-Hutu coercion, with the exception that obedience does not imply direct harm for noncompliance. Here respondents said that they joined attacks because doing so was "the law" (*igeteko*). Others said that they went with murderous groups or killed because they were "obeying" what they had been told to do. Still others said they participated because they had been "authorized" to kill Tutsis. In these accounts, respondents stressed that "the state" or "the authorities" had mandated participation for all able-bodied Hutu men. Killing was "the law." Those who emphasized coercion made similar statements. Indeed, when pressed, respondents who stressed obedience often said that they feared punishment if they did not comply. For coding purposes, however, the difference between these categories is that the former respondents stressed they participated because they feared what would happen to them if they did not take part in the killing, while the latter respondents stressed the general importance of complying with law and authority.

"Protecting Tutsi family members or Tutsis hiding in their house" is somewhat self-explanatory. In these cases, respondents described how they joined attacks in order to avert suspicion or accusations that they were protecting Tutsis. In some cases, the threat was direct: groups showed up at their homes and charged that the respondents were hiding Tutsis or were enemy "accomplices." Knowing that there were Tutsis hiding in their homes, these respondents said that they opted to join attacks to save those they were hiding. In other cases, the threat was indirect: because respondents knew they were hiding Tutsis, they joined attacks in order to prevent suspicion that they were doing so. Some respondents described how a friend had come to their home and warned that a certain group was planning an attack against them and the Tutsis hiding in their home. To prevent such an attack, respondents felt that it was best to join the group.

A "copycat" motivation is one where respondents said that they participated because others were doing so. Typical responses would be, "I went into the attack because I wanted to help others" or "I went to join my colleagues." By the same token, other respondents said they joined attacks because they saw "no consequences" for doing so or because they were "habituated" to the violence around them. Overall, the responses that I have put in this category emphasize some form of mimicking.

"Accidental integration" is similar, but here respondents described hearing a commotion nearby, going to see what was happening, and then finding themselves swept up in a group that was attacking Tut-

sis. Other respondents described a general state of confusion or "ignorance": they said that they joined attacks without really knowing what they were doing. In short, some type of confusion, uncertainty, or curiosity ties this category of responses together. "Material gain" is self-explanatory: in these cases, respondents said they joined attacks in order to loot property from Tutsis, including household goods and livestock.

"War-related fear and combativeness" is quite different. In these cases, respondents described fearing the RPF or a combination of the RPF and their Tutsi allies after the assassination of President Habyarimana. In these narratives, both the president's assassination and the renewed onset of civil war loomed large, and respondents said that they joined attacks or killed to "protect Hutus," to "win the war," or to "save the country." Others said that they joined attacks to "defend" themselves or their families against attack, while still others said that they joined attacks to prevent the monarchy from returning. The overall image that the respondents conveyed was one of ethnic warfare, whereby "the Tutsis" were attacking "the Hutus" and the respondents were participating in order to preempt attacks against them.

"Anger at or revenge for Habyarimana's death" is similar to war-related fear and combativeness. But here the emphasis is less on war-time fear and more on a specific response to the president's assassination. In these accounts, respondents emphasized that Habyarimana was their "parent" or "father" and that his death had to be avenged. Many respondents used a version of the Kinyarwanda verb *guhora*, which translates as "avenge." In short, these respondents blamed the RPF for killing the president, and they said that a violation of such magnitude required revenge against the RPF's alleged supporters—"the Tutsis."

The respondent from Kayove quoted in chapter 3 expressed the logic of both anger and self-defense quite well. Here he describes his response when he learned of Habyarimana's death:

In my mind, I understood right away that the Tutsis were responsible. I was angry, and I said to myself, "It is true. The Tutsis are mean." And I said everything people say about them is true. . . . We said . . . we are going to kill them before being killed by them.

