



**Université de Montréal**

**The Politicization and Depoliticization of Ethnicity  
A Constructivist Approach to Power-sharing**

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## Résumé

Depuis les années 1990, le partage du pouvoir est l'option favorisée pour la consolidation de la paix dans les sociétés multi-ethniques. Or, une importante littérature a remis en cause sa capacité à consolider la paix sur le long terme. Ce mémoire questionne l'approche de l'ethnicité, des institutions et des relations peuple-élites dans la théorie du partage du pouvoir. Il propose de la ré-approcher en se basant sur la théorie constructiviste de l'ethnicité, qui reconnaît la multiplicité et la relative fluidité des identités ethniques, sur une approche néo-institutionnaliste, qui étudie les interactions des institutions avec leur environnement, et en accordant une attention particulière au lien entre peuple et élites. Ce mémoire développe trois arguments principaux. 1–La politisation du clivage ethnique nuit au bon fonctionnement d'un système démocratique, menace la durabilité de la paix et transforme la nature de la violence. Le « succès » du partage du pouvoir peut donc être défini comme la dépolitisation de ce clivage. 2–La politisation du clivage ethnique n'est pas naturelle, mais résulte d'un processus dans lequel les institutions formelles et informelles ainsi que la violence jouent des rôles clés. 3–La dépolitisation du clivage ethnique est possible si des garanties pour représentation politique et la sécurité des catégories ethniques sont mises en place, et si des incitatifs pour la mobilisation d'identités non-ethniques sont apportés. Ces principes peuvent guider l'élaboration d'accords de partage du pouvoir. Ce mémoire théorique est complété par une étude de plausibilité qui se focalise sur le cas crucial du Burundi.

## **Abstract**

Since the 1990s, power-sharing has become the favoured option for peacebuilding in multi-ethnic societies. An important literature has however shed light on the limits of this approach and put into question its capacity to establish sustainable peace. This thesis questions three elements of power-sharing theory: its approach of ethnicity, institutions and its elite-bias. It proposes to approach power-sharing theory through the lenses of a constructivist theory of ethnicity, which acknowledges the multiplicity and limited fluidity of ethnic identities; a neo-institutionalist approach of institutions, which pays attention to the interaction of institutions with their environment; and in paying attention to citizen-elite linkages. Three main arguments are developed: 1-The politicization of the ethnic cleavage is problematic since it hinders the good functioning of a democratic system, threaten the sustainability of peace, and transform the nature of violence. “Success” of power-sharing is thus defined as the depoliticization of ethnicity. 2-The politicization of ethnicity is not natural but results from a process in which formal and informal institutions as well as violence play a key-role. 3-The depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage is, at least theoretically, possible if sufficient guarantees for the political representation and the security of the groups are established, and incentives are provided for the mobilization of non-ethnic identities. These principles may guide the design of power-sharing systems. This “theory-proposing” thesis is complemented by a plausibility probe which focuses on the crucial case of Burundi.

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

BDS	Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces de Défense de la Démocratie (Burundi)
FNL	Forces Nationales de Libération (Burundi)
FRODEBU	Front pour la Démocratie du Burundi
Palipehutu	Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu (Burundi)
PS	Parti Socialiste (Senegal)
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UPRONA	Union pour le Progrès National (Burundi)

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“The very detachment of sociological Machiavellianism is a not inconsiderable contribution in situations where men are torn by conflicting fanaticisms that have one important thing in common—their ideological befuddlement about the nature of society. [...] In this way, sociology can attain to the dignity of political relevance as well, not because it has a particular political ideology of its own to offer, but just because it has not.”

Peter L. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 1963: 170-171

## Introduction

“Parmi les lois qui régissent les sociétés humaines, il y en a une qui semble plus précise et plus claire que toutes les autres. Pour que les hommes restent civilisés ou le deviennent, il faut que parmi eux l’art de s’associer se développe et se perfectionne dans le même rapport que l’égalité de conditions s’accroît.”

Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, 1840/1981: 141

### A Constructivist Approach to Power-sharing

“While everyone now pays lip service to constructivism, constructivist assumptions remain comprehensively unincorporated into our theories linking ethnic groups to outcomes,” Chandra wrote on the occasion of a symposium on “Cumulative Finding in the Study of Ethnic Politics” (2001: 8). This observation is both disappointing and challenging: while the constructivist approach has become dominant in the study of ethnicity, it remains largely ignored in the research concerning the outcomes of ethnic politics, including ethnic conflict and the way out of ethnic civil war, power-sharing (Chandra, 2001: 7). This thesis attempts to overcome this problem.

Since 2001, some constructivists insights have been integrated in the power-sharing literature, but this has been done in great part in a piecemeal fashion. On the one hand, constructivist insights have been used to criticize some aspects of power-sharing theory (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005). On the other hand, consociationalists have made room for constructivist elements in their existing theory (Lijphart, 2001; McGarry and O’Leary, 2006a, 2006b). This thesis aims at going a step further. Instead of grafting some constructivists findings in the existing theory of power-sharing, I propose to re-approach power-sharing from a fully constructivist point of view. The aim is not only to criticize the existing models, but mostly to re-root power-sharing in a “constructivist world” (Chandra, 2012: 22).

The constructivist literature on ethnicity has indeed proposed a significant shift in our understanding of important concepts including ethnicity itself, change in ethnic identities, ethnic conflict and ethnic violence. While the previous primordialist approach tended to assume that individuals had a single, fixed and “natural” ethnic identity, constructivists have demonstrated that individual ethnic identities are multiple, relatively fluid, and are the result of a process of social construction (Chandra, 2012: 19). This thesis proposes a way to found power-sharing theory in this

constructivist theory of ethnicity. The constructivist approach, however, is much broader than the study of ethnicity.

In the most fundamental sense, “the term ‘constructivist’ refers simply to the position that facts that we take to be ‘natural’ are in fact the products of some human attempt at creation and interpretation” (Chandra, 2012: 18). More precisely, I follow Berger and Luckman (1966) in considering that reality is not a given but the fruit of a social construction process in which institutionalization plays a major role. The institutionalization process can be understood in three phases: in the *exteriorisation* phase, repeated human activities are habitualized and typified (groups of people or actions are categorized) which make them follow recurrent patterns. Institutionalization results from this first phase. In the words of the authors, “institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” (1966: 72). The second step is the *objectivation* phase in which institutions are “crystalized” and become “autonomous”, or “objective”, which means they “are experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who ‘happen to’ embody them at the moment” (1966: 76). In this second phase, institutions come to appear external and coercive to individuals. In the third phase, *internalization*, these institutions are internalized by individuals through socialization processes. For Berger and Luckmann, it is through this institutionalization process that everyday life reality is *both* socially constructed and “taken for granted *as* the reality” by individuals (1966:37).

As for most of the power-sharing literature, the focus of this thesis is on formal institutions, which can be broadly defined as state institutions. More specifically, a particular attention is granted to constitutional and electoral-system design (Reilly, 2001). In opposition to most of the power-sharing literature, however, I also integrate informal institutions in the analysis. These can be defined, in contrast to formal institutions, as institutions which are “created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels” (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004: 725).

Following Berger and Luckmann (1966), I acknowledge the fact that institutions have a coercive power on individuals, but are also created and modified by these same individuals. “The relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remain a dialectical one. That is, man (not of course in isolation but in his collectivities) and his social world interact with each other. The product act back upon the producer” (1966: 78). As it will be argued in chapter 1, this understanding of institutions constitutes a break with a part of the existing power-sharing literature. While this literature has in great part followed a classical

“institutionalist” point of view, which presupposes that the same institutions have the same effects in varying contexts, I follow the “neo-institutionalist” literature, which attributes more attention to the various meanings that actors invest in institutions, and the variations in actor’s behaviour in the same institutional frameworks (Peters, 2005; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002). As demonstrated by the this literature, historical legacies and the context in which institutions are implemented impacts on their performance (Putnam, 1993). This thesis therefore aims at understanding power-sharing institutions *in context*. In addition to constructivist, the approach adopted in this thesis is therefore also neo-institutionalist.

### **A Tocquevillian Definition of Success**

Approaching power-sharing from a constructivist point of view is not merely a matter of intellectual curiosity. Rather, it arguably has important consequences on the theory itself, as well as on its normative implications. This re-thinking of power-sharing appears necessary because power-sharing has followed a paradoxical destiny in the last few years. While “power sharing [has] become the international community’s preferred remedy for building peace and democracy after civil wars” since the 1990s (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005: 5), the capacity of power-sharing to establish sustainable peace after civil conflicts has been increasingly questioned in parallel (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005; Jarstad, 2008). A constructivist approach arguably allows for the filling of some theoretical gaps in power-sharing theory, which may guide the design of power-sharing systems, and may help imagine new solutions to some of the practical problems of power-sharing.

Perhaps the most important consequence of approaching power-sharing from a constructivist perspective is that it allows for a redefinition of the goal of power-sharing. The question is indeed crucial but often unanswered in studies of power-sharing. Horowitz notes that this “inadequate specification of consequences” of power-sharing is the source of major difficulties in the use of power-sharing as a policy prescription (1985: 570).<sup>1</sup> Specifying my definition of the success of power-sharing is therefore necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Horowitz justifies his affirmation as follows: “Lijphart is aiming at stable democracy: his consistently employed criterion for evaluation is whether something proved ‘workable’ or ‘successful’ or whether the arrangement ‘broke down’ or ‘fell apart.’ Nordlinger defines conflict regulation as the ‘absence of widespread violence and government repression’; he judges degrees of ‘success’ in achieving this. Esman describes the ‘main purposes’ of conflict management as ‘the authoritative allocation of scarce resources and opportunities among competing communal actors’—which may unnecessarily import a potential technique or conflict management into



In this thesis “success” is defined as the depoliticization of ethnicity. In other words, the substitution of the dominant political cleavage in a society by a non-ethnic cleavage. To put it in another way, Rabushka and Shepsle’s 1972 classical definition of a divided society is: “a society which is both ethnically diverse and where ethnicity is the politically salient cleavage around which interests are organized for political purposes such as elections” (quoted by Reilly, 2001: 4). This thesis argues that it is (at least theoretically) possible to establish a society which is ethnically diverse, and where ethnicity is *not* politically salient, and interests are *not* organized around the ethnic cleavage. It further argues that this depoliticization of ethnicity is necessary since the politicization of the ethnic cleavage hinders both the establishment of democracy and sustainable peace. The “art of associating together” referred to by Alexis de Tocqueville in the epigraph of this introduction might thus also flourish in multi-ethnic societies and lay a necessary basis for the consolidation of peace and democracy (also see Huntington, 1968: 5; Putnam, 1993: 89). This definition of success might appear quite conjectural at this stage of our analysis, but it is an outcome of my analysis more than a preliminary assumption. While its justification will be done in chapter 2 and 4, I believe its statement here is necessary for clarity purpose.

For now, suffice it to note that this definition breaks with three different traditions in the literature on democracy in multi-ethnic societies. The first one is general pessimism about democracy in multi-ethnic societies. Following John Stuart Mill who considered that “it is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with nationalities” (quoted by Welsh, 1993: 45), some authors are pessimistic about the prospects for democracy in multi-ethnic societies. The position adopted in this thesis partly agrees with this pessimism, since it argues that democracy and sustainable peace in ethnically *divided* societies are almost impossible to establish. However, this thesis is more optimistic than this theory since it considers democracy and peace as possible in ethnically *diverse* societies, when ethnicity is not politicized.

The second tradition is power-sharing literature, which emerged as a reaction to the pessimistic assessments for democracy in multi-ethnic societies. In the 1960s, Lijphart (1977) and Lehmbruch (1974) rose attention to small multi-ethnic democracies in which societies were divided in

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its definition—as well as ‘the prevention of control of overt hostility and violence. A secondary purpose may be to reduce the long-range political salience of communal solidarities’. He, too, then makes a broad judgement about ‘effective’ or ‘successful’ control or management. A given device, then, may make things better, worse, or the same” (1985: 570-571).

segments but bargaining and accommodation between segmental elites allowed for a stable political system (see chapter 1), and recommended this model of democracy building in divided societies. This consociational solution is also rooted in a form of pessimism: the idea that national unity cannot possibly be created in multi-ethnic societies. Lijphart indeed writes:

Although the replacement of segmental loyalties by a common national allegiance appears to be a logical answer to the problems posed by a plural society, it is extremely dangerous to attempt it. Because of the tenacity of primordial loyalties, any effort to eradicate them not only is quite unlikely to succeed, especially in the short run, but may well be counterproductive and may stimulate segmental cohesion and intersegmental violence rather than national cohesion. The consociational alternative avoids this danger and offers a more promising method for achieving both democracy and a considerable degree of political unity” (1977: 24)

This view is also a central in the centripetalist literature. For example, Horowitz notes that classical power-sharing assume that “it is necessary for ethnically divided states to live with cleavages rather than wish them away” (Horowitz, 1985: 568-9). This thesis breaks with these conceptions in two ways. First, the analysis leads to pessimistic prospects for peace and democracy as long as ethnic cleavages are politicized. Second, the constructivist approach of ethnicity allows for a brighter prospect for the depoliticization of ethnic identities in diverse societies.

Third, I also break with the, sometimes over-optimistic, constructivist assessments of the prospects of state-building in multi-ethnic societies, namely, with those who considered that “because [ethnicity] is imagined, it can also be unimagined” (Esman, 2004: 34). This thesis considers that the claim that the reality is socially constructed does not mean that it is easily modifiable. Rather, reality is “solid” *because* it has been socially constructed and is thereby deeply internalized by actors, taken for granted and reproduced unconsciously. Surely, a constructivist approach lets more room for fluidity and change than essentialist approaches, but it acknowledges that change results from collective processes which are most of the time unintended. The fact that the social world *changes*, does not mean that it is easy to *induce* or *direct this change* (see Varshney, 2009: 288). Accordingly, this thesis argues that there are serious obstacles for change and incentives for individuals to refuse this change. These must be carefully identified and if possible removed, to enable the depoliticization of ethnicity, and incentives should be provided to foster it.

The objective of depoliticizing ethnicity, is therefore both ambitious and modest. It is ambitious given the pervasiveness of ethnic identities, and the widespread impact that “race-thinking” has

had on the development of institutions for the last centuries. Succeeding in it, however, might well help preventing some of the most horrible massacres humanity has known. On the other hand, this objective is modest: it does not pretend to make ethnic identities disappear, only to depoliticize them. Neither does it aim at eradicating conflict. Rather, it recognizes that conflict is an inherent characteristic of human societies. Changing the cleavage is a first step, especially in contexts marked by the absence of democracy, clientelism, and poverty. Other sources of violence, and other motives for war may still exist, but prospects for democratization and the consolidation of a sustainable peace may dramatically increase if ethnicity is not the dominant cleavage. Depoliticizing ethnicity after an ethnic conflict, thus, is only a first step, but probably a necessary one; certainly a big one and surely a difficult one; the question which remains to be investigated is whether it is a possible or an impossible one.

## **Research Questions**

As mentioned earlier, this thesis attempts to root power-sharing theory in a “constructivist world”. To do so, it soon appeared insufficient to study institutional design exclusively. Rather, three preliminary questions needed to be clarified.

1. *What is the specificity of ethnic as compared to non-ethnic cleavages?*
2. *How can one explain the politicization of ethnic identities in diverse societies?*
3. *How can one explain the depoliticization of ethnic identities in diverse societies?*

The answers to these questions serve as a basis for the answer to the central question of this thesis:

4. *How can institutional design generally, and power-sharing more specifically, foster the depoliticization of ethnic identities in diverse societies?*

## **Arguments**

To answer these questions, I develop four main arguments. First, I argue that the ethnic cleavage acts as a “transformative cleavage” which changes both the nature of politics and violence. Because ethnic identities have a limited fluidity, their politicization transforms politics in a zero-sum game between members of different ethnic categories, which hinders the good functioning of a democracy and threatens the sustainability of peace. Moreover, as chapter 4 argues, when violence is exerted across ethnic lines it tends to be indiscriminate, dispossessive and linked to a

high occurrence of atrocities. Both specificities of the ethnic cleavage make its depoliticization a legitimate normative goal for power-sharing.

Second, I develop a theory of the politicization of ethnic identities. Building on Chandra (2012), I argue that the politicization of ethnic cleavages is not a natural given. I observe that ethnic identities have a limited fluidity but are multiple. Individuals have “repertoires of identities” which include both ethnic and non-ethnic identities. The politicization of ethnic identities results from constraints on this repertoire, which makes the political mobilization of non-ethnic identities impossible. I argue that these constraints come principally from formal and informal institutions, as well as from violence and its legacies.

Third, I argue that the depoliticization of ethnic identities results from the removal of the constraints on repertoires of identities, which *enables* the mobilization of non-ethnic identities, and the provision of incentives for the politicization of non-ethnic identities, which *fosters* the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage.

Fourth, and based on the previous arguments, I argue that general principles of institutional design for the depoliticization of ethnicity might include 1) the provision of strong guarantees for political representation and security for members of all ethnic categories, and 2) the provision of institutional incentives for the creation of multi-ethnic networks, most important among which are multi-ethnic political parties. However, I argue that each power-sharing system must thus be designed with an eye on the local context, because individuals’ behaviour in power-sharing institutions also depends on the incentives provided by pre-existing informal institutions. A study of these contextual incentives might provide guidance for contextualized institutional design.

## **Focus**

This fourth argument means that a general model of power-sharing can hardly be formulated. Rather, different power-sharing models could be designed for different contexts. Accordingly, while the theory of the *politicization* of ethnicity proposed in this thesis aims to be generalizable, the institutional model of the *depoliticization* of ethnic identities proposed in chapter 5 focuses on a specific context: post-conflict neo-patrimonial electoral systems.

I focus on post-conflict neo-patrimonial electoral systems because this type of political system is the most likely in post-war settings for two reasons. First, most ongoing civil and ethnic conflicts

take place in neo-patrimonial societies<sup>2</sup>, be it in Africa (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997), the Middle East (Bank & Richter, 2010), post-communist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Radnitz, 2010), or South-America (Helmke and Levitzky, 2006; Bechle, 2010). The logic of neo-patrimonialism is unlikely to disappear during a war; rather, the increased uncertainties created by civil conflict might reinforce clientelist ties through the formation of vertical alliances that substitute state services. Second, third parties involved in peace-making processes are likely to advocate for the establishment of a multi-party democracy for the post-war order, since democratization is one of the main goals of liberal peacebuilding (Paris, 2004). But substantial obstacles to democratization are also likely to exist in most post-war societies, including the unwillingness of politicians to follow the rules of a democratic political game (Zahar & Sriram, 2009). Post-war societies are thus likely to have a multi-party democratic system on paper, but in practice, its status is at best uncertain. A period of democratic consolidation, understood as “a process in which all major political actors come to accept the democratic rules of the game” (Sandbrook, 1996: 70) is necessary for the establishment of a functioning democracy. This process, however, is anything but easy. Post-war multi-party electoral systems are thus at a crossroad between democracy and authoritarianism (Zahar, 2003: 3). Elections can continue to be held even if democracy is a mirage (Morgenbesser, 2014). I thus use the term “electoral system” to underline the existence of regular elections without making assumptions about the state of democracy in this system.

The fact that the logic of neo-patrimonialism can infuse electoral systems has been acknowledged by various authors. Chandra (2004) studies “patronage democracies<sup>3</sup>”; Beck (2008) focuses on “clientelist democracies<sup>4</sup>”. In this thesis, neo-patrimonial electoral systems refer to a subset of neo-patrimonial systems in which politics is organized formally around the regular holding of elections. Neo-patrimonial electoral systems include a large set of cases where many variations can be observed. Focusing on this type of societies does not mean that I neglect these variations. I only argue that these societies have enough in common to develop a theory of the depoliticization of ethnicity in post-war settings, while the depoliticization of ethnicity in other contexts might take

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<sup>2</sup> IRIN, *Mapped: a world at war: Today's wars on one map.*, April 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. Online : <https://www.irinnews.org/maps-and-graphics/2016/04/26/mapped-world-war>

<sup>3</sup> Defined as “a democracy in which the state monopolizes access to jobs and services, and in which elected officials have discretion in the implementation of laws allocating the jobs and services at the disposal of the state (Chandra, 2004: 6)

<sup>4</sup> “A democratic regime infused with clientelist relationships that serve as the basis for political mobilization and accountability” (Beck, 2008: 4)

different forms. One of the main elements of commonality in neo-patrimonial regimes is the pre-eminence of the state as the main source of resources. In neo-patrimonial contexts, inequalities in access to resources are thus tightly linked to state politics and to access to the state whereas they may have much more diffuse origins in, say, western democracies (Chandra, 2004; Beck, 2008).

## **Methodology**

This thesis is a “theory-proposing” exercise, in the sense given by Van Evera: “[it] advances new hypotheses. A deductive argument for these hypotheses is advanced. Examples may be offered to illustrate these hypotheses and to demonstrate their plausibility, but strong empirical tests are not performed” (1997: 89). The focus of chapters one to five is on theory synthesis and development. I however complement this theoretical focus by a plausibility probe in chapter six.

The method of the plausibility probe aims at determining whether the hypotheses suggested by this theory are sufficiently plausible to be worth investing time and energy in a rigorous test. As Eckstein writes, “plausibility here means something more than a belief in a potential validity plain and simple, for hypotheses are unlikely ever to be formulated unless considered potentially valid; it also means something less than actual validity, for which rigorous testing is required” (2000: 140). The case study provided in chapter 6 can however be considered an “especially powerful ‘plausibility prove’” (Eckstein, 2000: 156) since it focuses on a “crucial case”. The crucial case method, first proposed by Eckstein in 1975, focuses on a case which is particular in regard to a theory. This case represents “a most difficult test for an argument and hence provides what is, arguably, the strongest sort of evidence possible in a non-experimental, single-case setting” (Gerring, 2007: 232). In Eckstein’s words, “the essential abstract characteristic of a crucial case can be deduced from its function as a test of a theory. It is a case that must closely fit a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory’s validity, or, conversely, must not fit equally well any rule contrary to that proposed” (Eckstein, 2000: 148). One of the methods of identifying a crucial case is “to focus inquiry on ‘most-likely’ or ‘least-likely’ cases – cases that ought, or ought not, to invalidate or confirm theories, if any cases can be expected to do so” (Eckstein, 2000: 149).

The case of Burundi arguably fits these conditions well. The depoliticization of ethnic identities in Burundi could have been considered very improbable given its long history of ethnic domination and massacres (Samii, 2013: 560). However, both the political and the social salience of ethnicity decreased quickly after the adoption of a power-sharing agreement in Arusha in 2000 (Berckmoes,

2014; Alfieri, 2016b; Schraml, 2011; Reyntjens, 2005). Not only is this phenomenon surprising in light of the literature on ethnicity, it is also difficult to explain with the existing power-sharing literature. Burundi is thus a “crucial case” for this theory because it is a “least-likely” case for the depoliticization of ethnicity and the success of power-sharing.

This method has the advantage of providing a solution to “the principal problem facing the comparative method [which] can be succinctly stated as: many variables, small number of cases.” (Lijphart 1971: 685). This method also has the advantage of corresponding to the time and resource limits of this research project. However, it could be criticized for according too much importance to a single case that confirmed the theory (Lijphart, 1971: 686). For this reason, I prefer to talk about a plausibility probe. The plausibility of the argument is suggested both by the wide theoretical basis of the hypotheses and by the crucial case of Burundi—its full validity, if possible, should however be demonstrated rigorously in a further study.

## **Chapter Overview**

The thesis is roughly divided into three parts. In the first part, I develop the theoretical and conceptual framework which will underpin the analysis. Chapter 1 reviews the literature on power-sharing and its critiques. From the discussion of three important debates in power-sharing theory, it lays out the rest of the thesis. Chapter 2 develops a constructivist theory of ethnicity and pays careful attention to the definition and the conceptualization of important notions such as ethnic identities, the modalities of change in ethnic identities, ethnic conflict and ethnic violence. Building on this conceptual basis, the second part develops a theory of the politicization of ethnicity. Chapter 3 focuses on the role of formal institutions and informal networks. It argues that political parties are central in the process of politicization of ethnic identities. Chapter 4 focuses on the role of violence in the politicization of ethnicity. It also elaborates on the specificity of ethnic violence as compared to other types of violence. Finally, the third part is concerned with the depoliticization of ethnic identities. Chapter 5 draws the general principles for the depoliticization of ethnic identities. It then details the specificities of actors’ behaviour in neo-patrimonial contexts. On this basis, I propose an institutional model for the depoliticization of ethnic identities in neo-patrimonial systems. Chapter 6 is the plausibility case study of Burundi.

## Chapter 1: Power-Sharing Theory and its Critics

“In the total absence of social conflict, political institutions are unnecessary; in the total absence of harmony, they are impossible”.

Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 1968: 9.

