

The Order of Genocide

Race, Power, and War in Rwanda

SCOTT STRAUS

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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

	Did the "October War" cause changes in your area? (N = 206)	Before 1994, were you afraid of the RPF? (N = 198)	Did multipartyism cause changes in your area? (N = 205)	Had you heard of political problems in Burundi in 1993? (N = 205) ^b	If so, were you affected by what you heard? (N = 98)
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)

	What was your opinion of the Habyarimana government? (N = 196)
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.

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)

	In 1994, did you think Hutus and Tutsis were different "amoko"? (N = 201)	Had you heard of the Hutu Ten Commandments? (N = 204)	Was Rwanda a country for Hutus? (N = 181)	I heard in the United States that Hutus have hatred for Tutsis Is that true? (N = 181)
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)

<i>Respondents' stated motivations (N = 209)</i>	
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.

"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
Copypat 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.E.'"

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.

6 The Logic of Genocide

So far, I have focused on the patterns and dynamics of violence as well as the characteristics, attitudes, and motivations of perpetrators. But there is one big question that remains unexamined: why genocide? What was the logic of extermination in Rwanda? At different points in my interviews, I asked respondents to explain what they thought the purpose of the violence was. I asked them to describe the language they used, and I asked them to explain how they rationalized killing children and other obviously unthreatening civilians. Their answers are below. While they do not conclusively resolve why genocide happened, they do provide insight into the overall logic of extermination.

The Meta-Rationale for Genocide

The main rationale that perpetrators consistently gave for genocidal violence is the following: the RPF killed President Habyarimana; RPF soldiers had invaded to kill Hutus; all Tutsis were RPF supporters or potential supporters; ergo, Hutus had to kill Tutsis to prevent being attacked by them. A range of perpetrators explained the logic of the genocide in this way, no matter what reason they gave for their individual participation. What follows are some representative excerpts, chosen from respondents in different parts of the country. (I identify each respondent's prefecture of origin below.) Most excerpts come from responses to the question, "How did the violence start in your area?"