"Inter-personal revenge" entails a similar mechanism but in a different context. In these cases, a respondent described how a group had killed a Tutsi family member or friend who had been hiding in his home. Such action, according to the respondents, necessitated re-

Table 5.10 Respondents' aggregated stated motivation (weighted results)

Aggregated motivation (N = 210)	
Intra-Hutu coercion and/or obedience only	45%
Intra-Hutu coercion and/or obedience plus some other motive unrelated to war or anger at Habyarimana's assassination	10.6
Protect Tutsis	0.2
Copycat or accidental integration	3.9
Material gain	0.9
War-related motive or anger at/revenge for Habyarimana's assassination and intra-Hutu coercion or obedience	13.7
War-related motive or anger at/revenge for Habyarimana's death and other noncoercion/obedience motive	2.3
War-related motive and/or anger at/revenge for Habyarimana's death	8.3
Claimed no active participation	15.1

venge. However, because during the genocide killing Hutus was difficult or impossible, said the respondents, they exacted revenge against Tutsis associated with the original attackers. The logic may seem strange to an outsider, but nonetheless a few respondents explained their participation in this way. As I noted above, these categories of motivation were not mutually exclusive. Several respondents voiced various simultaneous or changing motivations. Indeed, by my count some 38.6 percent of the respondents reported two distinct motives, and 9.5 percent reported at least three. To account for this, I combine motives into nine aggregate categories, and I report their frequency in table 5.10.

These results point to two primary motivations to participate in the genocide: in-group pressure and out-group fear or revenge. In the sample, 79.9 percent of the respondents cited either one of these motivations (or both), while 5 percent mentioned neither (15.1 percent claimed that they did not actively participate in the killing). If true, this finding suggests that most perpetrators participated in violence because they feared the consequences of not doing so. Either they feared punishment from other Hutus for not participating, or they feared retribution and attack from Tutsi rebels and their alleged ethnic civilian allies.

The findings support theories of genocide that emphasize obedience and fear in the context of a security dilemma. However, both theories need modification. For Rwandan *génocidaires*, obedience stemmed less from a blind "culture of obedience" or from the legitimacy of au-

thorities. Rather, obedience stemmed from in-group coercion and social pressure: men feared that they would be punished for appearing to refuse to participate in the genocide. As for fear, the argument about a "security dilemma" emphasizes that people commit violence in order to preempt violence being committed against them, especially in the context of anarchy and state collapse. The first part of the claim fits the evidence from Rwanda. Individuals said that they feared the RPF in the context of renewed war and after the president's assassination. Hence they attacked their Tutsi neighbors, they said. But the second part of the claim fits the evidence less well. In Rwanda, there was not total anarchy. State institutions stayed intact, as did norms of compliance, and both contributed to why so many men participated in the genocide.

Triangulation

The question remains as to whether these results can be believed. A perpetrator wanting to minimize his responsibility would naturally claim that others forced him to participate or that he feared for his security. With less conscious deception, a perpetrator also could retrospectively attribute a motivation even if one never existed or because the one that did exist was too horrible to admit. Both possibilities exist, and there is no way to prove conclusively what the actual truth was at the moment when each individual chose to participate in violence or chose to kill. That said, there are ways of triangulating these results to see if the dynamics that the perpetrators describe did, in fact, occur. Again, the research goal is not to ascertain perfect validity, but rather to determine to what extent results are meaningful. I do this in four ways: (1) by analyzing the internal consistency of the results, (2) by citing excerpts from the most aggressive perpetrators, (3) by examining other sources, and (4) by interviewing nonperpetrators.

Given the respondents' stated motivations, a reasonable expectation is that those who claimed that they participated because of in-group pressure would have been less violent than those who claimed that they participated because of war-related fear or anger at the president's assassination. If the data support that supposition, it would lend credibility to the respondents' stated motivations. To test the supposition, I ran bivariate regressions with primary and aggregate motive as separate independent variables and degree of violence as dependent ones. The regressions show a strong relationship between the variables (see Appendix table 5.4).

The results have two main implications. First, the results support the supposition that the most violent individuals cited war-related motives (including revenge for the president's assassination) while the least violent individuals cited in-group pressure. That finding does not rule out the possibility that the narratives of some perpetrators were fabricated or biased retrospectively. However, the finding demonstrates a strong internal consistency to the narratives and thus gives reason to have confidence in them. Second, the regression results again point to important differences among perpetrators. The results indicate that war-related fear and anger drove the most aggressive perpetrators, while a fear of in-group punishment motivated the least violent to participate.