When it comes to power-sharing, theory is never far from practice. Power sharing systems existed long before they were analysed by political scientists, and this object of study quickly fed into practice as a normative prescription for democratic consolidation and conflict management in multi-ethnic societies. This chapter lays the theoretical foundations of the thesis’s approach to power-sharing. In the first part, I review the literature on power-sharing. I start by tracing the history of the field, including its emergence, the major debate between consociationalism and centripetalism, and the evolutions of its normative goals from democracy building to conflict management and peacebuilding. I then review the criticisms it has been subjected to as a tool for peacebuilding after civil wars. In the second part, I argue that these limitations are linked to theoretical weaknesses. I review three major debates in power-sharing theory: the underlying conception of ethnicity, the theorisation of the performance of institutions, and the citizen-elite linkage. The theoretical framework adopted in this thesis will be based on the constructivist theory of ethnicity, a neo-institutional point of view on institutions, and a close attention to the role of citizens in power-sharing agreements.

### Consensus and Debates

In the 1960s, the stability of democracy in heterogeneous societies was being debated against a dominant view, formulated by John Stuart Mill, that the stability of a political system requires minimal cultural homogeneity in a society. At a time when decolonization was creating a wide range of multi-ethnic states, the emphasis was put on nation-building, with the aim of erasing “primordial” loyalties to ethnic groups (McRae, 1990: 93). In 1967, Arendt Lijphart and Gerhard Lehmbuch<sup>5</sup> simultaneously pointed to the existence of “a type of political systems which [had]

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<sup>5</sup> Both of these articles were presented at the World Congress of the International Political Science Association (McRae, 1990: 94) and later published: Lijphart (1968), Lehmbuch (1974).



hitherto been rather neglected in comparative research: [...] systems in which political groups like to settle their conflicts by negotiated agreements among all the relevant actors, the majority principle being applicable in fairly limited domains only” (Lehmbruch, 1974: 91). Their main cases were Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Lebanon. The very existence of this type of political system allowed for relative optimism about the prospects for democratization in plural societies. Lijphart therefore argued that “it may be *difficult*, but it is not at all *impossible* to achieve and maintain a stable democracy in plural society” (Lijphart, 1977: 1; McRae, 1990: 93-94; Mafakheri & Ahmad: 2015).

Lijphart coined the term *consociationalism*<sup>6</sup> to describe this new model of democracy, but power-sharing theory covers a wider range of institutional arrangements. A general definition of power-sharing could therefore be: “any set of arrangements that prevent one agent, or organized collective agency, from being the ‘winner who holds all critical power’, whether temporarily or permanently” (McEvoy & O’Leary, 2013: 3). The importance of this “discovery” can be measured by the debates it engendered amongst political scientists.<sup>7</sup>

Despite many lines of divisions which will be discussed subsequently, power-sharing scholars share certain common assumptions, summarized by Reilly: “there is consensus on the capacity of political institutions to change political outcomes, and hence the utility of political engineering. Common ground is also found in the central role ascribed to political parties and electoral systems as key institutional variables influencing the reduction – or escalation–of communal tensions in ethnically divided societies” (2012: 63-64). For the power-sharing scholars, “the vision of a massive shift from the ascriptive group to the state” aims too high. Instead, “they are far more modest about goals. They assume that it is necessary for ethnically divided states to live with cleavages rather than wish them away” (Horowitz, 1985: 568-9). Following Sartori (1968) who “urged political scientists to take up the challenge of becoming participants in the building of political institutions via constitutional engineering” (quoted by Reilly, 2001: 12), they advocate for

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<sup>6</sup> The term is derived from the Latin word *consociatio*, which means « to associate in an alliance » (Sisk, 1996: 5). In Lijphart’s own words, it should be noted that « neither this term nor the general concept were entirely new. [Lijphart] borrowed the term « consociational » from David Apter’s 1962 study of Uganda, and it can actually be traced as far back as Johannes Althusius’ writings in the early seventeenth century ». (2007: 3).

<sup>7</sup> A selection of the literature on these debates includes: Bogaards, 2008, 2014; Daadler, 1971; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003a, 2003b; Horowitz, 1985, 1991, 2014; Jarstad, 2008b; Lehmbruch, 1974; Lijphart, 1977, 2001, 2007; McEvoy & O’Leary, 2013; McGarry & O’Leary B, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; McRae, 1974; Nordlinger & Huntington, 1972; O’Flynn & Russell, 2005, Reilly, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2008, 2012; Reynolds, 2002; Rothchild & Roeder, 2005; Sisk, 1996; Spears, 2013; Sriram & Zahar, 2009; Wolff, 2012.

political leaders and political scientists to think in terms of institutional engineering to promote the establishment of stable democracies in the “third world” (Lijphart, 1977: 223).

Despite these shared assumptions, the power-sharing literature has been characterized by a divide between *consociationalist* approaches which follow Lijphart, and *centripetalist* approaches, first formulated by Donald Horowitz.

### ***Consociationalism***

Consociational theory, as developed by Lijphart, “holds that democracy is possible in deeply divided societies but only if their type of democracy is [...] characterized by (1) grand coalition governments that include representatives of all major linguistic and religious groups, (2) cultural autonomy of these groups, (3) proportionality in political representation and civil service appointments, and (4) a minority veto with regard to vital minority rights and autonomy” (Lijphart, 2007: 42). These four elements can take various institutional forms, both formal and informal (Lijphart, 1977: chapter 2).

For Lijphart, plural societies are characterized by the division of the population in *segments* that can be defined as follow: “[segments] exists where political divisions follow very closely, and especially concern lines of objective social differentiation, especially those particularly salient in a society. Segmental cleavages may be of religious, ideological linguistic, regional, cultural, racial, or ethnic nature. A further characteristic, [...] is that political parties, interest groups, media of communication, schools, and voluntary associations tend to be organized along ethnic lines of segmental cleavages” (Lijphart, 1977: 3-4). The fundamental idea of consociationalism is that although a society is segmented, accommodation and cooperation can happen at the top, among elites, in a grand coalition government. Cultural autonomy then permits groups to define their own rules in areas where they have specific cultural practices such as marriage or education. Proportionality allows for an equitable representation of groups in the parliament and in the allocation of state resources. Mutual veto points provide a sense of security during the elaboration of state policy, since they can be used by the minority groups to block decisions that would be to their disadvantage.

This model, elaborated from empirical observations and then formulated as a normative prescription by Lijphart, was later refined by others, including McGarry and O’Leary (2006a, 2006b) or Wolff (2012). They integrated some of the criticisms formulated against Lijphart to

create a “liberal” model of consociation which will be discussed in more details below. There was also a proliferation of areas of application of power-sharing. From an initial focus on political institutions, it was extended to territorial, military or economic domains (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003a; McEvoy & O’Leary 2013: 4).

### ***Centripetalism***

The harshest criticisms of consociationalism came from “centripetal” approaches, first developed by Donald Horowitz (1985). Horowitz’s fundamental disagreement with Lijphart concerns the ability of leaders to compromise in divided societies. Lijphart argued that leaders would participate in grand coalitions for they understand that they have a common interest in maintaining stability, Horowitz argues that this is not always the case (1990: 116). Leaders may be averse to cooperation, either because of their own convictions, their followers’ pressures against accommodation, or because of other groups’ intent to enter in conflict (Horowitz, 1985: 564). “Although some form of regularized interethnic bargaining may be essential, it may require precisely the kind of pragmatism that is lacking among ethnic groups that see their vital interests threatened by other groups” (Horowitz, 1985: 565). Centripetalism’s fundamental idea is to fill this gap by providing institutional incentives for leaders to favour cooperation over conflict.

Centripetalism has thus been defined by Reilly as “a political system or strategy designed to focus competition at the moderate centre rather than the extremes – primarily by presenting rational, office-seeking politicians with incentives to seek electoral support from groups beyond their own ethnic community” (2001: 11).

The design of the electoral system is at the center of centripetalists’ interest since “the electoral principle (such as proportional representation or first-past-the-post), the number of members per constituency, and the structure of the ballot all have a potential impact on ethnic alignments, ethnic electoral appeals, multiethnic coalitions, the growth of extremist parties, and policy outcomes.” (Horowitz, 1985: 628). Further refinements (Horowitz, 1991; Reilly, 2001) have emphasized three elements:

- 1–The presentation of electoral incentives for campaigning politicians to reach out to and to attract votes from a range of ethnic groups other than their own, thus encouraging candidates to moderate their political rhetoric on potentially divisive issues and forcing them to broaden their policy positions ;
- 2–The presence of multi ethnic areas of bargaining such as parliamentary and executive forums, in which political actors representing different identity

groups have an incentive to come together and cut deals on reciprocal electoral support, and hence perhaps on other more substantial policy issues as well ; and 3—the development of centrist aggregative and multi-ethnic political parties or coalitions of parties which are capable of making cross-ethnic appeals and presenting a complex and diverse range of policy options to the electorate (Reilly, 2012: 58).

Institutionally, centripetalism focuses on various methods. The main one is the design of electoral systems that require cross-territorial or cross-ethnic support for candidates to be elected. Campaigning politicians therefore have incentives to moderate their discourse, so that they can gain votes from other regions or groups, as well as to cooperate and build agreements of vote pooling or coalition building. Reilly (2001) has thus advocated for the implementation of preferential voting systems, which allow citizen to indicate their second and third (or more) preferences while voting. Since secondary preferences have a strong effect on the result of the election, this rewards centrist parties, and provides powerful incentives for discourse moderation, and coalition building during the campaign. Another approach is to require parties to be multi-ethnic, thereby transforming them into arenas of cross ethnic bargaining (Reilly, 2012: 58; Reilly, 2001; Bogaards, 2014; Bogaards & al., 2013).

The main criticisms of centripetalism have focused on the fact that there were few empirical tests of its theoretical assumptions, and that it might well prove inapplicable. A careful examination of the cases of Australia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Northern Ireland however allowed Reilly (2001) to address these critiques and demonstrate that some empirical examples tend to confirm centripetalist conclusions.

The debate between consociationalism and centripetalis, is frontal, and sometimes surprisingly heated for scholars working on consensual politics. This is especially true since—although based on different theoretical foundations—the two models are rarely—if ever—separated in practice, with political systems generally combining elements of the two (Reilly, 2012: 63). Take for example Switzerland, which is one of the paradigmatic cases studied by Lijphart. Although it fits quite well with the four pillars of consociationalism (grand coalitions, cultural autonomy, proportionality, minority veto), direct democracy and more particularly referenda, as well as federalism and multi-ethnic parties, could be considered centripetalist mechanisms since they had the indirect effect of fostering consensual decision making in the Swiss parliament (Linder, 1994: 118). As we shall see in chapter 6, the power-sharing system adopted in Burundi also includes elements recommended

by both consociationalists and centripetalists. On the one hand, it institutionalized ethnic quotas in parliament; on the other, it made multi-ethnic parties compulsory (Lothe, 2007).

### ***Power-sharing as a Tool for Peacebuilding***

As noted in the introduction, Lijphart's main aim was the development of stable democracies; with the work of Donald Horowitz (1985) and Eric Nordlinger (1972) a new goal for power-sharing emerged: ethnic conflict management. These two normative goals have divided the entire literature on power-sharing. Both objectives, however, fitted well with the post-cold-war international agenda which sought solutions to civil wars and the establishment of stability and democracy in post-conflict settings (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005: 5). In the 1990's, power-sharing had become key in international efforts for peacebuilding in divided societies (Reynolds, 2002: 1). Power-sharing was believed to be a useful tool for negotiators since it enabled them to present an acceptable compromise to the belligerents and provided a solution to the credible commitments problems experienced by peace agreements (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005: 5).

Theoreticians of power-sharing have thus put varying emphasis on one of these three dimensions. While some authors continue to focus mainly on democratization in heterogeneous societies (Lijphart, 2007; Reilly, 2001; Reynold, 2002), other focus on ethnic conflict management for divided societies (Horowitz, 1985; Nordlinger, 1972; Esman, 1973; Rothchild, 1997; McGarry & O'Leary, 2006a), and some concentrate specifically on peacemaking and peacebuilding after civil wars (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005; Jarstad & Sisk, 2008). As noted in the introduction, this thesis falls in the third stream of research, but with a specific definition of the success of power-sharing. Indeed, I define success as the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage. By doing so, this research indirectly touches upon the two other objectives, since the depoliticization of ethnicity arguably renders possible and facilitates both peacebuilding and democratization, although it does not guarantee them.

The main theoretical debate in this "peacebuilding" subfield has been whether power-sharing is a good solution for peacebuilding after civil conflicts. The "unintended consequences" (O'Flynn & Russell, 2005: 3) of power-sharing have received growing scholarly attention. Roeder and Rothchild have formulated the intriguing hypothesis that "the very same institutions that provide an attractive basis to end a conflict in an ethnically divided country are likely to hinder that consolidation of peace and democracy over the longer term" (2005: 6). Consociationalism has thus

been criticised as a tool for the establishment of stability and democracy after civil wars for various reasons.

First, consociationalism has been criticised for entrenching divisions and perpetuating ethnic conflict over time, instead of resolving it (O’Flynn & Russell, 2005). It does so because it is based on too static and pessimistic a view of ethnic groups, which does not take into consideration the complexity of inter-individual relationships in multi-ethnic societies and the possibility for groups to change over time (Dixon, 2012: 99). Moreover, it tends to place ethnicity in the center of the political game and thus keep it politically salient on the long run (Rothchild and Roeder, 2005: 37). Finally, consociational institutions, and more precisely proportionality and veto points, may be used by belligerents as “institutional weapons” for perpetuating ethnic conflict and thus constitute a threat to peace (Rothchild and Roeder, 2005: 37).

A second problem is that consociational agreements freeze a certain balance of power between former enemies. This equilibrium may provide peace as long as the power balance does not change, but if it does (for example as a result of demographic or alliance changes) the whole power-sharing system may be destabilized (Jarstad, 2008: 120). A related problem is that the structure of incentives may differ between the moment the agreement is signed and that when it is implemented. Consequently, elites which had incentives to sign the agreement may have incentives not to commit to it afterward (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005: 38).

A third problem identified by critiques of power-sharing is that external support might well be necessary for the agreement’s adoption, implementation and sustainability (McGarry and O’Leary, 2006a: 48). The problem is that long-term commitment of third parties to enforce this agreement is at best uncertain, and the departure of a “foreign protector” might well mean the return to inter-ethnic violence (Zahar, 2005; Jarstad, 2008: 119).

The inclusion of civil war belligerents also poses various problems. First, the question of who to include in the agreement is not always easy to resolve (Jarstad, 2008: 115). Second, the inclusion of dominant factions in the agreement may well be perceived as a reward for violence and would put in power extremists who are not committed to state and democracy building (Sriram & Zahar, 2009). The dynamic of politics might also tend to the exclusion of moderates, because of an effect often referred to as “ethnic outbidding”, according to which the ethnic cleavage, once politicized, tends to eliminate other cleavages from the political game and give incentives to politicians to

polarize their discourse rather than moderate it (Horowitz, 1985: 306-31; Jarstad, 2008: 124; O'Flynn & Russell, 2005).

Finally, some reservations have been formulated about the democratic nature of power-sharing systems. Lijphart himself addressed the criticisms arguing that consociational systems provide in fact a higher quality of democracy with respect to various indicators (1999; 1977: 52). But the questions of governmental inefficacy and governmental rigidity remain pertinent, especially in post-war settings, and carry the risk of destabilization of the entire system (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005: 39; Jarstad, 2008: 122-129).

### **Three Debates in Power-sharing Theory**

Despite these criticisms, this thesis does not intend to reject power-sharing as a tool for peace-building in divided societies out-of-hand. Rather, I argue that the above-mentioned issues experienced by power-sharing in practice are linked to conceptual weaknesses in the theory of power-sharing. They could be partly addressed if power-sharing theory manages to develop precise answers to at least three long-running debates: the underlying conception of ethnicity; the relationship between power-sharing institutions and their environment; and the way to integrate citizens in the analysis. These issues have been debated since the beginning of power-sharing theory, but theoretical developments in political science can arguably shed new light on them. This section reviews the controversies regarding each of these debates and specifies the approach of power-sharing which will be adopted in this thesis.

#### ***Underlying Conceptions of Ethnicity***

As discussed earlier, consociationalism has been criticized for its underlying primordialist conception of ethnicity, and the ethnic reification effect it may have on the long run. Power-sharing's first formulations were indeed rooted in a "primordialist" conception of ethnicity, which was dominant at the time (Lijphart, 2001). These primordialist postulates have in great part been discredited by the constructivist literature on ethnicity. However, the implications of this constructivist understanding of ethnicity have arguably not yet been fully exploited in power-sharing theory.

Primordialism dominated studies on ethnicity and ethnic conflict for a long time, but was too rigid to explain the variations and changes in ethnicity that were observed empirically (Bannon et al.,

2004; Schlee, 2002). To fill this gap, the development of a new theory was necessary. Constructivist theory of ethnicity has thus developed as a reaction to primordialism. It is therefore useful to quickly return to the primordialist foundations, before discussing how constructivism undermined them.

“Primordialism,” Chandra summarizes, “is defined by three minimal propositions: (1) Individuals have a single ethnic identity; (2) this ethnic identity is by nature fixed; and (3) this ethnic identity is exogenous to human processes” (2012: 19). Various versions of primordialism explained the origin of ethnic identities and their fixedness by referring to biology or social factors. For example, Esman’s primordialism “looks upon ethnic identities as historically rooted, deeply embedded in a people’s culture, reinforced by collective myths and memories, social institutions and practices, perpetuated inter-generationally by early socialization and therefore likely to persist over time” (2004: 30). Because these ethnic identities are unique and fixed, ethnic groups are easily identifiable and do not change over time.

At a group level, primordialism is thus the equivalent of what Wimmer (2013) calls “herderianism”. According to this view, inherited from the German philosopher Herder, the world is filled with different “peoples” defined by three characteristics. “First, each forms a community held together by close ties amongst its members [...]. Second, each people has a consciousness of itself, an identity based on a sense of shared historical destiny. Finally, each people is endowed with its own culture and language that define a unique worldview” (Wimmer, 2013: 16).

As Fearon and Laitin note, “primordialism is itself something of a construct of constructivists” (2000a: 849). Indeed, primordialism in its “pure” form is only rarely explicitly formulated in the literature on ethnicity (with few exceptions, including Geertz, 1973). However, as Chandra rightly observes, “like many influential ideas, its power lies in its invisibility” (Chandra, 2012: 1). Primordialism’s strength is that its assumptions are commonly utilized implicitly, and that these assumptions underlie a great number of works that build upon the theory of ethnicity.

The main theoretical implication of primordialism is that ethnic identity and ethnic groups can be considered as explanatory variables. Primordialism thus explains various phenomena (including ethnic conflict) by the presence of ethnic diversity. Empirical evidence demonstrated that the story was not that simple: ethnic identities appears to be much more fluid than assumed by primordialism, and their political and social salience appears to vary across time and space (see



Bannon and al. 2004; Schlee, 2002; Chandra, 2012). These explanatory gaps led to the development of a new theory based on constructivist assumptions.

At a group level, three theoretical moves undermined the fundamental assumptions of primordialism (Wimmer, 2013: 21). The first move beyond herderianism was undertaken by Barth, in his 1969 book *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, in which he questioned the idea that ethnic groups are cultural groups. Rather, what matters, he says, is the boundary that delimitates these groups. This boundary is defined and signalled by a small number of “cultural markers”, that allow the differentiation of group vs. non-group members. A second move was done by the contextualist school, which noted the existence of multiple variations and changes in ethnicity among time and space. These authors observed that collective and individual identities could change over time (Schlee, 2002). This led these researchers to note the fluid and dynamic nature of ethnicity, as well as its contextual and relational nature (Wimmer, 2013: 23). Finally, a perhaps even more consequential criticism was formulated by Rogers Brubaker in his book *Ethnicity without groups* (2004), in which he criticized the broad tendency of scholars to “take groups for granted”. Brubaker called this problem “groupism”: “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis.” (Brubaker, 2002: 164). In fact, Brubaker observed, “ethnic groups” are often not “groups” characterized by a high level of intragroup ties. It is therefore an analytical mistake to “treat ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed.” (Brubaker, 2002: 164).

This criticism led to a reorientation of the constructivist theory of ethnicity toward individuals as units of analysis. Instead of being single, individual identities are multiple; instead of being fixed, they can change (Chandra, 2012: 2-3). The focus is no more on ethnic groups, but on ethnic (individual and collective) identities, and the link between them. In brief, where primordialism considered ethnic identities as single and fixed, constructivism shows that they are multiple and that they can change over time and space. Where primordialism considered ethnic identities and ethnic groups as synonyms, constructivism disentangles the two.

Consociationalism, because it provides segmental representation and autonomy, tends to reify groups and maintain the centrality of the ethnic cleavage in the political game. It tends to create an equilibrium between groups that can be contested if there are changes in group demography or distribution of power, potentially leading to a return to violence. More recent versions of

consociational theory integrated this critique and proposed a distinction between “predetermined” and “self-determined” ethnic groups. In a “corporate” consociational model, groups are predetermined and the system offers autonomies to these groups. A consociational model based on group self-determination is more open and thus allows for groups to change over time, or for new cleavages to arise. While “corporate” consociationalism was institutionalized by pre-determined ethnic quotas for the political representation of groups, “liberal” consociationalism prefers “pure” proportional representation which allows for self-determination of the groups (Lijphart, 1991, 2001; O’Leary and McGarry 2006b).

This solution is not completely convincing. Even though it opens the door to change in ethnic divisions, nothing proves that this change will actually happen. In post-ethnic conflict settings, it is even unlikely to happen, since recent violence results in group polarization (Jarstad, 2008; Zahar, 2003). Parties will probably be organized on an ethnic basis and society will be segmented rather than reconciled. More problematically, in the absence of specific guarantees for the representation of minorities, problems of permanent or “frozen” minorities and majorities (Horowitz, 1985) may emerge and can be conducive to ethnic conflict. In a post-conflict context, the absence of guarantees for the representation of each group in political institutions and in the army can also lead to security dilemmas which have been identified as a cause of ethnic violence (Posen, 1993; Rose, 2000; Lake & Rothchild, 1996).

This debate has the merit of raising the question of ethnic group formation and perpetuation, and of the integration of constructivist findings in power-sharing theory (Lijphart, 2001). The “self-determination” solution, however, emphasizes only the fluid and dynamic nature of ethnicity; it does not address another important finding of the constructivists, namely that individual identities are *multiple*. Moreover, all individual identities are not ethnic. In fact, the constructivist theory of ethnicity, more than simply focusing our attention on individuals, also provides a new conception of individual identities: “an individual’s identity is composed of many grafted together identities, which are weighted, valued, and combined in non-linear ways depending on context” (Wilson, 2015: 464). This leads to what could be called an “individualist situationism” where each individual can mobilize his or her different identities depending on the situation.

This thesis aims at injecting the constructivist theory of ethnicity in the power-sharing literature, and at exploring how it might, or might not, transform our approach to power-sharing. I will argue that individuals have multiple identities and that one of the aims of power-sharing institutions

might be to provide incentives for individuals to mobilize non-ethnic identities instead of ethnic ones, therefore contributing to a depoliticization of ethnic identities. More generally, this thesis aims at demonstrating that a reflection on ethnic power-sharing cannot be led independently of a reflection on ethnicity and ethnic conflict.

### ***Institutions and their Environment***

The second debate focuses on the conceptualization of institutions and their effect on the social interactions. As Schraml accurately observes, “the ‘institutional engineering’-debate (...) is subject to a rather narrow concept of institution” (2011: 74). This conception assumes that certain types of institutions have the same effects in different context. Schraml further argues that “the predominant understanding of institutions assumes a universally valid, generalizable and partly causal relationship between political institutions and the desired outcome of conflict management, political stability and democracy” (2011: 72). This echoes Horowitz’s criticism of the consociational approach of institutions: “there is little recognition that any policy or technique may have an array of consequences—some desired, some undesired, some intended, some unintended—or that a given measure may have varying or opposite consequences under varying environmental conditions, and there is nothing whatever about a phenomenon endemic to policy and policy analysis: the second order-consequences that all policies tend to have” (1985: 571).

This conceptualization takes root in an “institutionalist” approach, which was developed in legal studies, and focused on institutional design, out of context. A further evolution of this theory has however put emphasis on several other factors. The influence of history and of the environment in which institutions are implanted has been shown to influence their functioning (Peters, 2005; Putnam, 1993; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002). These approaches are grouped under the label “neo-institutionalism”. The implication of these theories is that the effect of institutions is not necessarily universal. Rather, Putnam demonstrated that the context matters (1993). The interaction between power-sharing systems and their environment has been the matter of controversies from the beginning of power-sharing theory. However, the potential of a neo-institutionalist approach of power-sharing has arguably not been fully explored yet.