Another method for checking the credibility of the respondents is to ask those who identified as leaders of the violence whether they pressured other Hutus to join them. Although I learned the significance of in-group coercion in the field, midway through the survey I began asking individuals who admitted to being leaders of the violence in their communities whether they pressured others to participate. Each readily acknowledged that he did. I reproduce excerpts from four interviews below. The first is from a *cellule* committee member from Gitesi Commune in Kibuye Prefecture. He said that he initially resisted killing Tutsis but then switched after soldiers pressured him to attack Tutsis:

Did you oblige others to join you? Yes. What was said? That they [the Tutsis] killed Habyarimana, our parent, that no one could stay [home] without joining the attacks; that the Tutsis were fighting to retake the country as it was before 1959 [i.e. before the revolution] that they [the Tutsis] killed all the Hutus in Byumba [where the RPF held territory]; and that we had been told if we didn't defend ourselves we also would be killed. Who said that? Soldiers. . . . Why was it necessary to oblige others? The others had to help us because it was a communal activity [igikorwa rusange]. What happened if someone did not participate? It would be bad. For example? He could be killed. Would you kill a Hutu who did not participate? And why did they attack me? I was Hutu. Why was it an activity for everyone? Because where the Inkotanyi attacked, they also did not differentiate. But if someone did not want to participate, why was it necessary to force him? They had to go, absolutely! Why? Because of the death of Habyarimana. It was understood that the Tutsis were fighting to live alone [that is, without Hutus] in the country. But why mobilize others? If there was only one person, there would not be deaths [meaning that to accomplish the goal of killing Tutsis many men were needed].

This particular excerpt demonstrates, among other things, how the rationale for genocide—that the RPF killed Habyarimana, that the RPF wanted to kill Hutus, and thus that all Tutsis had to be killed—became the dominant idea during this period. This respondent described how once others—in this case, soldiers—pressured him to accept this rationale, he then mobilized others in the same way. I will return to this rationale in the next chapter, but the point to stress here is how, for this respondent, obliging others was an almost natural course of action. “They had to go, absolutely!” he said. That kind of thinking was repeated over and over in my interviews.

The second example is the man from Kayove Commune in Gisenyi Prefecture whose testimony I cited above and extensively in chapter 3. I start the excerpt at the point where I asked him how he and other perpetrators located Tutsis to kill during the genocide:

How did you find them? We knew where they lived. We arrived at their place, and when we did not find them, we attacked their neighbors, and they showed us by force where they had gone or where they were hiding. What do you mean “by force”? If the neighbor did not show us, we had to kill him. Did one oblige other Hutus to participate? Ehhhh! If we found someone at his house, without accompanying us, we hit him. We asked him for money and we went to drink. If he had cows or goats, we took them because he was an accomplice. If you did not participate, you were considered an accomplice! Accomplice! Yes! You were considered like a Tutsi. Even if you were Hutu, you were no longer considered Hutu. . . .¹² Why was it necessary to oblige others to participate? They had to understand that we were attacked by the Tutsi ubwoko. They had to help us fight them because we knew we would finish them and go to the front. Kill the Tutsis and then go to the front! Yes.

This is a remarkable statement. As with the previous example, this respondent shows how attacking civilians was part of the war rationale. Killing Tutsis was seen as the first step in a war to defeat the RPF, after which one would “go to the front” to fight soldiers. I will return to this respondent (and this rationale) in the next chapter, but again the point to stress here is that the respondent admits to beating and robbing Hutus who did not participate. This respondent called non-participating Hutus “accomplices,” which during the genocide was ef-

12. At this point in the interview, the respondent describes how he and his group attacked the Hutu *conseiller* because the latter had not participated. For a description of the attack and the role of the burgomaster in trying to save the *conseiller*, see chapter 3, the section on Kayove Commune.

fectively a death warrant. In fact, the respondent went so far as to say that Hutus who did not participate “were no longer considered Hutu.”

The third example comes from a *cellule* committee member who was the leader of a roadblock in Kayonza Commune in Kibungo Prefecture. He did not kill, nor did he order others to kill, he said, but he was responsible for the roadblock where Tutsis were killed. He described how on April 10 a *conseiller* and an army lieutenant came to his house and ordered him, along with other *cellule* committee members, to set up roadblocks throughout the *cellule*. The excerpt below picks up where I ask him to describe how the roadblock worked:

Did you recruit people for the roadblock? Yes, but always with the other members of the cellule. How did you choose people to go to the roadblock? We chose men who were strong, not children and not elders. Every strong man! All men, except those who were sick, because the purpose was to ensure security and prevent infiltration by the Inkotanyi. . . . Were peasants ordered to go to the roadblock? Yes. And if they refused? They didn’t refuse! Why not? They obey the authorities. They said, “What the authorities order, we must accept.”