This debate emerged when scholars tried to explain why elites cooperated in certain situations but not in others (McRae, 1990: 95). In his 1967 article, Lehmbruch emphasized the variable of

political culture, “the fact that peculiar norms of conflict management develop under specific historical circumstances”. He wrote:

Under certain (and quite different) historical circumstances “fragmented” political cultures generate methods of conflict management which permit the survival and continued existence of the political system and at the same time a considerable measure of group autonomy. These methods consist in transactions which differ markedly from bargains in a “homogeneous” political culture and have much in common with agreements as they take place among nations. Then they become norms which are retransmitted by the learning processes in the political socialization of elites and thus acquire a strong degree of persistence through time (Lehmbruch, 1967: 5).

Daadler (1971) followed in his footsteps by considering historical processes as major explanations for the existence of consociational systems.

For Lijphart, on the other hand, the existence of consociational systems is not necessarily the fruit of a specific political culture. For him, the most important factor is the capacity of elites to understand the interest of cooperation. However, Lijphart integrates context into his consociational theory through his famous “favourable conditions” (1977: chapter 3). These conditions, he argues, may facilitate the emergence of consociationalism but in no way are they necessary. Lijphart’s list of favourable conditions evolved across his career. His final 1985 list includes: geographical concentration of segments, equal size and small number of the segments, the presence of external threats and overarching loyalties, a tradition of elite accommodation and socioeconomic equality (a comparative table of the different versions of this list can be found in Bogaards, 1998: 478).

The status of these favourable conditions has been the subject of much debate in the field (Bogaards, 1998). Some like Pappalardo (1981) or Dew (1972) argue that these conditions are a prerequisite to consociationalism; others, including Lijphart, consider them only as helpful circumstances (Bogaards, 1998: 486-7). Bogaards shows that this debate opposes a more “determinist” to a more “voluntarist” point of view. For Lijphart, the favourable conditions were a way to try reconcile contextual determinism to voluntarism: contextual factors are helpful, but do not fully determine the outcome. But in so doing, Lijphart arguably created a certain ambiguity, or even an “inherent contradiction”, in consociationalism (Bogaards, 1998: 489):

Lijphart has attempted to obviate the tension between determinism and voluntarism in consociational theory by separating the two approaches. Voluntarism plays a key-role in the self-negating prediction; the deterministic elements are relegated to the category of favourable factors. However, this separation was bound to be incomplete, since the favourable factors cannot function as conditions without impairing the voluntaristic

character of consociationalism. With that the favourable factors fell between two stools and became a popular object of critique” (Bogaards, 1998: 490).

The problem is that the normative value of consociationalism derives from its voluntaristic character: consociationalism is a useful model only if it can be used to build democracy in unfavourable contexts. If the success or failure of consociationalism is fully determined by external conditions, institutional engineering does not have much reason to be. More importantly, the exact theoretical explanation of why a given contextual factor would be more or less favourable to consociationalism seems quite vague. There needs to be more theorizing on exactly how the context interacts with power-sharing institutions to influence the cooperative behaviour of elites. As Bogaards puts it, “voluntarism has not yet produced a theory of elite behaviour which is able to explain and predict political choices in plural societies” (1998: 492).

Such a theory of elite behaviour has however been –at least partly– developed on the other side of the debate, by the centripetalists, starting with Horowitz (1985). They focus on incentives for cooperation provided by the electoral system to leaders. This focus on political institutions and incentives allows us to understand more precisely why leaders sometimes cooperate and sometimes do not. Centripetalists, however, tend to focus too exclusively on electoral systems and therefore they do not fully integrate context in their analysis.

In this thesis, I conceptualize context as a set of institutions which interact with the power-sharing system. As Spears observes, “an elementary, though perhaps implicit, assumption [in power-sharing theory] [...] is [...] the existence of a deeper institutional framework on which [power-sharing] agreements rest” (2013: 37). To say it differently, power-sharing accords are not established in a vacuum: pre-existing institutions interact with power-sharing institutions to produce a certain political outcome. A promising way to understand the functioning of power-sharing systems is thus to contextualize them, not in abstract and general terms, but in a more practical study of pre-existing (or co-existing) institutions. Studying the interaction of these institutions presents a theoretical and methodological challenge that can be addressed by using a theory of incentives.

However, a theory of incentives cannot limit itself to electoral incentives; it must integrate diverse conflicting incentives stemming from other formal and informal institutions. This has partly been done by centripetalists. Horowitz (1985: 574) insists on the necessity of integrating variables relative to the size and distribution of groups and the structure of cleavages in the analysis. More

generally, there is an understanding that different constitutional dispositions can provide different and potentially contradictory incentives to leaders, which can sometimes compromise the aims of the centripetal system as a whole. More recently, Reilly emphasized the importance of micro-level institutions including how small changes, such as single vs. multi-member districts or optional versus compulsory preferential marking in preferential voting systems, can have major impacts on the political outcomes of the institutional structure (Reilly, 2001: Chapter 7).

Much like formal institutions, informal institutions have an impact on the functioning of power-sharing systems. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) have underlined the necessity of taking such institutions into account, since they have a deep influence on the outcome of politics, especially in contexts where patronage and clientelism are important features of social life. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) have also proposed to pay more attention to citizen/elite linkages, in addition to formal institutional structures, to understand the outcomes of politics. In both cases, the argument is not that formal institutions have no effect, but that the outcome of politics is better understood when considering the interaction between formal and informal institutions. This is particularly important in “neo-patrimonial” contexts such as Burundi (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). Power-sharing systems are often established in this type of environment, characterized by a predominance of informal institutions over formal ones. In this context, the exclusive focus of most power-sharing theory on formal institutions makes little sense (Spears, 2013).

In this research, I argue that the “practical performance” (Putnam, 1993: 8) of power-sharing institutions is best understood if power-sharing is studied in its institutional context. To study the interaction of these different institutional complexes, I focus on individual actors. Following Chandra (2004), I adopt the “assumption that individuals are instrumentally rational actors who pursue objectives however defined, by selecting those means that maximize their chances of obtaining them” (Chandra, 2004: 11). These actors are confronted to various institutional complexes which provide them with different sets of incentives and constraints (Posner, 2005). If incentives coming from different institutional frameworks overlap, they may be mutually-reinforcing or conflicting (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004). I argue that taking this variety of incentives in consideration helps understand the functioning of power-sharing in context.

### *The Elite-Citizen Linkage*

The third debate within consociational theory concerns the relationship between elites and citizens. Consociationalism focuses explicitly on elites, since accommodation is supposed to happen at the top. It therefore pays disproportionate attention to leaders and does not spend much time questioning their link to citizens.

Horowitz pays more attention to this question. Reviewing previous theories of ethnic conflict, he notes that more “attention needs to be paid to developing theory that links elite to mass concerns and answers the insistent question of why the followers follow” (1985: 140). He does so by incorporating the psychological elements of “group worth” and “entitlement” in his theory of ethnic conflict, and by paying attention to the relationship of party leaders with their electorate, and how it can affect ethnic conflict.

Centripetalism has thus attributed more importance to people. For example, as Reilly writes, “a particular characteristic of the centripetal approach is its reliance on mass rather than elite activity as the driving force for moderation: while vote-pooling deals are made between candidates, the ultimate success of such strategies is dependent on the behaviour of their supporters ‘on the ground’” (2001: 196). But centripetalism remains mainly focused on electoral systems and on providing incentives for cooperation and accommodation to the leaders of ethnic groups. The idea is that designing systems that reward the most centrist and moderate candidates will lead to the formulation of less extremist discourses by elites, and, thus, yield more peaceful inter-group relationships. There is an underlying instrumentalist understanding of ethnicity, which considers that ethnic conflict results at least partly from elite manipulation. Thus, while including the electorate in the analysis, centripetalism remains predominantly focused on providing incentives for elite moderation. This can however become a weakness in instances where elites are moderate while the people are not, or if the political system produces inter-elite accommodation whereas inter-group relations remain conflictual (Horowitz, 1985).

In short, both consociationalism and centripetalism did not fully explore the impact of the link between elites and followers on the functioning of power-sharing systems. Just as integrating context in the analysis was theoretically important, so is integrating people. Theoretically, understanding the behaviour of citizens may in some cases help us understand the success or failure of power-sharing systems. Moreover, power-sharing should also focus on providing

incentives for the moderation of citizens, since these can sometimes be the instigators of ethnic tensions. Methodologically, this implies paying attention to the linkage between people and elites (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007) as well as to the hierarchies in communities. This linkage can vary in nature. Kitschelt and Wilkinson identify two types of linkages: programmatic or clientelistic.

The question of the linkage between people and elites is developed in chapters 2, 5 and 6. In chapter 2, the question of the structure of ethnic groups, and how clientelist networks reinforce or alter the politicization of ethnic identities is discussed. In chapter 5 and 6, I focus on power-sharing institutions in neo-patrimonial contexts. I argue that the dynamics of the relationship between state leaders, elites and citizens helps understand the functioning of power-sharing systems. At each level, specific imperatives make each actor more or less susceptible to react to different types of incentives.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, this chapter has retraced the emergence of power-sharing theory and the main theoretical divisions within the field. I have then reviewed several criticisms addressed to power-sharing as a peacebuilding device. In the second part, I have discussed three major debates in power-sharing theory. I showed that a good part of the power-sharing theories are rooted in a primordialist conception of ethnicity and in an “institutionalist” conception of institutions. Moreover, I established that power-sharing theory focuses mainly on elites. I argued that these three points are theoretical weaknesses and I proposed to introduce three modifications in the theory of power-sharing: a constructivist conception of ethnicity which acknowledges the multiplicity and the relative fluidity of ethnic identities; a neo-institutionalist approach which studies the interaction of power-sharing with its institutional context; and a close attention to citizen-elite linkages. This chapter has thus exposed the big lines of the theoretical approach adopted in this thesis. Before developing these ideas further, it is necessary to clarify the manner in which this thesis understands ethnicity. This is the object the next chapter.



## Chapter 2: Theory of Ethnicity

“Tous les sangs des races de couleurs sont ‘dominants’, jaunes rouges ou parme... le sang des blancs est ‘dominé’... toujours ! Les enfants des belles unions mixtes seront jaunes, noirs, rouges, jamais blancs, jamais plus blancs !...”

Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Rigodon*, 1969: 712.

“C’est à force de concevoir les hommes comme des échantillons que l’on apprend à les traiter comme s’ils n’étaient point des hommes.”

Wladimir Weidlé, *Les abeilles d’Artistée*, 1936/2002: 80.

Although things have evolved since Chandra’s 2001 remark about the lack of integration of constructivist theory in the study of the outcomes of ethnic politics, the integration of constructivist findings in the power-sharing literature remains a challenge for three interrelated reasons. First, many scholars working on power-sharing come from the study of electoral systems and focus primarily on constitutional institutions without incorporating a deep reflection about ethnicity in their analysis of power-sharing.<sup>8</sup> This is legitimate since specialization in one field is already arduous work –but this may result in the unintended reproduction of implicit primordialism in their research. A second reason is the lack of unity, coherence and conceptual clarity in the constructivist corpus on ethnicity, which makes it harder to incorporate its findings. The recent publication of two books synthesizing these findings, Kanchan Chandra’s *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics* (2012), and Andreas Wimmer’s *Ethnic Boundary Making* (2013) contributes to filling this gap. They also contribute to moving the debate *away from* the opposition between primordialism and constructivism and *inside* constructivism (Chandra, 2012: 4-5). Finally, a third reason is that, when constructivist theories have been applied to outcomes of ethnic politics, they have sometimes been applied poorly. Constructivist approaches focusing on discourse have tended to overestimate the fluidity of ethnic identities and assume that “because [ethnicity] is imagined, it can also be unimagined” easily (Esman, 2004: 34). This has led to the promotion of idealistic solutions, and has sometimes made primordialism appear to fit more closely with the reality (Van Evera, 2001).

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<sup>8</sup> One of the notable exceptions is Horowitz (1985).

This chapter will attempt to start addressing these three problems as they relate to power-sharing theory. While power-sharing theorists often focus exclusively on constitutional institutions and electoral systems, this chapter aims to anchor a reflection on power-sharing in a constructivist theory of ethnicity and ethnic identity change. This chapter's goal is thus to lay the theoretical foundations and develop a constructivist conceptual framework suited for a reflection on ethnic conflict management.

To do so, I discuss three important dimensions of the literature on ethnicity, with the aim of clarifying the concepts used in the rest of this thesis. I start by discussing the definition of ethnicity and adopting a constructivist one. Following Chandra, an ethnic identity is defined here as “a subset of categories in which descent-based attributes are necessary for membership” (2012: 58). In part two, I review the literature on ethnic identity change and specify the possible and impossible, probable and improbable modalities of change in ethnic identities. Theorizing change is important to be able to formulate realistic proposals for ethnic conflict management, without overestimating the fluidity of ethnic identities. Indeed, whereas most previous constructivist theories emphasize the fluidity of ethnic identities, I argue that this fluidity is limited at an individual level. I put the emphasis on another dimension of the constructivist understanding of ethnic identities: their multiplicity. The third part finally discusses the concept of ethnic conflict, and proposes an understanding of ethnic conflict based on a “triangle of conflict” which builds on Galtung (2009) and Bramsen and Wæver (2016).

## **Defining Ethnicity**

At first sight, the concept of ethnicity appears to cover such an extraordinary variety of social groupings, united by such diverse criteria - such as common language, religion, past political alliance, territory or culture - that the notion may well seem to be too inclusive, a catch-all concept, “*un fourre-tout*” (Chrétien et Prunier, 2003: VII). What is the common denominator of ethnic identities? How can we define the concept? However challenging, this question cannot be avoided since this definition is the cornerstone of a theory of ethnicity.<sup>9</sup> To summarize the wide

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<sup>9</sup> Retracing the history of the term “ethnicity”, its emergence and its uses in social sciences could be interesting. In this regard, see Chapman (1993) or Chrétien & Prunier (2003: VII) or Jenkins (2008: chapter 2). The object of this section, however, is the clarification of the conception of ethnicity adopted in this thesis more than the varying historical uses of this concept.

literature on the question, two types of definitions can be differentiated: definitions with “groupist” assumptions and definitions with individualistic assumptions.

### ***Groupist Definitions of Ethnicity***

Definitions based on “groupist” presuppositions are of three kinds: objectivist, subjectivist, and mixed. They all substitute a definition of “ethnic groups” to a definition of ethnicity. Objectivist definitions typically include a list of criteria which are shared by ethnic groups (Fearon and Laitin, 2000b: 9). For example, Smith defines an ethnic group as “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of a common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity” (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 6). As opposed to these lists of material, objective elements, “subjectivist” definitions emphasize the inter-subjective feeling of belonging to an ethnic group. Following Max Weber’s definition, ethnic groups consist of “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists” (quoted by Chandra, 2012: 69).

The standard definition of ethnicity commonly found in the literature consists of a mix of “objective” and “subjective” elements. An example is the definition proposed by Wimmer: “ethnicity is understood as a subjectively felt belonging to a group that is distinguished by a shared culture and common ancestry. This belief in shared culture and ancestry rests on cultural practices perceived as ‘typical’ for the community, or on myths of a common historical origin, or on phenotypical similarities indicating common descent” (2013: 7). Moreover, a consensus has emerged about the understanding of ethnicity as an “umbrella concept” that “easily embraces groups differentiated by colour, language, and religion; it covers ‘tribes’, ‘races’, ‘nationalities’, and ‘castes’” (Horowitz, 1985: 53).

These definitions may be considered problematic because of their lack of precision and their underlying groupist assumption that lead to some analytical mistakes. First, because of their vague and imprecise character, they tend to create controversies about which group should be defined as ethnic, and debates about whether a definition is too large or too exclusive (Fearon and Laitin, 2000b: 11; for a detailed discussion see Chandra, 2012: 73-93). This is problematic since a good definition should cover precisely the phenomenon it is supposed to define. But the most important

problem is that this lack of precision leads to methodological mistakes. Because no clear criteria are established to differentiate between ethnic and non-ethnic groups, scholars tend to uncritically import everyday life classifications of ethnic and non-ethnic groups in their analysis. By so doing, the sociological analysis only reproduces pre-notions or common wisdoms which are not theoretical but *pre-theoretical*. As stressed by Durkheim (1895), sociology must instead emancipate itself from these “empirical categories”. A sociology of ethnicity must rest on a more solid ground.

The second problem with these definitions is the confusion between ethnic categories (or identities) and ethnic groups. As already noted in chapter 1, Brubaker (2004) demonstrated that the group dimension of ethnicity should not be taken for granted. “Ethnic groups” are in fact often not “groups” in the sense of homogeneous units, characterized by a high level of internal ties, and feelings of belonging. Ethnicity can instead exist *without group*: members of an ethnic category may well not form a group; they still have an identity in common. Since the group is not necessary, ethnic identities can be considered as individual identities, which are shared by a multiplicity of individuals. This does not mean that ethnic groups do not exist, but their existence is not given by nature; it must be empirically demonstrated, and the degree of cohesion of these groups may vary.

### ***Individualistic Definitions of Ethnicity***

To avoid the confusion, it is in fact necessary to differentiate between the concept of group and the concept of category. From this point on view, it is not one, but two definitions that are required: ethnic group and ethnic category (or its synonym, ethnic identity). The literature on ethnicity based on constructivist premises increasingly focuses on ethnic *identities* rather than ethnic groups. An identity is defined as “a category that can be used to classify or describe an individual—that is, a category for which she possesses the attributes that determine eligibility for membership” (Chandra, 2012: 100). The concept of category does not imply any specific relationship between the members of a same category, they only need to possess a certain criterion of classification in common. For example, the members of the category “men” do not need to be organized in any particular way to be part of the category. On the other hand, the concept of group, as understood in this thesis, implies the existence of interrelationships, interdependence, intra-group communications between the members of a group, as well as a feeling of belonging to the group understood as a unit. For the purpose of this chapter, suffice it to discuss two “individualistic”

definitions of ethnic identities, one proposed by Fearon and Laitin (2000b), and the other by Chandra (2005, 2012).

Fearon and Laitin (2000b) distinguish between *rules of membership* in a social category, and *content* of this category, which are the typical characteristics of members of this category. This distinction is important because it recognizes the existence of the content of categories (the aforementioned “objective elements”) but shows that they can vary and have nothing to do with the definition of the category in itself. Culture, for example, can be the content of an ethnic identity. However, this element does not define an ethnic category in itself, because culture can change over time. As Horowitz puts it, “culture is important in the making of ethnic groups, but it is more important for providing *post facto* content to group identity than it is for providing some ineluctable prerequisite for an identity to come into being” (1985: 69). Content certainly contributes to the reinforcement of the feeling of belonging to an ethnic group in certain cases, however these elements are neither prerequisite for the delimitation of a category boundary, nor fixed over time (see Barth, 1969).

Accordingly, the inclusion of elements of content of the categories in the definition is both problematic and unnecessary. Problematic, since these elements can change over time; they are *variables* and thus cannot be included in definitions that aim to be stable. Unnecessary, because, as we shall see, it is possible to develop a theory of ethnic conflict and ethnic violence with a definition that does not include elements of the content of ethnic categories. Following previous constructivist definitions, the definition of ethnicity adopted in this thesis is thus *minimalist*. It does not deny the existence of several elements that are often linked to ethnic identity; it only considers them variable and unnecessary to define an identity as ethnic.

If the content is not necessary for building a definition of ethnic identity, the rule of membership is. Starting from a reflection on how an individual’s ethnic identity is determined in everyday life, Fearon and Laitin (2000b) identify the “descent rule”, which can be formulated as follows: “all that is necessary to be counted as a member of an ethnic group is to be able to have accepted the claim to be immediately descended from other members of the group” (2000b: 13). This centrality of (imagined) decent in ethnic classifications is also acknowledged by other constructivist authors including Jenkins (2008), Karner, (2007), or Scharml (2012, 2014). Fearon and Laitin’s important “descent rule” is however not free of ambiguities. Indeed, it may not correspond to some situations, including the “creation” of new ethnic groups. For example, the group Yoruba “was

invented in Nigeria in the nineteenth century. At this time period, the parents of those who were classified as Yoruba were not themselves classified as Yoruba for the reason that this category did not exist during their lifetimes” (Chandra 2006: 408; about Yorubas’ ethnogenesis see Peel, 2000). According to the descent rule, Yoruba would thus not be an ethnic group, since parents were not member of an ethnic group.

Chandra’s definition of ethnicity, builds on this “descent rule” and tries to solves this problem. Chandra (2012) defines ethnic identity as “a subset of categories in which descent-based attributes are necessary for membership” (Chandra, 2012: 58). This definition is based on the distinction between category and attribute. An attribute is “a characteristic that qualifies an individual for membership in [a] category, or signals membership” (Chandra, 2012: 105). An ethnic attribute is an attribute which is “associated with or believed to be associated with descent”. It can be inherited genetically (physical characteristics) or socially (name, language, geographical origin, etc.) (Chandra, 2012: 59). For Chandra, what makes a category ethnic, is that the rule of membership in this category is the possession of such a *descent-based* attribute. In other words, it is not the categories in themselves that are transmitted by descent, but the attributes. And the eligibility for membership in an ethnic category is restricted to the individuals who possess a specific descent-based attribute. This solves the problem that was just identified with the “descent rule” since “this [definition] does not require that children share the same descent-based categories as their parents – just that the attributes that qualify them for membership in ethnic categories are acquired through descent” (Chandra, 2006: 409).

The set of social categories associated with descent-based attributes is wider than the set of identities which are conventionally classified as “ethnic”. Ethnic categories are thus a subset of this wider set, which Chandra defines by adding four restrictions. These aim at eliminating the identities which could be “associated with descent”, but are not conventionally considered ethnic. In Chandra’s words, these restrictions aim at “approximating the conventional classification of ethnic identities” (Chandra, 2012: 62):

(1) [Ethnic identities] are impersonal—that is, they are an “imagined community” in which members are not part of an immediate family or kin group; (2) they constitute a section of a country’s population rather than the whole; (3) if one sibling is eligible for membership in a category at any given place, then all other siblings would also be eligible in that place; and (4) the qualifying attributes for membership are restricted to one’s own genetically transmitted features or to the language, religion, place of origin, tribe, region, caste, clan,

nationality, or race of one's parents and ancestors (Chandra, 2006: 400; for a detailed discussion of these restrictions see Chandra, 2012: 61.)

These four restrictions may be considered the weakness of Chandra's sophisticated conceptual framework. Indeed, Chandra recognises that they are not analytically justified, but are rather determined arbitrarily to eliminate non-ethnic identities from the definition. Their theoretical justification is yet to be developed (2012: 61). The problem is that this lets open the question of why so-called "ethnic" identities should be analysed distinctively from other "descent-based" identities. Chandra writes that "in the absence of such justifications, [she does] not think that there is so far a good reason to wall off ethnic identities from other types of descent-based identities" (Chandra, 2012: 62).

These restrictions can also be criticised individually. Indeed, restriction 1 carries the risk of introducing a "groupist" element in the definition. The size criteria introduced by restriction 2 might well be problematic: it is not because a country is mono-ethnic that its inhabitants have no ethnic identity—it is only that these identities are latent. A change in the context (for example, immigration or emigration) might well activate these identities. Restriction 4 is similarly ambiguous in regard of constructivist assumptions for it reintroduces in the definition a list which resembles the "objectivist" definitions.

It may be argued that these restrictions are needed because the basic definition is not sufficiently precise. In the next subsection, I propose a definition of ethnicity which is arguably consistent with Chandra's definition, but allows for the elimination of these restrictions.

### ***Ethnic Identity and Filial Transmission***

Building on Chandra (2012), this thesis defines ethnic attributes as being automatically transmitted to the next generation (but not necessarily acquired) by descent.<sup>10</sup> A social category is defined as ethnic when the attribute of eligibility for membership in it is ethnic. Accordingly, I define ethnic identities as social categories in which the attribute necessary for membership is automatically *transmitted* to the next generation by descent. This implies that members of an ethnic category will automatically transmit the attributes necessary for membership in this category to their children.

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<sup>10</sup> By "automatically transmitted", I mean that ethnic attributes are those attributes which are ineluctably transmitted to the next generation. This excludes, for example, the colour of eyes, which is linked to descent, but is not *automatically* transmitted to one's children.

On the other hand, non-ethnic identities encompass all social categories in which the attribute necessary for membership is not transmitted by descent.

Although Chandra (2012) uses the word “group” as a synonym for “category”, I prefer, as noted earlier, to differentiate between the two concepts. I define an ethnic group as a set of persons eligible in the same ethnic category and united by a feeling of belonging to the same social entity, as well as by internal networks of exchange, communication, solidarity and interdependence. Note that while all members of an ethnic group need to be eligible in at least one common ethnic category, all the members of an ethnic category need not be members of the same group. To say it differently, there may be many groups in one ethnic category, for example, many political parties (Horowitz, 1985). What differentiates an ethnic group from a non-ethnic group is that the membership in an ethnic group is limited to individuals who possess an ethnic attribute.

A first particularity of this definition is that it makes no assumption about how an ethnic identity has been acquired, it only focuses on how it is transmitted. Following a widespread understanding of ethnicity as linked to the past, the focus of the definitions proposed by Fearon and Laitin (2000b) and Chandra (2012) was on inheritance of ethnic identities. Chandra, for example, notes that “descent-based” attributes are the attributes that are “acquired through [genetic, cultural or historical] *inheritance*” (2012: 59). This focus is probably due to the fact that ethnic extremists themselves often refer to a phantasmagorical past and myth of historical ancestry. As Anderson puts it, “racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations” (1983: 149). This mythical history, however, is not necessarily more than a dream (see Anderson, 1983). As Horowitz notes, “Ethnicity is connected to birth and blood, but not absolutely so” (1985: 51-52). Ethnic identities, although often inherited, are also sometimes acquired by choice: “conversion, intermarriage, passing, ‘forgetting origins’ and the likes” (Horowitz, 1985: 52-53) are mechanisms of ethnic identification which are not linked to descent. Horowitz therefore notes that there are two “principles of membership” in ethnic categories: “birth and choice” (1985:55).

The definition proposed in this thesis induces a subtle, but important shift away from the focus on inheritance. With this definition, the focus is put on the future, on the transmission of identity to the next generation. It is based on the idea that ethnic attributes are not always inherited from the parents, but are always transmitted to children. For example, religious conversion may allow an individual to change his ethnic identity: this identity will not have been acquired from his parents,



however, it is considered ethnic because he will transmit it to his children. Since ethnic attributes are transmitted to children, they are indeed, most of the time, inherited from parents; but this is not *always* the case, while ethnic attributes (however acquired) are *always* transmitted to children. This definition thus also allows us to solve the problems identified by Chandra regarding Fearon and Laitin's descent rule. To continue with the same example, Yoruba is defined as an ethnic identity not because Yorubas have inherited this identity from their parents, but because they will automatically transmit it to their children.

This slight modification of Chandra's definition allows for the suppression of her four restrictions, since "descent-based non-ethnic" identities are arguably ruled out of the definition. These include the "large number of categories typically based on attributes distributed arbitrarily across siblings" such as the colour of eyes, or the sex (Chandra, 2012: 61): as these attributes are not automatically transmitted from a parent to his child, they are not considered ethnic by this thesis's definition. Other identities excluded from the definition are class or political affiliation (Chandra, 2012: 63), as there is no guarantee that these will be transmitted automatically to an individual's child. It should be noted, however, that some identities that are excluded by Chandra's definition are not excluded by the definition proposed in this thesis. This includes nationality, Chandra notes that "'German' would not be an ethnic category in a country that is 100% German" (2012: 61). As noted above, I do not think this is accurate. Any German traveling abroad would feel he has a "German" ethnic identity. A nationality cannot be ethnic and non-ethnic at the same time. With this definition, it is considered ethnic if it is automatically transmitted to children. Another such identity is "family" which is excluded by Chandra's definition. Although families are "conventionally" not considered ethnic identities, I do not see any reason to differentiate them from other ethnic identities. If family is generally not considered ethnic, it is maybe more because families are rarely politically relevant due to the small number of their members—but the fact that family is almost never politically relevant, does not mean this is not an ethnic category. In at least one case, royal families, the group is politically relevant and, in this case it shares a remarkable number of common traits with ethnic groups. Royal families display for example the same myth of common ancestry, of purity of blood, sometimes the same restriction on marriage as ethnic groups.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Although nobility is often considered as a class or a family identity, its links to racism have been acknowledged in the literature. Hannah Arendt traces the origins of "race thinking" back to 17th century Europe.

Except for genetic characteristics, the transmission of ethnic attributes by descent is socially constructed, and can be considered as a shared subjectivity, an “idea”, or a “belief”.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that the modalities of this transmission by descent (which of the two parents will transmit its ethnic attribute to the children) are socially constructed, culturally varied, and differentiated by gender. In certain cases, ethnic attributes are transmitted to the children by both the mother and the father; in other cases, the transmission might be restricted to one of the parents only. Three examples can be provided to demonstrate this variety. In Germany, both parents are believed to transmit ethnic attributes. Consequently, “the Nazis viewed racial purity as the absence of any non-Aryan blood, whether maternally or paternally derived” (Weitsman, 2008: 564). On the other hand, Weitsman notes that for Serbians “identity [is] viewed as exclusively paternally derived” (2008: 565). The opposite case, exists too. For the category “Jewish”, it is mothers who transmit the ethnic identity (Chandra, 2012: 59). As demonstrated by Weitsman (2008), these varying modalities of transmission have very concrete consequences. Based on their conceptions, Nazis strictly forbade sexual intercourse with non-Aryans, and even led campaigns of sterilization of what they called “inferior races”. On the other hand, Serbian militias’ belief informed a policy of forced impregnation of Bosnian Muslim women as a technique of genocide: the men’s identity being transmitted to the children of these women. These two strategies were thus tightly linked with specific and socially constructed understandings of “descent” and the Serbian strategy would have been completely counterproductive for Nazis<sup>13</sup> (Weitsman, 2008).

As this last point already slightly suggests, this definition arguably allows for a better understanding of the specificity of ethnicity and ethnic conflict. At the end of this chapter, and in chapter 4, I will argue that, because ethnic attributes are transmitted by descent, human reproduction becomes central in ethnic politics, which has specific consequences on the

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She shows that French Aristocrats progressively developed the idea that they were of a different “race” as the bourgeoisie. They gradually came to read French politics as the fight between a “Germanic nobility and a Celtic bourgeoisie” (Arendt, 1951: 45). Anderson makes a similar observation and notes that “the dreams of racism actually have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than in those of nation: above all in claims to divinity among rulers and to ‘blue’ or ‘white’ blood and ‘breeding’ among aristocracies” (Anderson, 1983: 149). This metaphor of “blood” is common with other ethnic identities and proves that nobility is about filiation: however symbolic, blue blood is an ethnic attribute transmitted by filiation to the next generation. The link between nobility and ethnicity is even more obvious in pre-colonial Burundi, where the nobles were classified as a distinct ethnic category: the Ganwa (Chrétien, 1993; Reyntjens, 1994; Lemarchand, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Schraml (2012) and Karner (2007) put a specific emphasis on this subjective dimension, which is also acknowledged by Chandra (2012), but their focus is mainly on the inheritance of ethnic identities.

<sup>13</sup> “The maternal contribution to identity must be completely assumed away for an ethnic group to embark on a policy of forced impregnation or forced maternity in order to promote “genocide” or “ethnic cleansing” (Weitsman, 2008: 565).

functioning of an electoral system and on ethnic violence. But before tackling these questions, more needs to be said on the conceptual framework adopted in this thesis regarding change in ethnic identities and ethnic conflict.

## **Theorizing Change**

“Who are the Darfurians?” asks Alex De Waal. He identifies “four overlapping processes of identity formation, each of them primarily associated with a different period in the region’s history”: Sudanese identities, Islamic identities, administrative tribalism, and the Arab vs. African polarization (De Waal, 2005: 181). These shifts of identity do not result from migrations waves in Darfur. Rather, they are the product of shifts in the way the same people identify themselves across time. Observing a variety of examples of this type of identity shifts, constructivists have emphasized the fluid and dynamic nature of ethnicity, as opposed to the primordialist “fixed” conception of ethnicity.

The modalities of this change and the extent of fluidity can however be subject to debate. At least three different modalities of change have been identified by what I describe here as three different approaches to ethnic identity change: approaches focusing on group amalgamation and fragmentation, approaches focusing on the fluidity of ethnic identities, and approaches focusing on the multiplicity of ethnic identities. These three modalities are not necessarily mutually exclusive and the three phenomena are empirically observable. Disagreement between these approaches can however exist regarding the probability, frequency, or rapidity of change in ethnic categories.

### ***Amalgamation and Fragmentation of Ethnic Groups***

Halfway between contemporary constructivist theory and primordialism, the first integration of constructivism in the theory of ethnicity was undertaken by scholars focusing on the ability of ethnic groups to change by either fusion or fragmentation. This can be identified as the origin of the constructivist agenda in ethnic politics. For example, Horowitz observed in 1975 that “the extent and the importance of boundary change have generally been underrated” (1975: 113). The main concern of this first set of scholars is less with individual short term change in ethnic identity than with change in ethnic identities at a societal level. Put differently, their focus is not so much on changes in ethnic *identities*, but on changes in ethnic *groups*.

The categorization proposed by Horowitz (1975; 1985: 64-74) is representative of this type of approaches. For him,

Ethnic groups can become more or less inclusive. Some small ethnic groups merge with or absorb others, or are absorbed by them producing larger, composite groups. Larger groups, on the other hand, may divide into their component parts, or a portion of such a group may leave it to form a new, smaller group. (1985: 64-65).

Processes of assimilation or differentiation thus explain change in ethnic groups. These processes of fusion and fission are summarized in table 1 (Horowitz, 1985: 65). There is, moreover, the notion that ethnic groups are internally divided into subgroups. This “hierarchy” of groups explains that, depending on territorial and political context, different levels may be mobilized for identification. While groups A and B may be in conflict at the national level, at an ethnically homogeneous local level, two subgroups of A may enter into a rivalry. Context and political leadership explains why groups may sometimes divide and sometimes merge.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 1: Processes of Ethnic Fusion and Fission**

Assimilation		Differentiation	
<i>Amalgamation</i>	<i>Incorporation</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Proliferation</i>
A + B → C	A + B → A	A → B + C	A → A + B
Two or more groups unite to form a new, larger group	One group assumes the identity of another	One group divides into two or more component parts	One group or more produces an additional group from within its ranks

*Source: Horowitz, 1985: 65*

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<sup>14</sup> Andreas Wimmer (2013) has proposed an updated version of this. From his perspective, ethnic groups are mainly defined by the boundary that separates them and change is theorized as the displacement of the boundaries or the crossing of boundaries by individuals or groups. Wimmer identifies five mechanisms of change: expansion, contraction, transvaluation, positional move and blurring. *Expansion* is the process by which an ethnic group enlarges itself by including other groups, it is a process of amalgamation of previously separated groups. *Contraction*, on the opposite, is a process of fission of previously unified categories, to form many smaller ethnic groups. *Transvaluation* is the process by which the normative principles attributed to an ethnic group may change. *Positional move* is individual or collective move from a category to another, this includes assimilation (of an individual in a new category) or re-categorization. This can happen at an individual level, for example by changing one’s ethnic identity by marriage or by adopting attributes of another ethnic category. *Blurring*, finally, is the process of reducing the importance of ethnic identities in the social sphere, and trying to promote, instead, another base of cleavage, for example, social class (Wimmer, 2013: 50-61). This categorization has the advantage of including more mechanisms of change than Horowitz’s version. Wimmer also stresses the importance of strategic calculations at the root of these changes.

In regard to the theoretical framework developed in this thesis, it is important to note that this approach focuses on change in ethnic *groups* rather than ethnic *identities*. Its weakness is that it does not really identify the constraints on change. A closer look at the internal institutions and structures of ethnic groups is arguably necessary to understand these limits to change. Moreover, this approach theorizes how groups change but does not say much about what is specific to *ethnic* groups. To understand this, we must pay specific attention to ethnic identities.

### ***The Fluidity of Ethnic Identities***

A second set of researchers have observed that ethnic identity can change intrinsically and have thus emphasized the fluid nature of ethnic categories. Following the work of Benedict Anderson (1983) on nations as imagined communities, scholars have emphasized the ideational construction of ethnic identities, and “regarded ethnic solidarity as an invention of the human imagination, an intellectual construct, not an objective reality” (Esman, 2004: 34). This view has progressively become dominant in the field and is summarized by Wimmer: “the routine assertion that ethnicity is constructed, contextually variable, contested, and contingently eventful – representing the four Cs of the constructivist credo that is currently shared by most authors writing on ethnicity” (2013: 204).

While this approach has made a valuable contribution to questioning and countering the static primordialist understanding of ethnicity, its strength is also its weakness. Where primordialist theory could not explain change, these constructivist approaches have trouble explaining stability. Emphasizing fluidity creates risks of advocating for idealistic solutions for ethnic conflict, which have pushed certain scholars back to primordialism. As Kaufmann writes, “it follows that ethnic conflict generated by the promotion of pernicious, exclusive identities should be reversible by encouraging individuals and groups to adopt more benign, inclusive identities” (1996: 152). While this may appear feasible on paper, the reality of ethnic conflict often makes things more complicated. As Wimmer writes, “*hélas*, not everything is possible, not all ethnic boundaries are fluid and in motion, not all are cognitively and emotionally unstable, contextually shifting and continuously contested” (2013: 204). The problem here, as with the first approach, is an insufficient description of the constraints on change.

“How fluid is fluid?” asks Ferree (2012). Without denying the existence of identity shifts, other constructivists have thus argued that this change is significantly slower and harder to achieve than

expected, because of institutional, psychological or emotional factors. “Constructivism” Varshney writes “is [thus] basically about long-run stickiness” of ethnic identities (2009: 288). Ethnic individual identities have a certain fluidity but it should not be overestimated.

### ***The Multiplicity of Ethnic Identities***

The third approach recognizes a relative fluidity of individual ethnic identities but emphasizes their *multiplicity* as the principal mechanism for change in collective ethnic identities. Brubaker’s argument (2004) that ethnicity is not necessarily linked to groups has led to a reorientation of the constructivist theory of ethnicity toward individuals as units of analysis. Whereas primordialism considers that an individual had only one ethnic identity, constructivism acknowledges that an individual has *many* ethnic identities (Wilson, 2015).

This multiplicity of individual identities can explain observed shifts in collective identities. Chandra (2012) provides a sophisticated framework to theorise this change. Because every individual has a great number of ethnic attributes<sup>15</sup>, he is eligible in many ethnic categories, although he may not mobilize all of these identities. Chandra thus differentiates between “nominal” and “activated” categories. *Nominal* categories are all the potential categories an individual is eligible in due to his set of attributes. The *activated* categories are the few categories that are actually activated. Each individual thus has a “repertoire of nominal ethnic identities” composed of the totality of these identities. Because the attributes are generally fixed in the short term, the repertoire of nominal ethnic identities is relatively stable (Chandra, 2012: 9). However, change is possible at a societal level, when individuals choose or are forced to activate a specific ethnic category instead of another.

Let’s take the fictional example of a French-Canadian woman living in Montreal. Her nominal ethnic identities’ repertoire includes a language (French), a nationality (Canadian), a religion (say, Catholic), and a skin colour (say, white). She may activate or be forced to activate these different ethnic identities at different moments. When living in Quebec, she may activate the “French-speaker” identity while advocating for independence. While traveling, she will however have to activate her “Canadian” identity, because “Quebecker” is not an internationally recognized national identity, which is necessary to travel (and materialised as a passport). If she had lived

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<sup>15</sup> Although the definition of ethnic attributes utilized in this thesis is slightly different from Chandra’s, this definition is fully compatible with Chandra’s conceptualization of change.

three-hundred years ago, she may have activated her “white” identity as opposed to First Nations. Note, finally, that the activation of specific identities can be the outcome of her will, but can also be externally imposed, for example by institutional constraints or by ethnic violence (Chandra, 2012: 101-104; Felouzis & Fouquet-Chauprade, 2013).

Change can therefore be understood at an individual level as the activation by an individual of certain categories in which he is eligible instead of others. At a collective level, identity shifts in ethnic groups can be understood as the collective activation of a certain ethnic category instead of another. These changes can happen in the long, but also in the short run. Individuals activate different categories depending on the situation.

This framework thus allows for the reconciliation of the approaches which stress the stability of *individual* ethnic identities with those who emphasize the fluidity of ethnic identities at a collective level. Let’s be clear: at an individual level, ethnic attributes do (most of the time) *not* disappear or change *in the short run*, and neither do nominal ethnic identities. These identities can however be activated or “deactivated” socially and politically at different times. Inactive attributes and categories remain latent until they are reactivated. The four identities which have successively been politically relevant in Darfur, in the example provided at the beginning of this section (De Waal, 2005), have not appeared and disappear across time: individuals possessed them all in their nominal repertoires of identities, but politically activated a specific one at different periods.

The strength of this approach is that it allows for theoretical developments on the *constraints* on change in ethnic identities. Change is first constrained by the given set of attributes an individual possesses by descent (Chandra, 2012: 9). For example, a white American will hardly be able to shift to an Afro-American identity, since he does not possess the required descent-based attribute.<sup>16</sup> But the constraints on change are also limited by external factors: “history, institutional background, economic factors, ideological factors, social norms, and territorial factors may, taken individually or together, eliminate certain categories from the set of feasible choices while privileging others” (Chandra, 2012: 17).

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<sup>16</sup> Although the recent scandal about Rachel Dolezal, a white woman who pretended to be black and became president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, shows that descent-based attributes can be faked. However, once it became known that her bodily attributes were not acquired by descent, she was excluded from the “colored people” category, which is another proof of the importance of descent in ethnic categorizations.

### ***Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Identities in Interaction: the Politicization of Ethnicity***

While the above described approaches to change aimed at theorizing the way ethnic identities change, another important question is why ethnic identities are activated in certain contexts instead of other non-ethnic (i.e. non-descent based) identities such as ideological or economic identities. In other words, why are descent-based identities politically and socially salient in certain contexts and not in others? (Posner, 2004). A classical<sup>17</sup> explanation has been that ethnicity was a primordial loyalty that persisted in certain contexts because of a lack of modernization. As Bannon et al. write, with a focus on Africa, “ask most people why ethnicity is so salient in Africa and they will tell you that it is because Africans are so ‘backward’. Once Africans become more educated and urbanized (in short more “modern”) it is assumed, ethnicity will cease to cause so much conflict, distort so many elections and pervert so many public policies” (2004: 1). This view must be rejected first for its obvious western-centrism and its unawareness that ethnic politics does also exist in the western world, and second because ethnicity has proven to be a phenomenon fully inscribed in modernity (Horowitz, 1985: 96; Wimmer, 2002; Chrétien & Prunier, 2003).

A slight enlargement of Chandra’s framework can help conceptualize the problem of the variations in the politicization of ethnic identities. If we think in general terms, and not only in terms of ethnicity, it is obvious that individuals' nominal identity repertoires are not limited to ethnic identities. Rather ethnic identities co-exist with other non-ethnic identities in these repertoires. The politicization of ethnicity thus happens when individuals activate one of their ethnic identities rather than a non-ethnic one in their country’s political arena. At a societal level, ethnicity is politically and socially salient when the activated identities are mostly or exclusively ethnic.

The politicization of ethnicity can thus be reconceptualised as the *reduction of the set of nominal identities that can be activated by individuals to ethnic identities only*. This restriction is done by a variety of external factors, which can be identified and studied. Among these, formal and informal institutions may provide incentives for the activation or the non-activation of ethnic identities. Violence and emotions may also explain the restriction of the repertoire of identities that can be activated. Following Chandra (2004), Posner (2005) and Wimmer (2013), I consider that individuals act in a strategic way when activating an identity instead of another. To put it differently, they are likely to react to a variety of incentives in ‘hierarchizing’ their identities. This

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<sup>17</sup> And still widespread in everyday life, although discredited in academia.



thesis' argument is that, if incentives for the activation of ethnic identities are removed and sufficient incentives for the activation of non-ethnic identities are provided, a shift away from ethnic politics may take place.

In this thesis, I use this approach, based on a modified version of Chandra's concept of identity repertoire, to study the politicization of ethnic identities, ethnic politics and ethnic violence. This framework has the advantage of explaining change and the absence of change, as well as providing a conceptual framework for thinking about the politicization and depoliticization of ethnicity. The next chapters focus on three main explanatory factors for the reduction of the multiplicity of identities that can be activated to ethnic ones only: formal and informal *institutions* (Chapter 3), *violence*, and to a lesser extent *emotions* (Chapter 4).

But before studying the factors conducting to a politicization of ethnicity, it is useful to discuss the notion of ethnic conflict. Indeed, ethnic conflict is central in the literature on ethnicity and it is the object of this thesis. However, most previous theories of ethnic conflict do not fit very well with the theoretical framework developed in this chapter. This is because they are built on theories of ethnicity which were based on different assumptions than our constructivist approach. The next section reviews these theories. It then develops a theoretical framework which is compatible with a constructivist theory of ethnicity, and which allows us to understand what is specifically "ethnic" in an "ethnic conflict".

### **Conceptualizing Ethnic Conflict**

Most of the literature on ethnic conflict has in fact focused on conflict *between ethnic groups*, and has tried to identify the causes of conflict to prevent or manage them. After reviewing these approaches, this section questions these "groupists" and "causal" assumptions and their compatibility with our constructivist framework. In the second subsection, I argue that it is possible to conceptualize conflict in a way that allows us to think in terms of ethnic categories instead of ethnic groups, and in terms of process rather than causal relationships. In the third subsection, I ask what is the specificity of ethnic conflicts as opposed to other conflicts. I argue that the organization of politics around an ethnic cleavage has the specific effect of transforming the nature of the political game into a zero-sum game, which threatens the good functioning of democratic institutions and may induce a specific logic of violence. Based on this

reconceptualization, I explore a possible way of managing conflict in diverse societies: the depoliticization of ethnic identities.

### ***Causes of Conflict between Ethnic Groups***

A significant part of the approaches to ethnic conflict has focused on searching for the *causes* of these conflicts. They are based on a specific understanding of conflict, defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals by a multiple number of actors (Galtung, 2009: 23). An example of this type of definitions of conflict is provided by Wallensteen who defines conflict as a “social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources” (2011: 16). Similarly, Horowitz defines conflict as “a struggle in which the aim is to gain objectives and simultaneously to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals” (1985: 95). In this view, and as suggested in Horowitz’s definition, violence is understood as an outcome, or a degree of conflict (Zartmann & Faure, 2005: chapter 1; Kalyvas, 2006: 20-22).

Based on this definition, scholars have identified various causes of ethnic conflict. A first argument is that ethnic groups are naturally prone to conflict because of ancient hatred, differing worldviews or conflicting interests (Kaplan, 1993). Per this classical primordialist explanation, ethnic conflict needs no explanation (Fearon & Laitin, 2000). Although widespread in journalistic and common sense interpretations of many conflicts, more sophisticated explanations have been developed in academia.

A second explanation is that ethnic conflict results from competition between ethnic groups for “scarce resources”. These can be of various types: economic or political (see Esman, 2004; Wolff, 2006), territorial (Toft, 2002), symbolic, or cultural (Horowitz, 1985). In any case, inequalities of access to resources are at the root of conflict. Political, economic, or cultural discrimination creates grievances that motivate conflict, in line with Gurr’s theory of “relative deprivation” (1970). In this view, ethnic conflict results from the frustration created by a group’s feeling of being deprived of what they deserved or expected.

A third set of approaches, following the works of Tajfel on inter-group psychology, have focused on psychological and emotional causes of ethnic conflict. Through experimental research in social psychology, Tajfel (1974) finds the existence of an “in-group bias”: individuals tend to favour members of their own group even if the group is formed on a minimal criterion (Horowitz, 1985: 144-147). Horowitz (1985) builds on this literature to develop a theory of ethnic conflict. For him,

ethnic conflict is the result of inter-group comparison and competition for “group entitlement” understood as the “joint function of comparative worth and legitimacy” of ethnic groups in a society (Horowitz, 1985: 226). Since individual feelings of worth and legitimacy are intimately tied to a group’s worth and legitimacy, the members of an ethnic group will be inclined to engage in ethnic conflict to increase their group’s entitlements (Horowitz, 1985: 185-228). For his part, Petersen developed a sophisticated framework that describes how emotions such as fear, resentment, rage and hatred between groups are at the root of ethnic conflict and violence (Petersen, 2002, 2012).

A fourth set of explanations links ethnic violence to democracy. According to this approach, ethnic diversity creates permanent (or frozen) majorities and minorities in the electoral system because voters tend to vote on an ethnic basis. An ethnic group will thus be permanently excluded of the electoral system and therefore have incentive to use violence to change the situation (Horowitz, 1985; Welsh, 1993; Mann, 2005; Galvan, 2001a).

A fifth set of approaches focuses on structural and contextual factors. These include the weakness of the state, intra-state security problems, neighbouring countries’ instability, or the repartition of ethnic groups on a territory (Wolff, 2006: 66). For example, Toft (2002) develops the idea that ethnic conflict is mainly explained by settlement patterns and whether ethnic groups consider their territory indivisible. In such a case, they may mobilize for independence.<sup>18</sup> (For the discussion of these various approaches, also see Chandra, 2006: 418-421; Varshney, 2009; Toft, 2002; Esman 2004; Wolff, 2006: 66-73)

A last set of arguments considers that conflict arises from “strategic interactions between groups” (Lake & Rothchild, 1998: 8). For these authors, ethnic conflict and ethnic violence results from problems of limited information and security dilemmas. This set of arguments comes from an attempt to apply international relations’ realist theory to ethnic groups. Fearon and Laitin (1996) and, later, Wilson (2015) focus on the asymmetry of information. Because information flows are more important inside than between groups, the reaction to an offence differs depending on the position of the criminal. When he is a member of the group, the individual in question will be punished. When he is a member of the other group, however, the whole group will be held accountable. This mechanism can create spirals of violence. Posen (1993) has applied the “security

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<sup>18</sup> Another possibility that should at least be considered from a constructivist point of view, however, is that the boundaries of the groups are defined in a certain way *because* of independentist claims (Wimmer, 2013: 91).

dilemma” theory to ethnic conflict. He argues that, due to mutual mistrust, ethnic groups may have incentives for pre-emptive violence. This dynamic explains the emergence of conflict. A subsequent development of the theory also focused on diplomatic tactics between ethnic groups that might also lead to violence (Rose, 2000). Lake and Rothchild (1996) place fear at the center of their explanation of ethnic violence, they cover information failures and security dilemma mechanisms, but also highlight problems of credible commitment between groups.