Like the others, this respondent couches mobilization in the language of war: manning roadblocks was a means to protect security and stop the rebels. And, again, the excerpt makes clear that there was pressure for all able-bodied adult men to participate and that compliance amounted to obeying authorities. Authorities mobilized men to kill, and they took anyone they could find.

A last example makes the point. The respondent was a well-educated farmer, whom the local *conseiller* in his commune in Ruhengeri Prefecture had chosen to oversee several roadblocks in his sector. The respondent said that the local *responsable* made a list of men in that area to ensure that all participated:

All men had to participate! Yes, all men. And if they refused? It was not possible. He who refused could be killed. Could you have killed someone who refused? That was possible, if the person did not give a reason for why he could not go. What was a good reason? If he was sick.

Again, the pattern is the same: once genocidal violence began in an area, local Hutus who were in charge used their power and authority to mobilize able-bodied men to participate.

These are examples of Hutus who pressured other Hutus to participate in the genocide. The examples resonate strongly with what many

respondents said, namely that they participated because they feared the consequences of not participating. To cite one representative example of a perpetrator who claimed he participated because he was afraid of not doing so:

All Rwandans who were in the zone controlled by the *Abatabazi* government had to participate—to save his own life.¹³ Anyone who did not participate was considered an enemy or accomplice, and the penalty was death.

In short, I find a strong similarity between those who say they pressured other Hutus and those who say they were pressured by other Hutus.

That finding does not rule out other types of biases inherent to the method. For example, the period in which I interviewed may have been one where prisoners across the country had convinced themselves of in-group coercion. Or the style of my questions or my assistants' translations may have unwittingly invited such responses. However unlikely, these are possibilities and thus it becomes important to examine other primary sources to see if there is consistency among the various accounts.

To date, there is no other systematic nationwide study of perpetrators of which I am aware, but there is much informed judgment and anecdotal information about perpetrators in various reports. Close analysis of these documents reveals consistent references to intra-Hutu coercion. For example, the media watchdog group Article 19 reports that "people throughout the country were compelled, under penalty of death, to cooperate with security forces."¹⁴ Bruce Jones argues that "coercive mobilization" characterized popular participation during the genocide.¹⁵ "Everyone had to participate," said a Rwandan Lutheran minister interviewed in August 1994. "To prove that you weren't RPF, you had to walk around with a club."¹⁶

13. The "*abatabazi*" government refers to the interim government led by hardliners that took power after Habyarimana's assassination.

14. Article 19, *Broadcasting Genocide: Censorship, Propaganda, and State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda, 1990–1994* (New York: Article 19, 1996), 114. Elsewhere the same report notes radio broadcasts that called for punishment of those who did not comply. See 120–21.

15. Bruce Jones, *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 41.

16. Raymond Bonner, "Rwandans in Death Squad Say Choice Was Kill or Die," *New York Times*, August 14, 1994, A16. Said a teacher quoted in the same story: "We were forced to move with the killers in order not to be killed." He added, "We risked being killed. They said, 'If you don't come and work with us, you are R.P.F.'"

Several other academic studies, human rights reports, and journalistic accounts cite examples where perpetrators say that they were directly threatened for not participating in the genocide.¹⁷ Indeed, these other sources all indicate that an intra-Hutu coercion narrative was not an artificial product of my research: other sources using information collected in other periods and with other methods report the same dynamic.

All this raises the question of nonparticipation that I broached at the end of the last chapter: if there was significant coercive pressure to participate, how and why did some escape it? That question is critical to any comprehensive analysis of the genocide. However, systematically researching that question when I conducted research in Rwanda was difficult because there was no way to know if randomly sampled Hutu non-detainees were nonperpetrators. To account for this, during the micro-comparative segment of my fieldwork, I interviewed Hutu men who survivors and current authorities agreed had not participated in the genocide.