### ***Problematizing Causal Approaches of Ethnic Conflict***

These approaches build on specific understandings of ethnic groups, ethnic violence and causes of conflict, which do not fully correspond with the constructivist theory of ethnicity. A constructivist approach in fact problematizes these approaches in three ways; it questions their conception of ethnic groups, their conception of ethnic violence, and the reflection in terms of causal relationships.

The first constructivist critique targets the underlying “groupist” assumptions of these approaches. Building on the existing literature and on empirical observations of conflicts, these approaches tend to assume that the existence of ethnic groups precedes ethnic conflict, or at least that ethnic groups are well defined during ethnic conflicts. According to the constructivist framework developed in this thesis, however, the homogeneity and closure of ethnic groups even during ethnic conflict (especially when it is non-violent) should not be over-stated. Accordingly, taking the pre-existence of ethnic groups for granted, or comparing ethnic groups to states may be problematic in certain cases. This does not mean that these theories are wrong. In fact, as Chandra notes, “constructivist approaches do not, as is often assumed, dismiss primordialist interpretations of ethnic identities—they problematize them” (Chandra, 2012: 8). These theories are certainly relevant, but they apply only when ethnic groups are clearly constituted, which may not always be the case, and must first be demonstrated. To put it differently, constructivism asks an additional question: are “ethnic groups” really groups? And, more puzzlingly, are “ethnic groups” necessary for ethnic conflict to happen? The conceptualization of ethnic conflict I propose above allows for a focus on ethnic identities, rather than ethnic groups. It allows us to take the cohesion of ethnic groups in conflict as a variable rather than a given.

Second, the conception of violence adopted in these approaches has been problematized. Whereas causal approaches consider violence as the outcome or the fruit of an escalation of the conflict, a

growing number of scholars advocate for a conceptual differentiation between violence and conflict (Kalyvas, 2006: 75; Fearon and Laitin, 1998: 426). As we shall see in the next chapter, ethnic violence might in fact sometimes *precede* and generate generalized ethnic conflict by politicizing ethnic identities. In certain instances, ethnic violence may thus be closer to a cause of ethnic conflict than to its outcome. In this thesis, I disentangle the two phenomena, to gain a better understanding of the connection between them. Ethnic violence and its links to ethnic conflict are studied in detail in chapter 4.

Thirdly, the underlying conception of conflict and the research for its “causes” can also be problematized. Focusing on causes may indeed be misleading for three reasons. First, causes are likely to be multiple and to differ in every ethnic conflict. Generalization seems difficult as illustrated by the variety of causes identified in the literature. Second, reasons for entering in conflict might vary depending on the level. Local and national causes of conflict might in fact be very different (Kalyvas, 2006). Thirdly, as emphasized by Bramsen and Wæver (2016: 4) and Vorrath (2009), conflict is a dynamic process which evolves over time. Conflict may thus continue independently from its initial cause. Unlike in medicine, treating the causes of conflict might well have no effect on the disease itself. Moreover, what is perceived as a cause of conflict (the various reasons for polarization of the belligerents) might in fact be an outcome of this conflict (Kalyvas, 2006: 76). This proves the limitations of using metaphors or comparisons with natural sciences to guide social science research and the necessity to develop a more dynamic and processual understanding of conflicts rather than focusing exclusively on their causes. In the next section, I develop a conceptualization of ethnic conflict which tries to address these three issues.

### ***A “Triangle” Conceptualization of Ethnic Conflict***

Following an idea first developed by Galtung<sup>19</sup>, Bramsen and Wæver (2016) have developed a dynamic “triangle” conceptualization of conflict. The idea is that a conflict (or the resolution of a conflict) may emerge from any of the three tips of this triangle (Galtung, 2009). The three “tips” of the triangle identified by Bramsen and Wæver are “Situation”, “Interaction”, and “Tension” (SIT).

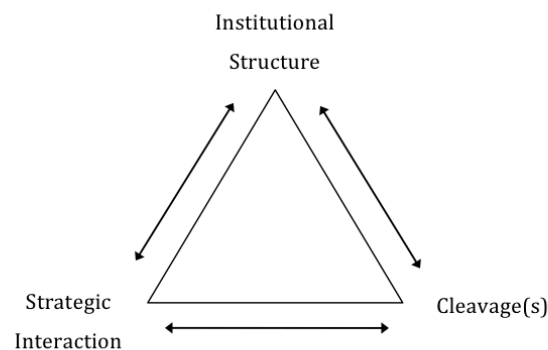
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<sup>19</sup> Johann Galtung proposed an “ABC” triangle. This triangle is formed of three interacting but separate elements *Attitude* (A), *behaviour* (B) and *contradiction* (C). (Galtung, 2009: 105). For Galtung, “attitude” includes psychological and emotional dispositions related to conflict; “behaviour” is more focused on concrete actions; “contradiction” refers to the incompatibility of goals pursued by the actors.

In brief, conflict is thus conceptualized as a relation between actors, characterized by a tension and taking place in a certain situation.<sup>20</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, I adapt Bramsen and Wæver's triangle to my theoretical framework. While the SIT triangle is very general in its conceptualization, I attempt to gain analytical precision and coherence by reframing it within a more limited neo-institutionalist theoretical framework. I replace the term situation by *institutional structure*; I qualify the term interaction as *strategic interaction*; and more importantly, I substitute the term tension by the concept of *cleavage(s)*.

**Figure 1: Conflict Triangle**



The *institutional structure* includes the formal and informal institutions that constitute the structure of the society, and provide constraints and opportunities for actors' behaviour. As Bramsen and Wæver note (2016), in a conflict situation, the structure includes a dimension of contradiction or conflicting interests between groups. Focusing on institutions allows for a more precise understanding of how political power and other types of resources are distributed in a society. Formal and informal institutions define a certain structure of opportunity (Horowitz, 1985) and create constraints, opportunities and potentially grievances amongst members of the categories in conflict.

*Strategic interaction* highlights the fact that, in our theoretical framework, actors in conflict not only interact, but interact *strategically* in the pursuit of some goals. Actors define their strategies

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<sup>20</sup> For these authors the conflict "situation" implies mainly a dimension of contradiction, competition, or incompatibility of goals linked to identity categories (2016: 8). "Interaction" underlines the fact that a conflict is a relationship rather than a rupture of a relationship (as is often implied). It is because parties are in uninterrupted contact that the conflict happens (2016: 10-11). "Tension" corresponds to a "stretching" of the relationship between parties, where uncertainty is prevalent (2016: 14). According to the authors, these three "tips" are more intrinsically dynamic than Galtung's and thus permit a more dynamic understanding of conflict.

depending on their position in the institutional structure but also given the resources at their disposal. Whereas “structure” includes institutions, “strategic interaction” allows for the integration of actor’s agency in the conceptualization of conflict. More precisely, this conceptualization of conflict borrows some of the premises of the “family of ‘thin’ rational choice explanations that abandon the narrow assumption that individuals are economically motivated but retain the assumption that individuals are instrumentally rational actors who pursue objectives however defined, by selecting those means that maximize their chances of obtaining them” (Chandra, 2004: 11).

Thirdly, the concept of cleavage(s) underlines that the society in which conflict takes place is divided around one (or more) cleavage(s). A political cleavage can be defined as *an alignment of individuals, which implies a division between two social categories which have contradictory preferences or objectives*. Following Lipset & Rokkan (1967), this definition stresses the dimension of “alignment” of voters (or any other type of actors who share membership in a certain social category). The tension between the two parties is implicit in the concept of cleavage: the individuals are aligned in two opposite groups because they have opposite preferences. The concept of cleavage is thus compatible with Bramsen and Wæver’s concept of tension. A cleavage implies the formation of vertical alliances and divisions in a society. As Kalyvas stresses, “the social science literature uses the concept of cleavage to refer to the link between actors at the center and action on the ground” (2006: 382). A cleavage can result from the aggregation of various micro-level tensions, but in general, it can be understood as the *organizing line* of the conflict. “Master cleavages can be understood as simultaneously symbolic and material formations that simplify, streamline, and incorporate a bewildering variety of local conflicts—a view compatible with the way outside observers, such as historians, rely on ‘master narrative’ as a means of ‘emplotment’—to tell a straight, compelling story out of many complex ones” (Kalyvas, 2006: 384).

A political cleavage thus implies the politicization of an identity category, as underlined by Bingham Powell, “political cleavage means an objective demographic division, such as class, ethnicity, or religion, in which particular membership categories are strongly associated with a particular political party” (1976: 2). As emphasised in this thesis, these identities are not necessarily ethnic, and their politicization results from a process of political activation. Just as there are many identities that can be activated, there are many cleavages in a society but some are

more salient than others, thus defining a certain “hierarchy of cleavages bases” (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967: 6). While Lipset and Rokkan studied four types of cleavages<sup>21</sup>, for this thesis suffice it to differentiate between two: cleavages based on ethnic and non-ethnic identities.

In regard to this triangle of conflict, it is easier to “locate” the specificity of ethnic conflict. While all societies have a given institutional structure and strategic interaction between groups, the specificity of societies marked by ethnic conflict is that the main *cleavage* is ethnic.<sup>22</sup> The emergence of an ethnic cleavage as the principal cleavage organizing politics in a given society results from the process of politicization of ethnicity. As described in the first subsection of this chapter, this is the result of a process whereby the individual repertoire of identities that can be politically activated is restricted to ethnic identities. Since the “tips” of the triangle interact, the politicization of ethnicity can come from two sides: the institutional structure, or the strategic interaction. Chapters 3 and 4 study how institutions and violence contribute to the politicization of ethnicity in certain contexts.

Another question however arises. In its most general sense, conflict is a natural feature of any society and is at the basis of politics. Moreover, some of the “causes” of ethnic conflict identified earlier, such as competition for economic or political goods, are in fact common to all types of political conflicts. Accordingly, what is the specificity of *ethnic* conflict? Is conflict different when ethnic identities rather than other types of identities are mobilized? In what way?

### ***The Specificity of Ethnic Conflict***

Understanding how the politicization of ethnic identities changes the nature of conflict is important since it justifies the interest of studying *ethnic* conflict in particular. It also justifies the definition of success of power-sharing adopted in this thesis. Before developing the theory of the politicization of ethnic identities, I therefore now ask how the political game changes when an ethnic cleavage is politicized. In this subsection, I focus on non-violent ethnic conflict. The specificity of ethnic violence will be discussed in chapter 4.

The specificity of ethnic conflict can arguably be understood in relation to the specificity of ethnic identities, namely, the fact that they are transmitted by descent. This specificity has two main

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<sup>21</sup> Subject vs. Dominant culture ; Church vs. Government ; Primary vs. Secondary economy, Workers vs. employers and owners (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967: 14)

<sup>22</sup> Note that societies are rarely divided by a unique cleavage and that “pure” forms of ethnic conflicts are consequently rare.



consequences. First, ethnic identities are sticky. When they become the main identity to be mobilized in politics, the fluidity which is necessary for the good functioning of a democracy disappears. Second, because ethnic attributes are transmitted by descent, human reproduction, and its site—the body—are central in ethnic politics: ethnic politics is always close to matters of life and death.

First, because ethnic attributes are transmitted by descent, these identities are often associated to the bodies: ethnic identities, even if most of them are social, are essentialized. This idea is formulated by Chapman: “for most children, heredity and environment are completely and conjointly embodied in their parents, beyond any possibility of separation. The continual suggestion, therefore that cultural groupings are, in human terms, virtually the same thing as biological groupings, must be understood in this light. Within the reproduction of social forms, biological and cultural transmission are often jointly experienced” (1993: 21). Sciences such as craniology and physical anthropology have reflected and participated in the construction of these beliefs by trying to find distinctive physical characteristics for ethnic categories.<sup>23</sup> From this point of view, ethnicity can be understood, not as a biological reality, but as a “biological social construct” (Jackson, 1991). Through this process, social identities become understood as biological identities, deeply inscribed in an individual’s body. As noted by Bourdieu, “this language of natural identity is in fact a language of social identity, which has been naturalized”<sup>24</sup> (Bourdieu, 1977: 51). Despite its “artificiality” this construction however nourishes phantasms and keeps an operative power in politics (Chrétien & Prunier, 2003: X).

One of the consequences of this essentialization of ethnic identities by their association to the bodies is that these identities become difficult to change, in Chandra’s words, they are sticky. Chandra identified “stickiness”—defined as “the property of being difficult to change credibly in the short term” (Chandra 2012: 14)—as one of the inherent properties of ethnic identities.<sup>25</sup> As

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<sup>23</sup> Examples are numerous. For example, in an article on the question, MacClancy studies how the Basques were constructed and studied as a biological group (1993).

<sup>24</sup> “Ce langage de l’identité naturelle est en fait un langage de l’identité sociale, ainsi *naturalisée*” (Bourdieu, 1977 : 51).

<sup>25</sup> For Chandra (2004, 2012), ethnic identities have two inherent properties: “stickiness” and “visibility”. “Visibility refers to the availability of raw data even in superficial observation, regardless of how those data are interpreted and whether the interpretation are correct” (Chandra 2012: 14). Many examples seem to suggest that the “visibility” property is less inherent to ethnic identities than estimated by Chandra. For example, Berckmoes observed strategies utilized by youth in Burundi to determine the ethnic identity of strangers they meet. One of them is for example to ask for the place of residence (Berckmoes, 2014: 99). These strategies are necessary because ethnic identities are *not* visible (also see Horowitz, 1985: 49).

noted earlier in this chapter, this does not mean that change of individual ethnic identities is impossible, only that it is difficult and rare. Chandra herself notes that “the greater stickiness [...] of descent-based attributes [...] is a product of their association with the body” (2012: 99). Moreover, it is worth noting that, because ethnic attributes are transmitted to children, this stickiness is not only restricted to an individual, but extends to all his descendants. In common language, this phenomenon is often referred to by using the surprisingly widespread metaphor of blood (Ignatieff, 1993). This metaphor expresses symbolically both transmission by descent and association with bodies. Most importantly, blood symbolises that ethnic identities cannot be easily changed, neither for an individual, nor for his descendants (Schiller & Fourn, 1999).

These three characteristics of ethnic identities (transmission by descent, essentialization, stickiness) arguably hinder the normal functioning of a democracy. Indeed, a democracy requires a certain fluidity of political affiliations as well as a certain feeling of community amongst the citizens. When ethnicity becomes the dominant political cleavage, both fluidity and the feeling of community tend to disappear. On the one hand, when political affiliations are determined by ethnicity, they lose almost all fluidity. As Chandra states, “democracy requires fluid majorities and minorities in order to survive. Ethnically divided societies, however, tend to produce ‘permanent’ majorities and minorities, based on ethnic census. Consequently, democracy in ethnically divided societies is threatened” (Chandra, 2012: 39). Indeed, without a chance of winning elections, the ‘frozen’ minority might be tempted to recourse to other means of political action, such as violence (Horowitz, 1985).

While electoral engineers have developed many potential solutions to this problem of “frozen” majorities and minorities (see chapter 1), another problem is that the politicization of ethnic identities tends to eliminate the feeling of community amongst citizens. Since politicians are elected by members of their ethnic category only, they have no incentives to redistribute state resources or to establish state services which benefit the entire population.<sup>26</sup> Rather, the allocation of goods will tend to be based on ethnic identities, which leads to the development of unequal structures of opportunity in a society. Access to state services, resources, and jobs will be dependent on the ethnic identity of individuals, which cannot be changed (Horowitz, 1985). The only way to improve one’s condition is thus to improve the category’s condition. Hence, the politicization of the ethnic cleavage tends to turn politics into a zero-sum game between members

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<sup>26</sup> This point will be further developed in chapter 5.

of different ethnic categories. The fact that identities are transmitted by descent and inequalities thus potentially concern one's whole progeny might explain the high emotional charge of these political conflicts. As Reilly writes, "under such conditions, the logic of elections changes from one of convergence on median policy positions to one of extreme divergence. Politics becomes a centrifugal game" (2006: 813).

A last aspect of ethnic politics is that, because human reproduction is the mechanism of transmission of ethnic identities, it takes a central place in ethnic politics. Sexuality—which is, in Foucault's words, "access to both the life of the body and the life of the species" (1976: 192)—becomes a central political issue, and is the subject of constraining techniques of management. In his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault noted the importance of the management of sexuality in "racist" societies, such as the Nazi regime. These policies "have received their color and their justification from the mythical concern of protecting the purity of blood and ensuring the triumph of the race" (Foucault, 1976: 197).<sup>27</sup> In contexts where ethnicity is politicized, birth rates are highly political objects, because they determine the evolution of demographic equilibriums. Strict rules regulating inter-ethnic marriage are also typical. One of the consequences of this centrality of reproduction is that, even if it does not always degenerate into mass murder, ethnic politics is always close to matters of life and death. This fact may well explain the important emotional dimension of ethnic politics: existential fears are always present.

In sum, the few inherent features of ethnicity which have been identified above make the consolidation of democracy and peace very difficult, if not improbable, in contexts where ethnicity is politicized. By contrast, democracy and peace are more easily established when non-ethnic cleavages such as class or ideology are politicized since these are more fluid and not tied to descent.

### **Managing Ethnic Conflict?**

The conflict triangle proposed above offers three different ways to manage or move away from ethnic conflict: changing the institutional structure of society, changing the strategic interaction of belligerents, or changing the cleavage. Power-sharing theory has mainly focused on changing the structure of the society (and more specifically political institutions) to change the strategic

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<sup>27</sup> Translated by the author, from french: "ont reçu alors leur couleur et leur justification du souci mythique de protéger la pureté du sang et de faire triompher la race" (Foucault, 1976: 197).

interaction between ethnic groups (Lijphart, 1977; Horowitz, 1985). The theory of ethnicity developed in this chapter provides the theoretical basis necessary to explore another solution: changing the cleavage. It indeed shows that it is at least theoretically possible for actors to deactivate ethnic identities and activate non-ethnic identities instead. An alternative aim for power-sharing can be the de-politicization of the ethnic cleavage. The specificity of ethnic cleavages in comparison with non-ethnic ones justifies the pursuit of this objective. Indeed, the consolidation and sane functioning of a democracy is thwarted in contexts where ethnicity is politicized.

The idea of de-politicizing ethnicity exists in some constructivist approaches, based on the notion that “because [ethnicity] is imagined, it can also be unimagined” (Esman, 2004: 34). Most proposals, however, can be found in the literature on reconciliation and “bottom-up” peacebuilding (Galtung, 2001; Afzali & Colleton, 2003; Peleg, 2004; Chayes & Minow, 2003). Although interesting and important, these approaches do not address the structural causes of the politicization of ethnic identities (Lefranc, 2012). Although this concern is very close to the centripetalist agenda, there have been, to my knowledge, few institutional design proposals with the explicit aim of depoliticizing ethnic identities (with the exception of some interesting proposals by Paris, 2004).<sup>28</sup> This thesis aims at filling this gap.

To do so, it is necessary to develop an in-depth understanding of the external constraints on the repertoires of identities, which lead to the activation of ethnic identities only. The following two chapters study how formal and institutions, as well as violence, constitute such constraints. Based on this discussion, it will be easier to differentiate between possible and impossible ways to depoliticize ethnicity in different contexts.

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<sup>28</sup> Another proposal has focused on cross-cutting cleavages. Beginning with Lipset and Rokkan’s 1967 *Party systems and voter alignments*, the idea that cross-cutting cleavages can reduce the probability of ethnic conflict has almost become consensual in the field. The rationale is that “a connection is forged across the gap formed by one dimension of identity (...) by virtue of a shared other dimension of identity (...)” (Wilson, 2015: 457). On the other hand, this gap cannot be crossed when cleavages are aligned (also see Gubler & Selway, 2012). Based on the study of ethnic parties’ behaviour in India, Chandra (2005) has argued that the politicization of *multiple* rather than a unique dimension of ethnic identities can act in favour of the stability of the system, even if parties are ethnic. In this model, citizens vote according to ethnic identities but they have a choice between several identities; the fixity of ethnic voting is thus eliminated. This model however, differs from this thesis’ purpose, since it does not really contribute to the depoliticization of ethnicity.

## Chapter 3: Formal and Informal Institutions

“Not until the end of the century were dignity and importance accorded to race-thinking as though it had been one of the major spiritual contributions of the Western world”.

Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism*, 1951: 38

The reduction of the multiplicity of identities that can be activated into ethnic identities exclusively is in great part attributable to institutions. Neo-institutionalist approaches have offered interesting explanations of why ethnic identities rather than non-ethnic ones are activated in certain contexts, as well as why a certain ethnic identity is mobilized. This literature is reviewed in the first part of this chapter. While it brings valuable insight on why individuals activate ethnic instead of non-ethnic identities and which ethnic identity they activate, this literature does not pay much attention to informal institutions. The second part attempts to fill this gap by paying closer attention to the incentives for the politicization of ethnic identities provided by informal institutions, including clientelist networks. In the third part, I focus on political parties, which can be considered as a link between formal and informal institutions. This focus may also provide a first suggestion about institutional design for the depoliticization of ethnic identities.

### Formal Institutions

The idea that political institutions can affect ethnicity and the outcomes of ethnic processes is at the foundation of power-sharing theory (Varshney, 2009: 289). But classical institutionalism mainly approached ethnicity through ethnic conflict regulation. Neo-institutionalist approaches have gone further and showed that the politicization of ethnicity and of specific ethnic identities is highly dependent on institutions. Three types of neo-institutionalisms have tackled these questions: historical neo-institutionalism (Mamdani, 1996; Young, 1994; Berri, 1992; Wimmer, 2002), rational-choice neo-institutionalism (Chandra, 2004; Posner, 2005), and sociological neo-institutionalism (Wimmer, 2013).

### ***Historical Neo-institutionalism: Politicizing Ethnicity***

The fact that so many people worldwide self-identify in ethnic terms cannot be taken as a natural given. In fact, it seems to be closely related to the (relatively recent) global spread of nationalism. Indeed, “while it may be an exaggeration to maintain that empires or premodern territorial states were not at all interested in shaping and policing ethnic boundaries, the change from empire to nation-state provided [...] new incentives for state elites to pursue strategies of ethnic boundary making” (Wimmer, 2013: 90). In the process of establishment of what Malkki calls a “national order of things”, an “ethnic order of things” seems to have been established too.<sup>29</sup> This order of things seems to result from a process which started in Europe and spread around the world through colonialism. Historical neo-institutionalist approaches have studied this process and put the emphasis on the historical construction of institutions and on the linkage between this institutional construction and the worldwide politicization of ethnicity.

As noted by Hannah Arendt, ethnicity and nationalism have been tied intimately from the very beginning of nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Race-thinking” she writes “was the ever present shadow accompanying the development of the comity of European nations” (Arendt, 1951: 41). A “growing tradition of research looks at the interplay between nation-building and the making of ethnic minorities” (Wimmer, 2013: 90; Young, 1976; Williams, 1989; Verdery, 1994; Wimmer, 2002; Mann, 2005). This literature observes that politics seems to have been increasingly ethnicized since nationalism—and especially its ethnic variant—associated the belonging to the political community to a certain ethnic identity. The process of nation-building was accompanied by a process of ethnic majority- and minority-making. As Wimmer writes,

On the one side, the modern principles of democracy, citizenship and popular sovereignty allowed for the inclusion of large sections of the population previously confined to the status of subjects and subordinates. On the other, shadowy side, however, forms of exclusion based on ethnic and national criteria developed. [...] Belonging to a specific national or ethnic group determines access to the rights and services the modern state is supposed to guarantee” (2002: 1).

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<sup>29</sup> Malkki uses the term “national order of things” with the intent of describing “a class of phenomena that is deeply cultural and yet global in its significance. That is, the nation—having powerful association with particular localities and territories—is simultaneously a supralocal, transnational cultural form” (Malkki, 1991: 37). In this sense, an “ethnic order of things” might refer to the fact, that, although ethnic identities vary from place to place, the phenomenon of identification to descent-based categories rather than non-ethnic identities is global.

The nation state in fact created institutional constraints on the repertoires of identities which led to the activation of ethnic identities instead of others. Moreover, the nation-state provided specific incentives for elites, majorities, and minorities, to frame their political action in ethnic terms - incentives to politically mobilize ethnic identities rather than non-ethnic ones, since those identified allowed for access to state services (Wimmer, 2013: 90-92). In sum, “modernity itself is structured according to ethnic and nationalist principles, because modern institutions of inclusion (citizenship, democracy, welfare) are systematically tied to ethnic and national forms of exclusion” (Wimmer, 2002: 4-5).

This model of the nation-state was then spread worldwide by colonization. As Arendt shows, the whole colonial enterprise, and the institutions it produced, were deeply rooted in “race-thinking”. Colonial institutions were founded on the principle of race “as a substitute for the nation” and “as a principle for body politics” (Arendt, 1951: 65). Although it might have existed in some places before colonization, the idea that social groups are defined by descent, has been generalized in the colonies, and especially in Africa. Colonization has thus played a crucial role in the constitution and separation of ethnic groups and the inscription of ethnicity as the main political cleavage. As studied by Sara Berri (1992), whereas precolonial groupings were multiple and fluid, colonial rule was accompanied by a process of definition, selection, simplification, and separation of ethnic groupings. For organizational and administrative purposes, colonizers clarified previously unclear ethnic boundaries and reduced the multiplicity of ethnic identities which could be identified, by building an institutional order which provided incentives for the mobilization of specific ethnic identities. Ethnic identities were thereby politicized since political rights, access to resources or territories were allocated based on these ethnic classifications. As Migdal notes “the colonizers could allocate the right to disburse resources, opportunities, and sanctions to various indigenous groups; these in turn could fashion new strategies of survival for peasants and workers” (1988: 102). This had a profound impact on the way people saw their own identity and the organization of politics after independence (Migdal, 1988: 130). These groups and hierarchies were institutionalized through the legal order of the colonial state, and particularly through “customary” laws that organized relations among populations and the use of “indirect rule” (Young, 1994). This legal order of the colonial state thus institutionalized the political activation of ethnicity. The persistence of this institutional order, and this organization of society long after independence (Mamdani, 1996) partly explain the salience of ethnic identities until today.

While this set of approaches explains the general tendency for the politicization of ethnicity, it does not provide much in the way of explanations for local variations in the intensity of the politicization of ethnicity (Varshney, 2009: 289). Nor does it explain why specific ethnic attributes are politicized in different contexts (Posner, 2005).

### ***Rational-choice Neo-institutionalism: Identity Activation as a Rational Calculation***

Rational-choice neo-institutionalism has put the emphasis on the way individuals or groups activate different ethnic categories in different contexts for instrumentalist reasons such as building winning coalitions in electoral competition (Bates, 1893; Chandra, 2004; Posner, 2004, 2005). This approach, which is not incompatible with historical-neo-institutionalism, helps understand local and temporal variations, as well as variations in the activated ethnic attribute.

This approach builds on the idea, first developed by Bates (1983), that ethnic politics results from a process of coalition building by rational actors. Thus, societal mobilization around one cleavage rather than another results from the aggregation of individual behaviours. Individuals are considered rational and seeking to maximize their interests (although these are not limited to economic interests); they interact in a given institutional framework (Chandra, 2004). Posner (2004, 2005) builds upon this approach to explain why a specific dimension of ethnicity rather than another is politically salient in different contexts.

Posner observes that lines of ethnic division are often multiple in a country. For example, Nigeria is divided by language, region, and religion. How then to explain that politics is organized around one specific cleavage rather than another? (Posner, 2005: 1) His answer to this question is double. First, institutions reduce the number of ethnic categories politically salient in a society. They restrict the nominal ethnic categories that an individual can potentially activate. Second, institutions also shape incentives for an individual to mobilize one of these nominal categories rather than another. Posner uses the metaphor of a card game: “political institutions explain, first, why players’ hands contain the card they do, and then, why the players play one of these cards rather than another. They also explain why one player or set of players ultimately wins the game” (2005: 3).

Following the rational choice reasoning described above, individuals seek to maximize their chances of winning. To do so, Posner argues, they will mobilize the category that gives them the most chances of being part of the winning coalition. In an electoral system, this is simply the



category with the highest number of members. Posner bases his argumentation on an empirical study of Zambia. The country is divided around language and tribe as a result of socio-historical processes. However, Posner observes a variation across time: at some times language is politically salient and at other times it is tribalism. He shows that this depends on the nature of the party system: during multi-party rule, incentives favour coalescing with people of the same language, while during periods of one-party rule, incentives favour coalescing around tribes (2005: 8-9). This process of coalition building can also be multi-ethnic. By responding to institutional incentives, individuals can ally or compete with members of other ethnic categories. For example, Posner shows that Chewas and Tumbaks are allies in Zambia, but adversaries in Malawi (2004), this variation can be explained by the different structure of incentives created by political institutions and demography.

### ***Sociological Neo-institutionalism: Identity Activation as a Strategic Calculation***

The rational-choice conception of rational and interest-maximizing individuals has been criticized for not fully corresponding to the reality. A weakness of this approach may be the difficulty to explain change in the politicization of ethnic cleavages in the absence of change in institutions. Wimmer (2013) proposes a sociological neo-institutionalist approach, which solves these problems by attributing more agency to actors. From Wimmer's point of view, the location and politicization of ethnic boundaries, as well as the level of groupness are the result of actors' *struggles* which take place in an institutional framework. Individuals are considered to act strategically in an institutional environment which provides constraints and opportunities for actors' strategic choices. In other words, although they may respond to institutional incentives, the goals they pursue may not always be only self-interested and may change over time.

According to Wimmer (2013), the politicization of a particular ethnic category changes primarily as a result of actors' strategic behaviour. This behaviour depends on institutions, but also on the distribution of power in the society and on the organization of social networks of alliance. Institutions provide incentives for the politicization of ethnicity. Networks define exactly who is included or not in each group (more on this later in the chapter). Actors' power and interests will define which strategy they can and will use. These strategies include the use of discourse, discrimination, political mobilization, or violence and aim at changing the location of the ethnic boundaries. The definition of the cleavage is thus the result of a permanent struggle, with actors acting strategically to impose their vision and interests. The exact ethnic attribute being politicized

is the outcome of this struggle (Wimmer, 2013). In this framework, a change in the ethnic cleavage can occur in three ways: 1–*exogenous shift*: for example, a change in the institutions, in the distribution of power, or external influences. 2–*endogenous shift*: destabilization due to the cumulative impact of the actors’ strategies or change in their strategies. 3–*exogenous drift*: the adoption of new strategies by actors (Wimmer, 2013: 106-108).

The three forms of neo-institutionalism described in this section combine to explain why and how the repertoire of identities that can be activated politically is limited to ethnic identities in certain context, and why and how a specific ethnic identity is activated. While rejecting too hard a version of rational choice theory, this thesis considers that individuals act strategically in a given institutional framework, while deciding which ethnic identity to activate (Chandra, 2004). Actors may thus respond to institutional incentives to activate an ethnic identity instead of another, and to mobilize non-ethnic identities instead of ethnic ones.

### **Informal Institutions**

Formal institutions help us understand a good part of the constraints on the repertoires of identity. The picture would not be complete, however, without integrating informal institutions. Informal institutions represent additional constraints on the repertoire of identities that can be activated, as well as supplementary incentives for the mobilization of specific identities. Paying attention to informal institutions helps us better understand variations such as the non-politicization of ethnic identities or the unusual persistence of the high salience of ethnicity. Their integration in the analysis provides a more encompassing understanding of the incentives that shape the strategic decisions of individuals concerning the activation of a certain identity. This is arguably true everywhere, but it is even more important in contexts such as neo-patrimonial societies, where informal institutions are predominant. In focusing on these informal institutions, I reconnect with a tradition of studying the interaction between clientelism and ethnicity (Lemarchand, 1972; Schmidt et al. 1977). I also participate in the renewed neo-institutionalist interest in informal institutions, according to which the outcomes of formal institutions is better understood when taking in account their *interaction* with informal institutions (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004 ; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). As we shall see, this may also be read as a way of linking studies of ethnicity to the “social capital” literature (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Norris, 2002).

### ***Clientelist Networks and Ethnic Divisions***

“Informal networks of alliances”, as understood by Wimmer, include clientelist networks but also any type of informal organization such as elite clubs (literary societies, officer circles) civil society organizations (associations dedicated to a specific cause), professional organizations or political organizations (Wimmer, 2011: 725; Putnam, 1993: 90). While including other type of informal networks in the analysis may be interesting, the main type of informal institutions discussed in this section is clientelist networks. Clientelism can be defined as a personal relationship between a patron and a client that is characterized by its reciprocity and its asymmetry. The patron is superior to the client in terms of economic wealth, social status and political power (Lemieux, 1977: 5-10). This relationship is based on mutual exchange of favours, usually the distribution of material resources by the patron in exchange for political support (Schmidt and al., 1977: xv). The relationship has material motivations, but is also rooted in affective ties between clients and patrons (Beck, 2008: 27). Clientelism is often organized by superimposition of multiple dyadic relations of clientelism. In these vertical structures, the patron of a client is himself the client of a superior patron. These relationships are organized in “pyramids” since a patron has usually multiple clients. Moreover, a client may also have multiple patrons (Schmidt, 1977: xx). These pyramids have at least three levels. 1–Patrons are at the top of the pyramid. 2–Brokers, who are intermediates between the people and the politicians and 3–Clients (or followers).

The fact that clientelism and ethnic diversity tend to be correlated is relatively well established in the literature (Alesina, Baquir and Easterly, 1999; Bates, 1974; Fearon, 1999; Caselli and Colemann, 2006; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Chandra, 2004; Laitin & van der Veen, 2012). The explanations of this correlation however vary. A first set of approaches argue that ethnic diversity leads to the development of clientelism, because ethnic favouritism leads to an ethnic redistribution of state resources (Alesina, Baquir and Easterly, 1999). Another argument is that reliance on ethnic groups as an answer to uncertainty and limited information is at the root of the development of clientelist networks. Landa (1981) stresses that the high intra-ethnic group flows of information may act as substitute for contract law in uncertain environments. Kitschelt and Wilkinson note in the same vein that “the critical ingredient to bring about this dynamic of “deepening” clientelism under conditions of intensifying inter-ethnic party competition may not be necessarily the existence of ethnic markers, but the presence of dense organisational networks configured around particular interpretations of ethnicity” (2007: 34).

A second set of explanations explores the hypothesis that clientelism reinforces ethnic divisions (Bates, 1974). According to these authors, reliance on ethnic identities allows the resolution of certain problems associated with clientelism. Lemarchand thus notes that relying on religious authority, or ethnic identities might allow leaders to redistribute less resources and get “clientelism at a discount” (Lemarchand, 1988: 151-154; Beck, 2008). For Fearon (1999) or Caselli and Colemann (2006), the reliance of politicians on ethnic identities allows for an easy delimitation of the boundaries of their winning coalition. For Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007: 14), relying on ethnicity is also a technique for facilitating the monitoring and enforcement of clientelist relationships. Finally, for Chandra (2007: 85), the bias toward co-ethnics in the selection of patrons or clients is due to the visibility of ethnic attributes. For these authors, clientelism is thus a cause of the reinforcement of ethnic divisions. However, this does not mean that the relationship cannot go the other way. Rather, “it suggests at a minimum that there may be a cyclical and dynamic relationship between ethnic divisions and patronage politics” (Chandra, 2012: 40).

In their efforts to theorize the relationship between ethnic diversity and clientelism, these theories however forget a bit quickly that, even if clientelism and ethnic divisions often go together, they do not *always* do so. Instead, “one of the most persistent theme of African scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s was that clientelism was one of the instruments used to fashion cross-ethnic cooperation” (Van de Walle, 2007: 54). Lemarchand (1972) stresses the importance of differentiating between the concepts of ethnicity and clientelism since clientelism is potentially more inclusive than ethnicity. For example, the Senegalese political system has been built on clientelist networks, but not on ethnic ones. Instead, Senegalese clientelism is organised around Islamic brotherhoods (membership into which is not necessarily transmitted by descent) and ethnicity is not politicized in the country (Beck, 2008). Thus, the literature on the mutual reinforcement of ethnic divisions and clientelism only tells half of the story. Clientelist networks can in fact have both effects: depending on their configuration, they can reinforce or bridge ethnic divides (also see Landé, 1977).

### ***Configurations of Informal Networks and Ethnic Identities***

In this thesis, rather than trying to develop a theory to explain the correlation of ethnic divisions and clienteles, I take the configuration of informal institutions and ethnic divisions as a variable. The historical process which combined the emergence of nationalism in Europe and its worldwide spread through colonization to produce a national and ethnic “order of things” may well explain

that informal institutions, just as formal ones, are very often—but not always— organized on an ethnic basis.

The configuration of informal networks and ethnic divisions can however arguably have important consequences. Following Tocqueville, the social capital literature (Norris, 2002), first formulated by Putnam (1993) has noted that associational networks play a major role in the functioning of democracy. These informal networks have two types of effects: “Internally, associations instil in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity and public-spiritedness. (...) Externally, what twentieth-century political scientists have called ‘interest articulation’ and ‘interest aggregation’ are enhanced by a dense network of secondary associations” (Putnam, 1993: 89-90). As Wimmer (2002, 2013) has noted, however, the crucial element in the case of ethnic conflict is whether these networks—that he calls “informal networks of alliance”—are ethnically exclusive or not. For him, when these networks are organized ethnically, they reinforce divisions; but when they cut across ethnic divides, they may have nation-building effects. He observes that:

Where the political alliances of the elites controlling the nation-building project reach across an ethnic divide, become institutionalised and organisationally stabilised, a pan-ethnic national identity will develop. Where the networks of political alliances are bounded by ethnic divisions and, importantly, when such ethnically defined networks are excluded from access to state power, ethnicity will be politicised and ethno-national identities will emerge (Wimmer, 2011: 734).

This effect was also acknowledged by Putnam who noted that “when individuals belong to ‘cross-cutting’ groups with diverse goals and members, their attitude will tend to moderate as a result of group interaction and cross-pressures” (1993: 90). The “contact” literature (Samii, 2013) also notes that the simple existence of these areas of bargaining is likely to have conciliatory effects between members of different ethnic categories since “even in competitive situation, regular, reciprocal interactions are, in and of themselves, likely to facilitate cooperation” (Reilly, 2001: 8; Axelrod, 1984; Raiffa, 1982).

Wimmer provides comparative empirical evidence from Mexico, the USA, Brazil, Belgium, Switzerland, Iraq, Canada, and Spain (Wimmer, 2002). To briefly illustrate the logic of his argument, the development of trans-ethnic associations in Switzerland contributed to the integration of the various segments of the population and the development of Swiss multi-ethnic nation *before* formal power-sharing and the modern Swiss nation was institutionalized (Wimmer, 2011). On the other hand, the lack of these trans-ethnic networks, and the ethnic organization of

informal institutions in Iraq and Belgium can explain part of the difficulties of national unification in these two countries (Wimmer, 2002, 2003).

To conclude, this discussion can be reformulated in the conceptual vocabulary of this thesis as follows: when informal networks are aligned with ethnic divisions, they tend to provide incentives for individuals to activate their ethnic identities instead of non-ethnic ones. On the other hand, when these networks are multi-ethnic, they create disincentives for the mobilization of ethnic identities and incentives for the mobilization of other identities.

## **Political Institutions and Political Party Systems**

Acknowledging the role of informal institutions in the politicization of ethnicity might first appear depressing for the proponents of institutional engineering for ethnic conflict management. Indeed, by definition, informal institutions can only difficultly be influenced by constitutional design. In this section, I argue that focusing on political parties may provide a solution to this problem. Political parties can indeed be considered as an intermediate category between state and non-state institutions. On the one hand, they may be considered formal institutions<sup>30</sup> since they are legalized by the state. As such, they can partly be shaped by constitutional dispositions and incentives provided by the electoral system. On the other hand, they have a strong influence on the formation of informal institutions, especially in neo-patrimonial contexts. Political parties are indeed considered central in the formation of political cleavages (which is taken, in this thesis, as a synonymous for politicization of an identity) by a large literature of political science. From this point of view, political parties can be considered as a link between formal macro-structural institutions, and informal institutions. For this reason, they deserve a specific attention for the purpose of this thesis.

### ***Political Parties and Political Cleavages***

Lipset & Rokkan (1967) put party systems at the core of their analysis of political cleavages. Political parties, they argue, have aggregative and expressive functions. They aggregate the variety of demands coming from their electorate in a coherent program, and formulate the main cleavages

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<sup>30</sup> In this conceptualization, political parties are not considered as actors or units of analysis, as some of the literature on political parties do (Arian and Barnes, 1974). Political parties are considered institutions which affect individuals' behaviours.

of the society in discourses and rhetoric. “They help crystalize and make explicit the conflicting interests, the latent strains and contrasts in themselves across structural cleavage lines and to set up priorities among their commitments to established or prospective roles in the system” (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967: 5). In sum, “as key agents of political articulation, aggregation and representation, political parties are the institutions that most directly affect the extent to which social cleavages are translated into national politics” (Reilly and Nordlund, 2008: 9).

The specificity of political parties in neo-patrimonial societies must not be overlooked. Butler and van de Walle (1999) question the role and effectivity of political parties in African neo-patrimonial “illiberal democracies”. “A striking feature of these party systems is the absence of differentiation of parties along programmatic lines”, they write (1999: 23). Instead of being framed in ideological terms, appeals are done on personal or ethnic basis. This corresponds to Kitschelt and Wilkinson’s observation (2007) that vertical linkages in neo-patrimonial societies are clientelist rather than programmatic. In neo-patrimonial systems, parties gain their legitimacy from their capacity to redistribute resources to their electoral basis. “A party without control of government and without influence over someone else’s victory or loss [...] cannot distribute either material benefits or the status benefits that come from the acquisition of political power” (Chandra, 2004: 13). Thus, “the main ambition of parties is either to gain control of the state or to gain leverage over those who have it” (Butler and van de Walle, 1999: 23). Even with few programmatic linkages, political parties still play a major role in the alignment of voters and thus the formation of dominant political cleavages since they develop clientelist networks. They thus represent vertical links of alliance and accountability (Butler and van de Walle, 1999: 14).

### ***Political Parties in Diverse Societies***

Due to this clientelist dimension, as well as the absence of programmatic appeals, political parties in Africa have sometimes been assumed to be mainly based on ethnicity. For this reason, Butler and van de Walle conclude: “in Africa today, parties do not really serve to aggregate interests; rather they serve a representation function in a context of clientelistic politics” (1999: 26). While this is true when parties are ethnic, nothing indicates that it can be formulated as a general rule. On the contrary, empirical data shows that most African parties are not ethnic (Elischer, 2013; Cheeseman & Ford, 2007) and that African citizens do not always identify primarily in ethnic terms (Bannon, Miguel, and Posner, 2004). Even if party-citizen linkage is clientelist (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007), there is no necessity for the dominant political cleavage to be ethnicity. As I

argued earlier, when institutions (including political parties) are organized on an ethnic basis, they are likely to have ethnically polarizing effects on societies, as described by Butler and van de Walle (1999). On the other hand, when party systems are not organized around the ethnic cleavage, they may provide incentives for individuals to mobilize non-ethnic identities.

Political parties in diverse societies can be classified in three categories: ethnic, multi-ethnic, and non-ethnic parties. Various definitions of an ethnic party have been proposed. Chandra writes: “an ethnic party is a party that overtly represents itself as a champion of the cause of one particular ethnic category or set of categories to the exclusion of others, and that makes such a representation central to its strategy of mobilizing voters” (2004: 3). This definition has however the disadvantage of overlooking the possibility that party leaders do not mobilize ethnicity in their discourse, but that the citizens vote ethnically for a party despite its multi-ethnic discourse. There are instances where parties became ethnic despite the will of their leaders. “Ethnic party system can and do emerge contrary to the conviction of the principal party leader” summarizes Horowitz (1985: 306). From this point of view, Horowitz’s definition is preferable. For him, “an ethnically based party derives its support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups) and serves the interests of that group” (1985: 291). Accordingly, an ethnic party is not principally defined by its discourse, but “the test of an ethnic party is simply the distribution of support” (1985: 291).

The definition of multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties follows. “A multi ethnic party is defined here as a party that also makes an appeal related to ethnicity central to its mobilizing strategy but that assumes a position of neutrality or equidistance toward all relevant categories on the salient dimension(s) of ethnicity” (Chandra 2004: 3). A non-ethnic party, on the other hand, does not mobilize ethnic classification as a factor to differentiate between its members. “The distinction between non-ethnic and multi-ethnic parties [...] depends on whether group members participate in the party on a group basis, whether in other words, the party comprises a coalition of ethnic groups” (Horowitz, 1985: 300). Chandra rightly observes that these classifications are not fixed but “time specific” (2004 : 4) since discourse or distribution of support can vary across time.

Bogaards (2008) identifies three functions party systems can have in diverse societies. A first function is *articulation* (2008: 54). As advocated by the proponents of consociationalism, ethnically based parties may contribute to the representation of all groups of a society, and contribute to the articulation of their demands at an elite level (Reilly, 2008: 9). As Butler and van



de Walle (1999: 26) however observed, this type of parties can hardly contribute to the second possible function of party systems: the *aggregation* of interests of various ethnic categories (Bogaards, 2008: 52). Neither are they suited to fulfill the third function: *blocking* the appearance of overtly ethnic conflict (Bogaards, 2008: 52). Blocking the re-emergence of ethnic tensions after ethnic wars, as well as fostering aggregation of varying ethnic interests is however the object of the strategy proposed in this thesis.

Multi-ethnic or non-ethnic parties are arguably best suited to block ethnic conflict, or aggregate various societal interests, or, to put it differently, to de-emphasise the politicization of ethnicity in a society, for three reasons. First, political parties are the groups in competition during elections, and thus they shape the cleavage structure of the campaign. In ethnic party systems “there is a single axis of political conflict and a single way of pursuing the conflict: through ethnic parties” (Horowitz, 1985: 342). Because all parties are ethnic, “there is little relief from the ethnic character of politics in the form of alternating issues. Hence divisive issues can cumulate in the party system, and all voters are identified with parties that have taken a stand on the main divisive issues” (Horowitz, 1985: 346). On the other hand, multi-ethnic parties need to mobilize a wider electoral basis and will thus tend to moderate their discourse to be able to attract votes from different ethnic categories. In other words, in multi-ethnic party systems, elites have incentives not to mobilize ethnic identities since they seek votes from members from other ethnic categories (Reilly, 2001).

Second, multi-ethnic political parties favour accommodation of elites of different ethnic categories by putting them in contact. Multi-ethnic parties indeed provide “areas of bargaining” where elites can negotiate and cooperate. As noted above, the existence of these areas may favour cooperative behaviours (Axelrod, 1984; Raiffa, 1982, Reilly, 2001). Moreover, multi-ethnic parties also have internal mechanisms of ethnic accommodation. Bogaards (2014) has studied the manner in which the principles of consociationalism are sometimes implemented in the internal structure of political parties to form “consociational parties”. The Congress Party in India is an example of this kind of internal accommodation mechanism (Bogaards, 2014). Although the model described by Bogaards is quite precise, informal intra-elite accommodation, or “ethnic arithmetic”, is common in multi-ethnic parties, and can take various forms (Rothschild, 1997).

Third, the multi-ethnic character of political parties is likely to be reproduced in clientelist networks which are attached to these parties. In neo-patrimonial societies, political parties are at

the top of clientelist pyramids. When the electoral basis of these parties is ethnically restricted, so will be their clientelist networks. However, when parties gain support from members of a variety of ethnic categories, the networks of clientelist redistribution will include all these categories, and therefore become multi-ethnic. As detailed above, multi-ethnic clientelist networks are likely to contribute to the de-emphasis of ethnic politicization at citizens' level for two reasons. First, they eliminate economic incentives for the politicization of ethnicity, and instead provide incentives for the mobilization of non-ethnic identities. Second, they create interactions, and even links of interdependence between members of different ethnic categories. They can thus be understood as "areas of bargaining" too and contribute positively to the integration of ethnic groups at citizens' level.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Institutional Engineering and Party Systems***

"Because political parties in theory represent the political expression of underlying societal cleavages, parties and party systems have not usually been thought amenable to overt political engineering", Reilly writes (2006: 812). A great part of the literature on divided societies indeed tends to take the predominance of ethnic parties for granted in diverse societies. Horowitz theorized the phenomenon of "ethnic outbidding" which states that once the ethnic cleavage becomes politicized, it tends to become the dominant cleavage in a society, because of electoral pressures toward ethnic extremism (1985: 318-33). As Chandra summarizes, "these theoretical families assume, explicitly or implicitly, that the success of ethnic parties is a natural by-product of the process by which ethnic identities become politically salient" (2004: 9). As already mentioned, this view is problematized by the fact that not all ethnically diverse societies have predominantly ethnic party systems (Elischer, 2013; Cheeseman & Ford, 2007; Bannon, et al., 2004). In fact, the relationship between underlying societal cleavages and political parties seems to be more complex than assumed by these theories.