In total, I interviewed ten nonparticipating Hutu men from four communes. Not only did each describe strong in-group pressure to participate, but several also described in some detail what happened. I asked seven of the group what exactly they did to avoid participating; five said that they escaped only after bribing their attackers or allowing the attackers to take Tutsis hiding in their homes. I quote from all of these interviews below. The first is from a Hutu businessman from Gafunzo Commune. He described how after an initial period of confusion following Habyarimana's death, a core group of attackers formed and consolidated control. They then traversed the sector attacking Tutsis as well as Hutus who were suspected of disobedience or hiding Tutsis. Shortly after the killing began, an attack group of about thirty men came to his home:

17. For examples, see Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 2, 322–24; African Rights, *Rwanda*, 326, 338, 402, 460, 466, and 476; Ephrem Rugiririza, "Bourreaux et victimes: Le face à face," *Diplomatie judiciaire*, October 18, 2002; Monthly Report, Internews, November 25, 2002, Kajelijeli trial, Sara Rakita, "Lasting Wounds: Consequences of Genocide and War for Rwanda's Children," Human Rights Watch, March 2003, 13–14; Bill Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 1; and André Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guilbert and Hervé Deguine*, trans. Carina Tertsakian (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 104–5. Alan Zarembo describes the way that Hutu men were mobilized face to face, but he interprets participation as an outcome of Rwanda's culture of obedience and "upholding the standards of good citizenship." Zarembo, "Judgment Day," *Harper's*, April 1997, esp. 70, 80.

They found me there. They began to call me an accomplice. They said they even would eat my cows. . . . *Did they try to forcibly take you?* They tried and I refused. They said if I didn't go with them, they would cut me, but I refused. *It was possible to refuse?* Yes, if you were not afraid. They threatened with their machetes.

At this point in the interview, the respondent showed me how his attackers menacingly brandished their machetes at him. Asked why he was not afraid, he said, "I knew that those who were killed had done nothing [wrong]," and "I said, 'If they kill me, it would be like the others who were killed.'"

However, when asked, the respondent also acknowledged that he had to pay off the attackers, and his occupation as a businessman meant that he had the means to do so. Whatever the ultimate reason for why this man did not join the attack, his testimony is consistent with what we have seen up to now: coercive pressure to participate and threats by Hutus who already had been violent against those who had not been.

The second example comes from a young Hutu man from Musambira Commune who had been a student during the genocide. When I interviewed him, he had recently been elected president of the *Gacaca* courts in his district. He described how during the genocide, the attackers came around and recruited all Hutu men to join the patrols:

The chance we had is that we were children. We were students. They did not require someone from our house to go. *People did not come to your place?* They came. We had [Tutsi] women we hid because their houses had been destroyed. We hid the boys too. They came to take these women and they took them and they killed them. *Did they ask you to go?* No.

This testimony again demonstrates the pressure for able-bodied Hutu men of a certain age to participate. This respondent escaped because he was considered a child.

The third example also comes from Musambira Commune, this time from a Hutu man who during the genocide was a farmer and afterwards was appointed *conseiller*:

Was there an obligation to participate? Yes. Some were afraid of being killed. There was a moment when we learned that people who hid others [Tutsis] would have to kill them and then, and after having killed them, they too would be killed. There were many who hid others. . . . *Did that happen here?* I was told of a youth who had hidden his brother-

in-law and who refused to kill him and who was killed also. There was a certain [name withheld] who had hidden someone, a sister-in-law, and he was told to kill this girl. He tried to refuse. They began to hit him. They gave him the machete and he used the machete on this girl.

Even if this respondent did not witness these events, that he believed them indicates that in-group threats for noncompliance were credible. In other words, those who did choose to participate may not have been directly beaten or threatened, but based on these and other stories, it would have seemed reasonable for them to expect serious negative consequences for not complying.

The fourth example is from a Hutu man from Kayove Commune who was a teacher during the genocide and was appointed headmaster of a school afterwards.¹⁸ He described the behavior of a violent group during the genocide:

One day they came to my place. I didn't know anyone. They said, "You will give us money. If not, you will help us." . . . Many people gave money to avoid the situation. If you refused, you were badly beaten.¹⁹

The excerpt again shows, at the very least, that it was credible for Hutu men to fear negative consequences for not participating. Some Hutu men had the means to bribe, and did so; others who became perpetrators told me that they did not have money to pay off the attackers.

The fifth example is again from Kayove, but this time from a former MRND official in the commune who subsequently was elected president of the *Gacaca* courts in his district. In this excerpt, he describes how shortly after the news of Habyarimana's death reached the commune, gangs of youths went on a rampage:

[They] passed everywhere. If they found you, no matter whom they found, they took you to go with them by force. They were crazy in the head. . . . They took people by force, by force! To resist, you had to pay.²⁰

The testimony continues to point to a pattern of in-group coercion during the genocide.