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<sup>31</sup> Attention could also be paid to intra-party ethnic divisions. This question is interesting and could be the object of another research, but for this thesis I mostly take multi-ethnic parties as "black boxes". This simplification is acceptable since multi-ethnic parties are likely to have integrating and depoliticizing effects even if they are internally organized on an ethnic basis, as discussed earlier. Even if it does not completely disappear, the ethnic cleavage is thus not the dominant cleavage in the political system anymore. Ethnicity is largely depoliticized, even though not completely. If they do not disappear on the long run, however, persisting intra-party ethnic divisions could be a source of re-politicization of ethnicity. This issue would thus be an interesting subject for future research.

First, the relationship between societal cleavages and political parties seems to be reciprocal rather than unidirectional. Political parties in part reflect pre-existing cleavages, but also affect the hierarchy of cleavages by reinforcing or lessening the dominance of certain cleavages. In brief, “party and society act on each other” (Horowitz, 1985: 291).

Second, the influence of contextual factors and strategic considerations in the formation of parties also matters. Lipset and Rokkan note that:

Cleavages do not translate themselves into party organizations as a matter of course: there are considerations of organizational and electoral strategy; there is the weighing of payoffs of alliances against losses through split-offs; and there is the successive narrowing of the ‘mobilization market’ through the time sequences of organizational efforts (1967: 26).

Chandra (2004) and Posner (2005) thus explains the success and failure of ethnic parties in winning elections different contexts by various factors, including the size of ethnic categories. The fundamental assumption being that citizens try to vote for the party that has the most chances of winning and therefore gaining access to state resources. “The voter, therefore, should vote for her preferred [ethnic] party only if it has reasonable chances of obtaining control or influence after the election and not otherwise” (2004: 13).

Institutional engineering also seems to have a potential influence on the formation party systems. Although it has not been studied much for the aforementioned reasons, this subject is gaining growing attention in the literature on institutional design for divided societies (Horowitz, 1985; Reilly, 2001; Reilly, 2006; Reilly & Nordlung, 2008). Moreover, institutional design practitioners had developed tools for the regulation of political parties before political science paid close attention to this question (Reilly, 2006).

Reilly studied attempts to fashion party systems through institutional engineering (2001; 2006). Two options can be distinguished. Formal rules which regulate the political parties and for example ban ethnic parties, and the utilization of electoral systems to provide incentives for the development of multi-ethnic parties (Reilly, 2001, 2006; Bogaards, 2008; Horowitz, 1985, 1991). I discuss these in more details in chapter 5. For now, suffice it to acknowledge with Horowitz that “party systems are a key policy problem of severely divided societies” (1985: 306).

Party systems represent a link between formal institutions and informal networks, since they can be influenced by institutional engineering, and their shape will determine the shape of clientelist networks. As I have argued in this chapter, the promotion of multi-ethnic political parties and

clientelist networks can have important effects of depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage; fostering their emergence should thus be central in a strategy of depoliticization of ethnicity through power-sharing institutions.

Although the literature briefly reviewed here is fruitful, one can identify three issues that it does not solve. First, institutional party regulations are often poorly implemented (Reilly, 2006; Bogaards et al., 2013; Kadima, 2008). When they are indeed implemented, this seems to be due to factors other than institutional rule, such as an already low salience of ethnicity, as was the case in Senegal (Hartmann, 2010), or the presence of an authoritarian regime, which uses these bans to repress the political opposition, as in Rwanda (Niesen, 2013). We must thus identify which incentives can be sufficiently strong to encourage leaders to form multi-ethnic parties and respect the regulations that states are often too weak to enforce.

The second question regards the role of people. As noted in chapter 1, centripetalist approaches are mainly focused on influencing elite behaviour. The institutions described by Reilly provide electoral incentives for elites to compromise and cooperate. While state leaders and elites are two groups of actors who have a great importance on political processes, the electorate should not completely be neglected. Indeed, as shown by Horowitz (1985: 306) pressures from the people for ethnic extremism can force leaders to modify their discourse against their will. Even more, ethnic voting can occur even if the elites campaigned without reference to ethnicity. This can have catastrophic consequences; in Burundi, the first attempt to establish informal power-sharing was undermined by ethnic voting which led to civil war (Lothe, 2007).

The third question regards the specificity of post-war settings as a context for institutional engineering. Indeed, post-war settings offer conditions which make the emergence of multi-ethnic parties without external intervention rather dubious. As Jarstad writes,

After a violent intrastate conflict, conditions conducive to democratization are typically absent and the legacies of conflict tend to linger. (...) Owing to psychological trauma of violence and fear of renewed violence, mass mobilization along extremist lines remains. Political ideologies are based on exclusive group-based interest rather than on universal, society-wide interests. (...) Political trust is low, which hinders cooperation across subcultures (2008a: 31).

The memory of recent violence, high levels of mistrust as well as negative emotions such as fear, resentment, or hatred, reinforce group antipathies and complicate the formation of multi-ethnic

parties further. Institutional design for ethnic conflict management in post-conflict societies needs to take this into account and develop specific dispositions to deal with it.

To tackle these issues a theory of incentives, based on a model of actors' behaviour in neo-patrimonial societies is required. This model will help us understand two things. First, it will help specify which types of incentives are likely to affect different actors. Second, it will theorize the vertical interactions between these actors, therefore allowing us to integrate citizens in the analysis. I develop this model in chapter 5, and build on it to propose a framework for the depoliticization of ethnicity in post-conflict neo-patrimonial societies. Before doing so, however, the next chapter examines ethnic violence. Beside institutions, violence is indeed the most important factor contributing to the reduction of the range of identities that can be activated.

## Chapter 4: Ethnic Violence

“A bloody phenomenon cannot be explained by a bloodless theory.”

Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 1985: 140.

“The ethnicity of the body is built in its dismemberment and disfigurement.”

Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, 1991: 64.

If the observation of the tragedies of ethnic violence has any utility, it may be to remind the reader what the point of a constructivist analysis is not: denying the existence of deeply felt ethnic loyalties and the terrible effects they may have.

As noted in chapter 2, ethnic violence and ethnic conflict must be understood as analytically autonomous although interconnected phenomena (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998: 426; Kalyvas, 2006: 20). This chapter studies the interaction between these two concepts. The first part reviews some of the criticisms that can be formulated against previous conceptualizations of ethnic violence. In the second part, I tackle a first question: what is the interaction between ethnic violence and ethnic conflict. I locate ethnic violence in the triangle of conflict, under the “strategy” tip. This strategy, I argue, aims to change either the structure of the conflict or the cleavage, namely, by politicizing ethnic identities. I conclude that ethnic violence is, beside institutions, a factor in the activation of ethnic identities. The third part tackles a second question: what is the specificity of ethnic violence? In other words, how does “the adjective ‘ethnic’ modify the noun ‘violence’?” (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998: 427). I argue that the organization of violence around an ethnic cleavage changes its logic. Because ethnic attributes are targeted, ethnic violence is indiscriminate (group-based), dispossessive (genocidal) and linked with atrocities. Because of this specificity, it deserves a special attention both from analytical and normative points of view. In conclusion, I argue that ethnic violence should be prevented because of its specific logic, but also because it leads to long standing ethnic polarization. In this process, the bodies, rendered political by the politicization of ethnicity, are central—dead or alive. The destruction, mutilation, and traumatization of bodies and minds are major features and consequences of ethnic violence. In

different ways, “the power of bodies is that they control how history will be told” (Rohde quoted by Kalyvas, 2006: 35).

## **Depressing Implications**

“It is easy to get depressed about the implications of constructivist insight for the study of ethnic violence” observed Wilkinson (2001: 17). Indeed, constructivism have put into question core aspects of the theories of ethnic conflict and ethnic violence.<sup>32</sup> First, these approaches have been based on the concept of ethnic groups, which has been questioned by the constructivist literature on ethnicity. Second, this literature has sometimes considered that ethnic heterogeneity as a cause of violence. But this causal link does not seem to be clearly observable empirically. Finally, ethnic violence has mostly been understood as a “degree” of ethnic conflict, which does not seem to be always the case. This section develops on these three weaknesses of non-constructivist approaches of ethnic violence.

### ***Groupism***

First, these approaches tend to consider ethnic violence as violent conflict between groups. This is problematic in regard of the constructivist theoretical framework adopted in this thesis, which problematizes the existence of ethnic groups. More concretely, the empirical observations of Mueller (2000), Valentino (2000) or Kalyvas (2006: 21) have shown that far from the entirety of ethnic group engaging in ethnic violence, it is most of the time a very small number of people who are directly involved. The authors argue that most people are reluctant to commit violence. Hence, small groups of thugs, led, encouraged and organized by politicians usually perpetrate the violence. The non-opposition of the masses is crucial for mass atrocities to occur –“Large segments of the public may support violent regimes while remaining indifferent or even opposed to mass killing itself” (Valentino 2000: 22)– but it does not mean these masses act violently, or even agree with this violence.

Since only a small group of perpetrators do act violently, nothing indicates that ethnic groups with dense internal solidarity or feeling of belonging need to exist for ethnic violence to happen. Rather, in many instances, civilians’ testimonies indicate that they did not consider their ethnic

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<sup>32</sup> Theories of ethnic conflict and ethnic violence have been reviewed in chapter 2, and I therefore do not review them in this chapter. Constructivist theories which focus more exclusively on ethnic violence (Wilkinson, 2006; Kaufmann, 1996; Mueller, 2000) are reviewed more specifically later in the chapter.

identity as prevailing on other identities before violence occurred (Kaufmann, 1996: 144). For Mueller, “the whole concept of “ethnic warfare” may [accordingly] be misguided. Specifically, insofar as it is taken to imply a war of all against all and neighbour against neighbour—a condition in which pretty much everyone in one ethnic group becomes the ardent, dedicated, and murderous enemy of everyone in another group—ethnic war essentially does not exist” (2000: 42). As theories of violence between ethnic groups exist, the challenge for a theory of ethnic violence is thus to develop an understanding of ethnic violence *without groups*.

### ***Ethnic Polarization as a Cause of Ethnic Violence***

The major cause of ethnic violence is considered by many theories to be deep pre-existing ethnic cleavages. Counter-intuitively, however, this does not seem to be the case empirically. Empirical observation has indeed shown that higher levels of ethnic polarization do not lead to more violence or civil wars (Fearon & Laitin 2003; Kalyvas, 2006: 74). As Valentino notes, “unusually severe, pre-existing social cleavages are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions” (2000: 13) to explain the outbreak of ethnic violence. In fact, theories of ethnic conflict appear to over-predict conflict and violence, but have difficulties explaining inter-ethnic peaceful cooperation (Fearon and Laitin, 1996). Ethnic diversity is not always a source of ethnic conflict, and “cold” ethnic wars can remain non-violent for decades, although group-feeling is high. Fearon and Laitin (1996) thus stress the necessity to develop theories that explain both conflict and cooperation in ethnically divided places.

Taking the problem from the other side, I argue that the hypothesis that ethnic violence may occur when ethnicity is not widely politicized, and ethnic groups are not very cohesive should be taken into consideration. Indeed, as mentioned above, ethnic identities are in some cases not particularly salient before ethnic violence happens. This is illustrated by victims in Bosnia or Rwanda, who say that they did not primarily identify in ethnic terms before ethnic violence occurred (Kaufmann, 1996: 144). As we shall see with Wilkinson (2006), ethnic violence can also be used with the explicit purpose of polarizing ethnicity.

More generally, the problems linked with the approaches looking for the “causes” of ethnic conflict and violence have been underlined in chapter 2. Since these causes can evolve over time (Vorrath, 2009) and since violence may be sustained by other factors than those that first created it



(Kalyvas, 2006: 75) focusing on causes may be misleading and have little utility. In this chapter, I try to develop a more dynamic and processual understanding of ethnic violence.

### ***Ethnic Violence as a Degree of Ethnic Conflict***

Since ethnic diversity does not necessarily lead to violence, and ethnic groups are not necessary for ethnic violence to emerge, ethnic violence can hardly be *exclusively* considered as a “degree” of ethnic conflict. This is not to argue that ethnic violence never results from the escalation of ethnic conflict. But it should be acknowledged that ethnic violence is not *always* an outcome of ethnic conflict. As well put by Fearon and Laitin,

Even where violence is clearly rooted in preexisting conflict, it should not be treated as a natural, self-explanatory outgrowth of such conflict, something that occurs automatically when the conflict reaches a certain intensity, a certain "temperature". Violence is not a quantitative degree of conflict but a qualitative form of conflict, with its own dynamics (1998: 426).

Following other authors, this thesis therefore argues for the analytical separation of ethnic violence and ethnic conflict, and gives specific attention to the relationship between the two concepts (Kalyvas, 2006: 75)

In sum, the challenges for a theory of ethnic violence based on constructivist premises are to understand ethnic violence independently from the notion of ethnic groups, understand how ethnic violence can precede ethnic polarization, and specify the relationship between ethnic violence and ethnic conflict. The next section tries to develop a theoretical framework to this effect.

### **Ethnic Violence and Ethnic Conflict**

This section tries to address the three challenges identified above by developing a framework for theorizing the relationship between ethnic conflict and ethnic violence. I start by defining ethnic violence. I then note its strategic character in ethnic conflicts and place violence in the triangle of ethnic conflict. Finally, I identify the two aims that ethnic violence may have: changing the structure or changing the dominant cleavage.

#### ***Defining Ethnic Violence***

In order to analytically differentiate between ethnic violence and ethnic conflict, a definition of ethnic violence independent from the notion of ethnic conflict should first be formulated. Kalyvas

writes that “at the very basic level, violence is the deliberate infliction of harm on people” (2006: 19). Building on this definition and on the definition of ethnic identities, I define ethnic violence as the deliberate infliction of harm on people because they possess, or are believed to possess, an attribute that makes them members of an ethnic category.<sup>33</sup> This is a minimalist definition. According to this definition, violence is ethnic when, and only when, the victim is targeted on the basis of her possession of ethnic attributes.<sup>34</sup> This definition has at least three advantages.

First, it does not presuppose the existence of ethnic groups, ethnic conflict, or ethnic polarization for ethnic violence to happen. In fact, it does not rest on a judgement on the general nature of inter-ethnic relations. This definition also does not prejudge the nature of the perpetrator. Ethnic violence can be perpetrated by a wide range of actors including states, armed groups, thugs, but also individuals. The perpetrators need not be a group, or have the feeling of belonging to a group (although they of course often do so)—the only criteria is that they select their *targets* because of their membership in an ethnic category.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, this definition does not imply that the victims feel any particular loyalty to an ethnic group; they just have to possess a certain ethnic attribute. Indeed, as Valentino observes, “the victim group is defined by the perpetrator because, in many cases, the victims do not perceive themselves to be members of the targeted group” (Valentino, 2000: 6).

Second, this definition allows for the integration of all forms of ethnic violence and for a clear-cut distinction between ethnic and non-ethnic violence. The test rests in the intentionality of the perpetrators to target the member of a certain ethnic category. It lets open the question of the scale of violence: ethnic violence is neither defined by its intensity nor by the number of victims. Forms

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<sup>33</sup> This definition also builds on antecedent definitions of ethnic violence, but tries to be more succinct. For example, Fearon and Laitin “term violence ‘ethnic’ if it involves members of different ethnic groups and either 1. it is motivated by hatred or dislike of ethnic others in general; 2. the criterion for selecting victims is ethnicity, meaning that members of one’s own group are exempted and members of the other group are eligible (as it were); 3. [a] it is committed with the idea of being on behalf of or in the name of an ethnic group, or [b] is committed against those who claim to represent or act on behalf of an ethnic group (and because of this status)” (2000b: 22). Brubaker and Laitin “define ethnic violence on first approximation as violence perpetrated across ethnic lines, in which at least one party is not a state (or a representative of a state), and in which the putative ethnic difference is coded by perpetrators, targets, influential third parties, or analysts as having been integral rather than incidental to the violence, that is, in which the violence is coded as having been meaningfully oriented in some way to the different ethnicity of the target” (1998: 428).

<sup>34</sup> In this regard, I follow Horowitz’s focus on “selective targeting” (2001).

<sup>35</sup> The perpetrator may be a collective, but may also be an individual. In this sense, what we usually term everyday ‘racism’ might be considered as a subtype of ethnic violence.

of ethnic violence include ethnic riots, pogroms, feuds, genocide, ethnic cleansing, certain terrorist attacks (where victims are selected on an ethnic basis), and ethnic fights.<sup>36</sup>

Third, this definition provides a basis for understanding the specificity of ethnic violence since it emphasises the targeting of ethnic attributes. As noted in chapter 2, because the attributes are transmitted by human reproduction they are sticky (Chandra, 2012: 14), often essentialized, associated with bodies, which are important in the understanding of the logic of ethnic violence developed in the third part of this chapter.

### ***The Strategic Use of Ethnic Violence***

Ethnic violence is often described as a spontaneous and irrational outburst of violence resulting from deep and ancient hatreds. However, as observed by many authors, ethnic violence serves certain aims and should be considered strategic. Studying ethnic riots, Horowitz notes that “even in the most spontaneous specimens of such episode there is room for a slightly enlarged, if not fully consciously formulated, agenda on the part of rioters” (2001: 423). A wide “instrumentalist” literature understands ethnic violence as the fruit of elite machinations (see for example Lemarchand, 1994; Wilkinson, 2006; Travaglianti, 2014). Focusing on mass killings, Valentino argues that this type of violence “should be recognized as a goal-oriented policy calculated to achieve leaders’ most important political military objectives with respect to other groups—a bloody solution to leaders’ most urgent problems” (2000: 29). Although the attention of scholars has often been focused on elites, citizens can also be at the root of a strategic use of violence, since cases show that “ethnic violence can spiral because of political contestation over group boundaries that are not the result of elite manipulation” (Fearon and Laitin, 2000a: 872; Brass, 1997).<sup>37</sup> This

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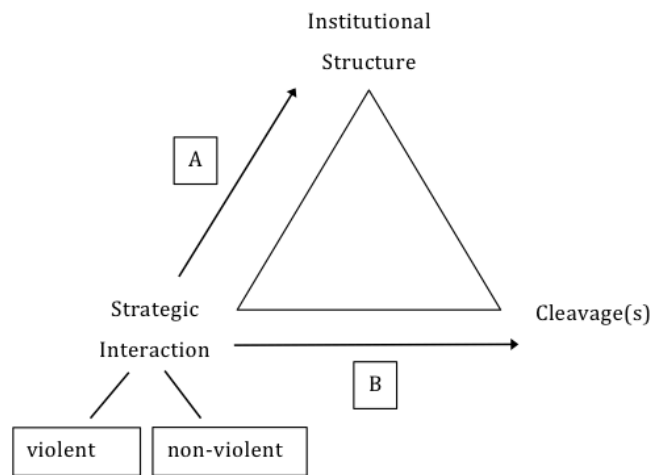
<sup>36</sup> For space reasons, I do not define and discuss these different types of violence in detail, but see Horowitz, 2001: 17-26.

<sup>37</sup> An opposition to the idea that ethnic violence is strategic could come from its “indiscriminate” character. Indeed, indiscriminate violence is often considered counterproductive. For Kalyvas, it “decreases the opportunity costs of collaboration with the rival actor” (2006: 144; 2004). He however explains the use of indiscriminate violence by its cheap costs as compared to selective violence. Even if counterproductive, this form of violence is thus understood as used rationally by actors (Kalyvas, 2006: chapter 6; Kalyvas, 2004). Downes (2011) focusing on civilian targeting notes that this is generally a bad strategy but that desperation can explain its use. This argument is close to the argument developed by Kalyvas. Downes however adds that desire for territorial conquest might also justify civilian targeting. This suggests that indiscriminate violence may become productive depending on the aims pursued by the actors. In fact, ethnic violence, although indiscriminate, may well be productive in regard of its aims. A crucial difference lies in the type of violence on which attention is focused. Kalyvas focuses on “coercive” violence, whereas ethnic violence is firstly “dispossessive” violence. When violence aims at controlling the enemy, its indiscriminate character may well be counterproductive, but when it

strategic use of ethnic violence is also acknowledged by the “realist” literature on ethnic conflict, which focuses on strategic interaction between groups (Lake & Rothchild, 1996, 1998; Fearon & Laitin, 1996; Wilson, 2005; Posen, 1993; Rose, 2000).

Recourse to violence can in fact be understood as a strategic choice. In an ethnic conflict, actors decide to use to violence when they believe it will serve their aims better than non-violence strategies. Ethnic violence can thus be located in our ethnic conflict “triangle” as a type of strategic interaction

**Figure 2: Violence and the Conflict Triangle**



### ***Two Aims of Ethnic Violence***

Our framework helps us understand the two goals that ethnic violence can have in an ethnic conflict. On the one hand, it may aim at impacting the structure of the society (A). On the other hand, it may help impacting the cleavage hierarchy by politicizing ethnic identities (B). These two different aims of ethnic violence have been described in the literature.

### ***Influencing the Structure***

Most of the literature on ethnic conflict and ethnic violence has in fact focused on the aim of impacting the structure of the society, because they took the (ethnic) cleavage mostly as a constant, or at least as a pre-condition for ethnic violence to happen. Theories focusing on competition between ethnic groups for access to scarce resources (Esman, 2004; Wolff, 2006), for

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aims at the elimination of the enemy then it makes more sense. Moreover, as will be argued below, atrocities may be “productive” in the sense that they inscribe domination and humiliation in the body of the victims.

territory (Toft, 2002) for psychological rewards (Horowitz, 1985) or for electoral results (Horowitz, 1985; Welsh, 1993; Mann, 2005; Galvan, 2001a), as well as approaches focusing on “relative deprivation” (Gurr, 1970) all have in common the idea that ethnic violence is utilized to affect the distribution of certain resources amongst ethnic groups. The general mechanism can be summarized as follows: in a society where ethnicity is politicized, actors decide to use violence with the aim of influencing or affecting the structure of society, either by transforming or maintaining it to their advantage. If the actors resorting to violence are members of a dominated ethnic category, they may aim at changing the structure of society to their advantage. But violence can also be used by members of dominant categories who wish to maintain the current structure of society, when they feel it is threatened. With his focus on elites, Valentino thus summarizes: “political conflict escalates to mass killing when powerful groups decide that only fundamental restructuring of society along ethnic lines will permanently end the conflict, secure their political domination or achieve other important goals” (2000: 41).

Rothchild and Roeder (2005) also observe this mechanism in regard to power-sharing systems. Power-sharing institutionalizes a certain structure of society, in the sense that it establishes a certain distribution of resources. Belligerents agree on a certain share of power based on the balance of power at the time of negotiations. When the balance changes (because of shifts in the demography, in the distribution of resources, or in military power, for example), some ethnic group may consider favourably the option of a return to violence to try changing the power-sharing agreement.

The strategic shift from a non-violent to a violent strategy can probably be explained by the calculations of the actors: when they start perceiving they might gain more through violence than through non-violence, they may turn to violence (Petersen, 2002: 256). Structural changes in the distribution of power, resources or demography amongst ethnic categories may thus be at the root of such a strategic shift (Wimmer, 2013). Structural changes in the environment, such as state collapse (Petersen, 2012), new elections (Horowitz, 1985) or the departure of a foreign protector (Zahar, 2005) may also provoke a shift toward violence. Note that the categories that benefit from structural changes are not necessarily the ones that use violence. Instead, fear or resentment linked with a loss of status or power may push ethnic categories toward violence (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Posen, 1993; Horowitz, 1985; Gurr, 1970; Sullivan, 2005).

### *Influencing the Cleavage Hierarchy*

An alternative aim of ethnic violence is to impact the cleavage hierarchy in a society. This aim is less often acknowledged in the literature but has been highlighted by some authors which include constructivist insights in their analysis (Fearon & Laitin, 2000a; Kaufmann, 1996; Wilkinson, 2006). Two different types of impact can be targeted. On the one hand, ethnic violence can in fact be utilized to maintain the politicization of the ethnic cleavage by actors who have interests in it. On the other hand, this suggests that ethnic violence can also be used in conflicts where ethnicity is not (or not very) politicized, to increase the politicization of ethnic identities.

Ethnic violence has indeed the effect of activating specific ethnic identities. Chandra notes that ethnic violence “can trigger almost all of the mechanisms of ethnic identity change” (2012: 34). Wimmer also notes that violence is sometimes utilized by actors to impose their vision of ethnic boundaries (Wimmer 2013: 70-71). As Fearon and Laitin put it:

Most simply, the provocation of violence by elites can construct groups in a more antagonistic manner—that is, alter the social content associated with being a member of each category—and in turn set in motion a spiral of vengeance. Second, extremists who provoke violence or push more moderate leaders to do so often wish to “purify” their culture, to sharply delineate identity boundaries that everyday inter-action and moderates’ political agendas threaten to blur (2000a: 865).