All the information above—the statistical analyses linking motivation to degree of participation, the narratives of genocide leaders, other

18. This respondent was cited in chapter 3.

19. I did not ask if he bribed his way out of participating.

20. Again, I did not ask if he paid.

sources on the genocide, and the narratives of Hutu nonperpetrators—it all consistently corroborates perpetrator accounts of intra-ethnic coercion to commit violence. There appears to have been widespread pressure for Hutu men of a certain age to participate and a credible threat of punishment if they did not comply. Moreover, the pressure to participate was equated with authority. In short, *intra-ethnic* coercion and pressure appears to have been a central factor driving mass participation in the genocide; based on the evidence seen so far, intra-ethnic coercion and pressure appear to have been greater determinants of genocidal participation than interethnic enmity.

Motivation Continued

In the survey, I asked another series of questions that pertain to motivation: whether the radio motivated perpetrators, whether they looted, whether they were drunk, and whether participating in the genocide was equivalent to working for the country. Given my findings about coercion and social pressure, I also began asking respondents if they had ever disobeyed the authorities (see table 5.11).

The responses to the question about the effect of the radio are important. Common wisdom and much commentary on the genocide stress the major role that radio played in inciting Rwandans to kill.²¹ While the radio undoubtedly did play a critical role, particularly in tipping the balance of power toward violence in some communities by signaling who had power and in linking genocidal violence to authority, the overwhelming majority of respondents said that the radio on its own did not cause them to participate. Rather, most said they joined the attacks because of face-to-face mobilization. They complied after encountering groups or individuals on roads, in commercial centers, or at their homes. In short, the respondents said they chose to par-

21. For examples where radio is emphasized, see Frank Chalk, "Hate Radio in Rwanda," in *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, ed. Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1999), 93–99; Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Alison Marschner (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 30; Christine Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves, "The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide," *Journal of Communication* 48:3 (1998), 107–28; and Darryl Li, "Echoes of Violence," in *The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention*, ed. Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 117–28. Some of these studies are careful not to overestimate the radio's role, but reductionist claims about the radio's impact, in general, abound. For example, Kellow and Steeves quote a journalist who asserts, "When the radio said it was time to kill people . . . the masses slid off a dark edge into insanity." (124). Li asserts that "hundreds of thousands heeded" the calls of RTLM broadcasts by taking part in the genocide (118).

Table 5.11 Other possible motivations (weighted results)

	<i>Did the radio lead you to go into the attacks?</i> (N = 176)	<i>Did you take any property during the genocide (including food)?</i> (N = 170)	<i>Were you given/did you drink alcohol during killing?</i> (N = 122)	<i>Did you think you were working for the country?</i> (N = 120)	<i>Have you ever disobeyed the authorities?</i> (N = 115)
No	85%	77.3%	84.8%	57.5%	90.9%
Yes	15%	22.7%	15.2%	42.5%	9.1%

ticipate not principally because of being told to do so over the radio—although that undoubtedly contributed indirectly—but because a person or persons directly solicited their participation.

The finding about looting is also significant. In my interviews with non-perpetrators, Rwandans often said that peasants participated to steal property because they are poor. However, the survey results challenge that assumption. During the genocide, there was undoubtedly a great deal of looting. Those who said they stole said that they took food, tiles, and other pieces of property or tried to take over a plot after a house or the land was empty. However, very few said that they killed or originally took part in the violence for material reasons. For most, the looting came later, after the killing was done.

The respondents also said that they tended not to be drunk while committing violence, which challenges another common claim found in and outside Rwanda. The responses to the question about working for the country are hard to interpret. Many respondents readily answered "yes" and said that participation was a way to save the nation from external attack or was a "law" high-level authorities had decreed. But many answered "no" and said that those leading the violence were elites, peasants, youth, or "delinquents" who did not represent the country. Thus, the question seems to show partly whether respondents thought government officials were responsible and partly whether respondents were convinced of the violence's legitimacy.

Finally, the result from the obedience question is striking and is consistent with other findings. Recall that about 88 percent of the sample said that they did weekly community labor programs called umuganda, a figure that is in keeping with the response to the obedience question. Both results indicate that the Rwandan state could

command a great deal of compliance from the citizenry before the genocide, and the findings above indicate that the pattern was reproduced during the genocide. I return to the point in greater detail in chapter 8.

Regression analyses again show that while some of these factors do not explain the behavior of the majority of perpetrators, they predict which perpetrators were most violent. In bivariate regressions, radio incitement, looting, and the idea that men were "working for the country" all proved statistically significant. However, in a multivariate context only the latter variable proved significant (see Appendix table 5.5 for regression results). Here again we see a bifurcated sample, with the most violent perpetrators saying that they killed for expected reasons (looting, radio incitement, and working for the country), while most respondents said that these factors did not matter.

Comprehensive Regression Analyses

In this chapter and the previous one, I ran a number of bivariate and multivariate regression analyses. Several indicated statistically significant results. However, of all the variables I cited, it remains unclear which ones have the strongest relationship with degree of participation. To answer that question, I ran a series of multivariate regression analyses, including all of the variables that proved meaningful in previous regressions (see Appendix table 5.6 for one representative table of results).

In every multivariate regression I ran, the variable for combined motivation had the strongest relationship with degree of participation. In other words, those respondents who claimed that war-related anger and fear drove them were consistently the most violent. The most violent perpetrators claimed that Hutus had to fight for the country and they mobilized the less violent to join them. Several multivariate regressions I ran also show significant relationships between age and degree of violence (with the youngest being most violent) and between preexisting relations with Tutsi neighbors and degree of violence (with those reporting the worst relations being the most violent).

This chapter has three major findings. First, the chapter shows that many common hypotheses about participation in genocide are both accurate and misleading. On the one hand, the survey results run contrary to various theories linking violence to preexisting ethnic antipathy and distance, to frustration from poverty, and to material

incentives. Most perpetrators did not report hostile relations with Tutsis, social distance with Tutsis, deep belief in racist culture, brainwashing or other extensive manipulation from propaganda, general deprivation before the genocide, or looting as a primary motive to commit genocide. Clearly there were dynamics other than these that drove large-scale participation in Rwanda's genocide. On the other hand, the results show that some of these variables are correlated with degree of participation in a statistically significant way—with preexisting relations with Tutsis as especially important. In other words, these theories explain, at least in part, the behavior of the most violent perpetrators.

Second, the chapter demonstrates that there was strong intra-Hutu pressure to participate in the genocide, that the pressure was associated with authority, and that this pressure, in all likelihood, contributed heavily to rapid, large-scale civilian mobilization. This chapter and the last also present evidence of high levels of civilian compliance with state authorities before the genocide: the interviewees regularly participated in obligatory state-induced labor projects and in nighttime patrols *before* the genocide. But the mechanism during the genocide appears less Rwanda's often-claimed "culture of obedience" and more intra-ethnic enforcement and coercion. In dry terms, there was a credible threat of sanction for noncompliance. In less dry terms, during the genocide, many Hutu men felt their choice was either participate in the genocide or be punished, and many chose the former.

Third, the chapter again points to the importance of the war. Many perpetrators said that they committed genocide because they wanted to protect themselves from the RPF and because they were enraged at Habyarimana's death and wanted revenge. The most powerful predictor of why one perpetrator committed more violence than another was whether a respondent described himself as motivated by war-related fear or anger. The qualitative testimony briefly presented above also showed how killing Tutsis was inseparable from the language of war. Killing Tutsis in fact was equated with fighting the enemy. These findings all support theories that claim that men kill to protect themselves and avenge those who killed their own; the findings are also further evidence that war is an essential part of the causal story of why genocide happened in Rwanda.

The findings from this chapter are consistent with the picture of genocide that emerged from previous chapters. After Habyarimana's assassination and the resumption of war, national hardliners declared

war on Tutsis. At the local level, in the context of crisis and emergency, local actors jostled for control until those promoting violence against Tutsis won the upper hand. Once they did, they in turn mobilized as many people as they could, claiming that killing Tutsis was self-defense and authorized by the state. This chapter shows that downstream, many men experienced a choice between compliance and the risk of punishment, and many opted to join the attacks. This chapter also shows that those who were the most aggressive during the genocide had the fewest ties to Tutsis, had the most deprivation, and, above all, were angry and fearful after Habyarimana's assassination and the renewed onset of war. Their mindset was one of rage and revenge, of killing before being killed, of organizing society categorically into an ethnic "us" and "them." Once these men wielded a plurality of force, once a tipping point was reached, mass mobilization and violence spiked, and from that point forward—in the context of continuing calls for violence from the national authorities and the continuing advance of the Tutsis—killing dominated local life. Genocide became the new order of the day.