What is interesting for our purpose is that this type of ethnic violence does not require the existence of firmly constituted ethnic groups. It does not even require that the majority of individuals in a population think of themselves in ethnic terms. At the minimum, only a handful of perpetrators need to think in ethnic terms. Recurrent violence however, will tend to make ethnic identities more salient. Lambert formulates the phenomenon in an intuitive way: “when one is subject to stray assault or mob attack upon the basis of his association with a religious community, he is quickly impressed with the significance of that membership” (quoted in Horowitz, 2001: 443). In other words, ethnic violence forces the activation of a specific ethnic identity. Since all members of a category are equally and indiscriminately targeted, they will tend to develop links of solidarity. At the same time, the relation with members of other groups will tend to disappear. In brief, “polarization encompasses outgroup aversion and ingroup solidarity” (Horowitz, 2001: 443).

Appadurai (1998, 2006) also notes that ethnic violence ascribes ethnic identities. Indeed, as we have seen, before violence occurs, there is no need for victims to perceive themselves as members a specific ethnic group. Neither do they need to politically activate the ethnic identity for which

they are targeted. Violence, in a way, imposes a specific identity. The testimony of a Bosnian schoolteacher is striking in this regard: “We never, until the war, thought of ourselves as Muslims. We were Yugoslavs. But when we began to be murdered, because we are Muslims, things changed. *The definition of who we are today has been determined by our killers*” (Kaufmann, 1996: 144, emphasis added). For Appadurai, ethnic violence thus has the effect of creating “certainty” about the identities of the perpetrators and the victims, even if it may be “the worst kind of certainty: dead certainty” (1998: 245).

Kaufmann (1996) also observes this phenomenon. He argues that, in ethnic wars, “hypernationalist” rhetoric, tales of atrocities perpetuated by the ethnic enemy, actual violence endured, fear of genocide as well as sanctions imposed by in-group hardliners tend to “shrink scope for individual identity choice” (1996: 143) and increase group cohesion. As a result, while members of the same ethnic category may be trusted, members of the enemy category are considered dangerous. The resulting “security dilemma” leads to the territorial unmixing of population (Kaufmann, 1996: 149): ethnic groups are politically, psychologically, and even territorially defined by violence. This effect of ethnic group formation and separation has been utilized to propose a “qualified” version of primordialism (Van Evera, 2001: 20). This “new primordialism” is based on the idea that violence and ethnic wars tend to “harden” ethnic identities so much that the situation can be explained in primordialist terms.

Petersen (2002) explains the phenomenon in terms of the emotions created by ethnic violence. For him, emotions help hierarchize individual identities: “while identities are multiple and malleable, identities can crystallize when one is in the grasp of a powerful emotion” (Petersen, 2002: 3). In the vocabulary used in this thesis, fear, hatred, or resentment thus act as constraints on the repertoires of identities. These emotions also explain that ethnic violence has long-term impacts, even when the actual violence has ended.

This effect of polarization of ethnic identities is often an unintended consequence of ethnic violence, but it is also sometimes used on purpose by individuals who would benefit from the polarization of ethnic identities. Wilkinson (2006) develops a theory of ethnic violence from a constructivist perspective. He argues that, while ethnic identities are multiple, some political actors build political organizations on specific ethnic cleavages. If these cleavages are not politicized during an election, their chances of success decrease. Because they have incentives to politicize a particular ethnic identity, politicians may use violence to reinforce their group’s cohesion in

periods of electoral competition, and to make sure that only one of their followers' multiple identities (the one that favours them electorally) will be politically salient at a given time. One of the strategies is to organize small "anti-minority events (...) [which] are designed to spark a minority counter-mobilization (preferably a violent counter-mobilization that can be portrayed as threatening to the majority) that will polarize the majority ethnic group behind the political party that has the strongest anti-minority identity" (Wilkinson, 2006: 4). Another strategy is highlighted by Travagianti (2014) who develops the argument that *intra*-ethnic violence can be used by incumbents to coerce their co-ethnics in voting for them. Ethnic violence can thus be used deliberately as a strategy for ethnic mobilization.

The strategic shift toward the use of ethnic violence for impacting the hierarchy of cleavages in a society can thus be explained by a (real or feared) relative "erasure" or depoliticization of ethnic identities, and the reaction of actors who refuse this change. Appadurai (1998, 2006) links ethnic violence to uncertainty about ethnic identities. For him, the recent rise in ethnic violence is linked with a feeling of uncertainty about ethnic categories, which is brought about by globalization. Ethnic violence is a reaction to this uncertainty since it acts to clarify, redraw, both physically and symbolically, the boundaries between groups. "Large scale violence is not simply the product of antagonistic identities but that violence itself is one of the ways in which the illusion of fixed and charged identities is produced, partly to allay the uncertainties about identities that global flows invariably produce" (Appadurai, 2006: 7). However, as Wilkinson (2006) demonstrates, other events, such as elections, may lead certain actors to provoke ethnic violence to "harden" ethnic antagonisms. The common denominator is the lack of clarity in ethnic identities, whereas some actors believe they can take advantage of an increased clarity. "Ambiguous [ethnic<sup>38</sup>] boundaries" write Fearon and Laitin "are as inflammatory as territorial ones" (2000a: 873).

In sum, this section has integrated ethnic violence in our framework of ethnic conflict. I defined ethnic violence as violence which targets individuals because they possess, or are believed to possess, a specific ethnic attribute. Violence is used strategically in ethnic conflicts for two different aims. In the case where a conflict is already ethnic, i.e. when the ethnic cleavage dominates other cleavages in a society, violence may be used to impact the structure of a society to the advantage of the perpetrator, either by changing of by maintaining this structure. On the other

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<sup>38</sup> They write "cultural", but, following Barth (1969) I consider that ethnic groups and cultural groups are different entities.



hand, ethnic violence can also occur when ethnicity is not politicized at a societal level, or at least not sufficiently from the point of view of the perpetrator. It may indeed seek to politicize ethnic identities with the very aim of making the conflict ethnic. Note that, as we shall see below, although analytically distinguishable, both aims are pursued in parallel in a majority of cases.

**Table 2: Ethnic Violence: Aims, Triggers, Effects**

Aim of violence	Politicization of ethnicity before violence	Trigger	Effect
Changing the structure	Yes	Real or feared structural change: change in the balance of power or in the repartition of resources; state collapse; elections; departure of a foreign protector.	Increased politicization of ethnic identities
Changing the cleavage hierarchy	Not necessary	Real or feared lack of clarity on activated ethnic categories: globalization, elections.	Increased politicization of ethnic identities

This second aim has allowed us to highlight an important effect of ethnic violence: the activation of ethnic identities. Ethnic violence can thus be not only the outcome but the source of the politicization of ethnic identities. This analysis allows us to propose two types of mechanisms to prevent ethnic violence. When violence aims at changing the structure of a society, the main solution is to change the ethnic cleavage, so that politics is not understood as a zero-sum game between ethnic categories. Preventing the use of ethnic violence to politicize ethnicity seems to require the provision of sufficient incentives for individuals not to want to pursue this path. In sum, since ethnic violence is strategic, actors can be expected to respond to incentives to use or discard this strategy (Wilkinson, 2006): What incentives can be provided? This is the object of chapter 5.

But before asking how to prevent ethnic violence, it is useful to think about the normative basis of this question. Most of the scholarly attention on ethnic conflict has followed the spread of ethnic civil wars in the 90s. As we shall see in the next section, some authors have however questioned whether this violence had any specificity as compared to other types of violence. In other words, why should our focus be on the prevention of ethnic violence in particular rather than simply on the prevention of violence? More generally, does ethnic violence deserve to be analytically

separated from other types of violence? In the next section, I take ethnic violence as a process and argue that there actually are good reasons to study and try to prevent ethnic violence specifically.

### **The Logic of Ethnic Violence**

This section argues that, because it targets ethnic attributes, ethnic violence deserves to be analytically and politically separated from violence in general. Ethnic violence, I argue, aims at breaking the chain of descent of an ethnic category. By definition, it is thus dispossessive and indiscriminate. As a corollary of its ethnic character, it is characterized by physical atrocities and takes a genocidal turn. These appear to be sufficient reasons to pay specific attention to ethnic violence. In the first part, I review approaches that question the specificity of ethnic violence. In the second part, I describe ethnicity as a “transformative” cleavage which modifies the logic of violence. In the third part, I identify and review three aims of ethnic violence, and the means used to pursue it.

### ***The Banality of Ethnic Violence?***

While the “instrumentalist” approach stressed the opportunistic use of ethnicity by elites, an important question arose: if ethnicity is politicized by leaders, why do followers follow? Although various answers—ranging from “ancient hatred” to psychosocial reasons (Horowitz, 1985; Fearon & Laitin, 2000a)—have been given to this question, a particularly interesting argument, first developed by Brass (1997), is that followers do not actually follow leaders but pursue their own agendas, which are not linked with ethnic antagonisms.

For Brass, much of what is commonly designated as “communal” violence, is not really motivated by communal antagonisms. In fact, violence might only be labelled as “ethnic”. But “the motivations of those implicated in ‘ethnic violence’ may be more complex than simple hatred for an out-group” (Fearon & Laitin, 2000a: 869). By studying local disputes, Brass argues that these motives are quite ambiguous, but fit in a broader scheme and are thus post-facto labelled as ethnic, because this interpretation “fits with the political needs of local or national politicians” (Fearon & Laitin, 2000a: 869).

In the same vein, Mueller (2000) argues that ethnic violence is much more “banal” than expected, and results in great part from greedy behaviour of “on the ground” actors than ethnic antipathies. Based on the analysis of ethnic massacres in Rwanda and Bosnia, he shows that ethnic violence is

often perpetrated by small numbers of thugs, whose reasons for fighting are principally opportunistic. The massacres, he argues, were led by the greed of actors rather than ethnic group grievances (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). “Indeed, based on these studies, one might conjecture that a necessary condition for sustained ‘ethnic violence’ is the availability of thugs (in most cases young men who are ill-educated, unemployed or underemployed, and from small towns) who can be mobilized by nationalist ideologues, who themselves, university educated, would shy away from killing their neighbours with machetes” (Fearon & Laitin, 2000a: 869).

These authors in fact observe what Kalyvas noted in the broader context of civil wars: there is often a disjunction between national and local causes of conflict. While national causes of war might be ethnic, on the local level, actors may use civil war as an opportunity to use violence to resolve individual or personal quarrels (Kalyvas, 2006: 372). Kalyvas however argues that attention to alliances and cleavages might allow for an understanding of the vertical linkages and the cohesion of belligerent groups. Alliances indeed provide a linkage between elites and citizens. “Alliance entails a transaction between supralocal and local actors, whereby the former supply the latter with external muscle, thus allowing them to win decisive local advantage; in exchange, supralocal actors recruit and motivate supporters at the local level” (Kalyvas, 2006: 365). Although their initial reasons for using violence are different, these alliances lead to a convergence between the aims of elites and citizens. Thus, “civil war can be analysed as a process that transforms the political actor’s quest for victory and power and the local and individual actor’s quest for personal and local advantage into a *joint process of violence*” (Kalyvas, 2006: 365).

The same logic can be applied to ethnic violence: although local and national causes of violence might vary, the cleavage is the same and the alliances are ethnic. Müller (2000)’s conclusion that ethnic violence is just “banal” violence rests on a causal approach to violence which does not fit with my theoretical framework and with the definition of ethnic violence that I use. The conceptualization of ethnic violence and ethnic conflict that I proposed does not take ethnicity as a *cause* of conflict, but as the main *cleavage* which organises this conflict. Accordingly, the fact that the “causes” of violence are not ethnic does not mean that the violence is not ethnic. Violence is only defined as ethnic when the victim is selected based on ethnic attributes, whatever the motivations. When the violence is organized around the ethnic cleavage, however, this cleavage transforms politicians and citizen’s reasons for fighting into a “joint process of violence”. The

argument I develop in the next sections is that the logic of violence changes when it becomes ethnic.

### *The Specificity of Ethnic Violence*

The specificity of ethnic violence comes from the fact that ethnic attributes are transmitted by descent. As noted in chapter 2, this particularity makes human reproduction central in ethnic politics. In fact, ethnic violence, just like ethnic conflict, can be read as the politicization of descent. This centrality of descent, I have noted, leads to an essentialization of attributes which become understood as inscribed in the bodies, since they are transmitted by filiation. Foucault was probably one of the first to acknowledge this link between the politicization of reproduction and ethnic violence in the 20th century. If on the one hand, many policies of control and intervention on the bodies and sexual behaviours “have received their color and their justification from the mythical concern of protecting the purity of blood and ensuring the triumph of the race” (Foucault, 1976: 197),<sup>39</sup> the centrality of sexuality also transforms the nature of violence. He writes: “if genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers [...] it is because the power is located and exercised at the level of life, of the species and the race, and of massive population phenomena”<sup>40</sup> (Foucault, 1976: 180; on this idea of “body politics” and genocide, also see Fleming, 2003). In other words, the organization of politics around ethnic categories has important effects on the logic of ethnic violence. As Appadurai notes, “the first step toward [...] an understanding [of ethnic violence] must be the most obvious and striking feature of such violence, which is its site and target—the body” (1998: 229).

Ethnic violence results from the belief held by at least a small group of perpetrators that their political problems come from individuals who possess a certain ethnic attribute. What they target, therefore, are not so much specific persons (who could be differentiated by guilt or innocence), but specific ethnic attributes. This has three important repercussions. First, because any person who possesses a specific ethnic attribute is a potential target, ethnic violence is “category-based” violence, which I call *indiscriminate*. Second, because ethnic attributes are essentialized and sticky, ethnic violence—in opposition to most other types of violence in civil war—does not aim at

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<sup>39</sup> Translated from French by the author: “ont reçu alors leur couleur et leur justification du souci mythique de protéger la pureté du sang et de faire triompher la race” (Foucault, 1976: 197)

<sup>40</sup> “Si le génocide est bien le rêve des pouvoirs modernes ce n’est pas pour un retour aujourd’hui au vieux droit de tuer; c’est parce que le pouvoir se situe et s’exerce au niveau de la vie, de l’espèce, de la race et des phénomènes massifs de population” (Foucault, 1976: 180).

controlling a population, but at exterminating it. It can thus be termed “*disposessive*” violence (Valentino, 2000: 30). Third, because ethnic attributes are transmitted by descent, often understood as bodily and linked to discourses about blood, *atrocities* are central in ethnic violence. I detail these three points below.

### *Targeting attributes: indiscriminate violence*

Because ethnic violence aims at eliminating an ethnic category, it is characterized by what Horowitz (2001) calls “selective targeting”: victims are carefully selected on the basis of their possession of an ethnic attribute. This makes ethnic violence “indiscriminate”, as opposed to “discriminate” violence. In the case of indiscriminate violence “the concept of individual guilt is replaced by the concept of guilt by association” (Kalyvas, 2006: 141). Ethnic violence is typically indiscriminate since it targets any member of a category independently of any judgement of their guilt or innocence. Kalyvas indeed notes that “the most extreme form of indiscriminate violence is probably the one that selects its victims on the basis of membership in a nation or an ethnic or a religious group” (2006: 141).

Ethnic violence can be at the same time “selective” and “indiscriminate”, because “indiscriminate” violence is not a synonym of “random” violence (Kalyvas, 2006: 141). Rather, “indiscriminate” violence occurs when the selection of victims is done at a *category*, rather than at an *individual* level. From this point of view the notion of group conflict must be put in perspective. As Kalyvas notes, “‘Group conflict’ makes sense only if group members are fully substitutable for each other” (2006: 373). In the case of ethnic violence, perpetrators are most of the time not substitutable, since most members of an ethnic category will not act violently. Victims, however, are substitutable: in an ethnic category, any individual can be targeted indiscriminately.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, because ethnic attributes are sticky, there is no way for the members of the targeted ethnic category to escape from this violence. It is most of the time impossible for them to change their ethnic identity. Accordingly, distinctions between guilty or non-guilty, and between civilians and military makes no sense in ethnic violence.

An example can help clarifying the logic of indiscriminate violence. The following quote describes a situation during the civil war in Lebanon. “We’re heading straight for the slaughterhouse. ... it’s

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<sup>41</sup> Although it should be noted that ethnic conflict is rarely “purely” ethnic and other motives may interfere with ethnicity in victim selection.

just a couple of blocks behind your house. You know the empty lot there. That's where Halabi, the Moslem butcher whose son was kidnapped, is collecting Christian Maronites. He wants revenge, that man! We'd better stay out of that area" (Tabbara, 1979, quoted by Kalyvas, 2006: 24). In this example, the butcher intends to commit "indiscriminate" violence. He selects his victims at a group level rather than at an individual level. Any member of the "Christian Maronite" category is a potential target, independently from any consideration about her guilt or innocence. There is no need for targeted Christians to have strong feelings of belonging to a group (although the common threat may create this feeling). On the other side, there is no indication that, and no need for, the butcher to feel a high level of solidarity with the members of the "Muslim" category. He only displaced the culpability for the kidnapping of his son from the actual criminal to the whole ethnic category. By so doing, he has transformed the nature of the intended violence: instead of planning to punish the real criminal (which would be discriminate violence), he targets any member of the ethnic category of the criminal: this is indiscriminate violence.

*Interrupting descent chains: dispossessive violence*

Ethnic violence comes from the fact that people of a certain ethnic category are considered a political problem by at least a small group of perpetrators. For the perpetrators, the only way to solve the political problem is to eliminate every individual who possesses these attributes. A second specificity of ethnic violence is thus that its ultimate goal is homogenization: the elimination of the ethnic category in its totality (Horowitz, 2001: 424), which means the eradication of specific ethnic attributes in a society. Although complete homogenization may not be the primary aim of ethnic violence, the dynamic of violence easily allows for it to descend into genocide. As Appadurai writes, "the domino effect to cleanse, as they ripple through the victim group, create further efforts to cleanse gray areas and achieve complete clarity and purity" (1998: 236).

The literature on violence in civil war identifies two general types of violence. Coercive violence, which aims at controlling or dominating a group and "dispossessive" violence which aims at exterminating a group (Valentino, 2000: 30; Kalyvas, 2006: 26). "A way to distinguish between the two is to ask whether at least one political actor intends to govern the population it targets for violence; an empirical indicator of this intention is whether a target of violence has the option to surrender" (Kalyvas, 2006: 26). While most of the violence in civil wars is coercive and aims at controlling the enemy group; ethnic violence is primarily dispossessive since its aim is

homogenization: the enemy cannot surrender. Since victims are selected due to their possession of ethnic attributes, “innocence is irrelevant *and compliance is utterly impossible*” (Kalyvas, 2006: 143).

However, unlike what is often assumed, the aim of ethnic violence is not necessarily to kill members of an ethnic category; it is first and foremost to increase the homogeneity of society. “There is abundant evidence that rioters want members of the target group to disappear: to die, to leave, or, occasionally, to renounce their identity and assume the identity of the aggressor group, restoring what is usually an idealized homogeneous status quo ante”. (Horowitz, 2001: 433). Other forms of violence, such as mass displacement may thus be as “efficient” as killing for serving the goal of ethnic violence.

The fact that ethnic attributes are transmitted by descent has another consequence: a central aim in ethnic violence is to impede ethnic reproduction, to interrupt the chain of descent (Foucault, 1976; Fleming, 2003). This is particularly obvious in the descriptions of the “techniques” or “manners” of killing reported by the Hutu refugees of Tanzania interviewed by Malkki (1995). She observed that “there were certain body parts on which mutilation and destruction converged”, these are differentiated by gender; for women, these are tightly linked to reproductive functions.

The sex of the body seems to have dictated the focal points for the infliction of violence on the body when the target was not a larger group. The mouth, the brain, and the head as a whole, as well as the anus, were focal areas on the bodies of men in particular. Women’s bodies were said to have been destroyed largely through the vagina and the uterus. When the women captured were pregnant, the violence seem *invariably* to have focused on the womb and specifically on the link between mother and child (Malkki, 1995: 92).

These sites of violence were explicitly understood by the survivors as attempts to impede reproduction of their ethnic group: “The disemboweling of pregnant Hutu women was interpreted as an effort to destroy the procreative capability, the ‘new life’ of the Hutu people. In several accounts, the unborn children or embryo was referred to, simply, as ‘the future’” (Malkki, 1995: 92).

In this regard, the exclusive focus on killing might be misleading if we aim at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of ethnic violence. Kalyvas notes that “there is a general consensus that homicide crosses a line: it ‘is an irreversible, direct, immediate, and unambiguous method of annihilation’ (Straus, 2000: 7); in this sense, death is ‘the absolute violence’ (Sofsky, 1998: 53)” (2006: 20). In the case of ethnic violence, other forms of violence such as mass

displacement, physical mutilations or rape may be as efficient, “absolute” and “irreversible” as homicide, given the aims of the perpetrators. Thus, they must be considered functionally equal to homicide. Mass deportations were for example the first “solution” adopted by Nazis: “before the war, the Nazis actively encouraged Jewish emigration, a policy that allowed over 70 percent of German Jews to escape. The Nazis also devoted a great deal of time, effort and resources to plans to deport the Jews to faraway places such as Siberia or Madagascar” (Valentino, 2000: 40).

Moreover, due to the centrality of descent in ethnic politics, rape is maybe the form of violence best permits an understanding of the multiple significations that ethnic violence may take. As multiple cases show, rape is utilized as a systematic strategy of ethnic “cleansing” in many cases of ethnic conflict. The most cited ones are Bangladesh, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (Sharlach, 2000) where mass rape occurred during ethnic wars. The fact that it is used in a specifically ethnic purpose cannot be denied (Nagel, 2003; Gellately & Kiernan, 2003: 13-14). The aims can be multiple. In Rwanda, it was systematically used as a weapon for killing Tutsi women (Sharlach, 2000; Weitsman, 2008).

The main difference between rape and murder is that it might have long-term “ethnic cleansing” effects since it often precludes the reproduction of the victim. In Rwanda, rape was used to deliberately transmit STDs to victims, thereby hindering the reproduction of the ethnic group. “Survivors report that Hutu men diagnosed with HIV raped Tutsi women during the civil war, then told the women that they would die slowly and gruellingly from AIDS” (Sharlach, 2000: 99). In a country where approximately 90% of Tutsi women were raped (Weitsman, 2008: 573), and where medication for the treatment of HIV is mostly unavailable, Sharlach argues that these practices must be considered as a “protracted genocide” (2000: 100). In ex-Yugoslavia, systematic rape and forced impregnation of Muslim and Croat women by Serbs were used with the aim of “diluting an ethnic community’s bloodline” (Sharlach, 2000: 101) and thus commit genocide (Fisher, 1996). Because, in this context, ethnic identity is believed to be transmitted exclusively by the father, the aim was explicitly to make these women pregnant: their children would thus have the ethnic identity of their enemies, the ethnic identity of a generation would be replaced by another<sup>42</sup> (Diken and Laustsen, 2005: 115; Weitsman, 2008). Finally, in many contexts, the social

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<sup>42</sup> “In Bosnia–Herzegovina, (...) the purpose of the Serb and Bosnian–Serb’s mass rapes was not merely to drive away and to harm non-Serb women, but (...) to ensure that they became pregnant. (...) In many cases the soldiers intentionally detained women until abortion was no longer possible” (Sharlach, 2000: 96-97).



stigma associated with rape victims makes these survivor “unmarriageable” (Weitsman, 2008: 564). Rape is deliberately used with the goal of having effects on the long run. As Sharlach indeed notes, “it appears that the women and girls who are most likely to suffer rape during genocide are those for whom it will have the worst long term consequences – stigma, shame, and even expulsion from their homes and communities” (Sharlach, 2000: 101). This stigma has the effect of destroying communities and thus impeding the reproduction of an ethnic category. In this regard, the words of the young husband of a rape victim in Kosovo are striking: “I don't hate her, but the story is before my eyes. I feel very cold toward her [...] I have no will to have children” (Bumiller, 1999).

### *Bodies as sites of violence: understanding atrocities*

A last particularity of ethnic violence is the widespread presence of atrocities.

The large scale violence of the 1990s appears to be typically accompanied by a surplus of rage, an excess of hatred that produces untold forms of degradation and violation, both to the body and the being of the victim: maimed and tortured bodies, burned and raped persons, disembowelled women, hacked and amputated children, sexualized humiliation of every type (Appadurai, 2006: 13).

In addition to their horrifying character, these atrocities might appear surprising. As Malkki writes,

Hearing scores of accounts of cumbersome, difficult mutilation and killing, the listener eventually begins to numb to their horror and to ask grimly practical questions. For instance: Would the process of killing tens of hundreds of thousands of Hutu not have been more efficiently pursued with guns and bullets? (1995: 95).

These atrocities can be better understood when taking into consideration the fact that ethnic violence does not only target the elimination of other ethnic categories, but also aims at the clarification of identities and the establishment of hierarchies between them: more than a “demographic” function, it also has clear symbolic functions. As Horowitz explains, although complete homogenization may be the “ideal” of perpetrators of ethnic violence, it is almost impossible to achieve. “Homogeneity is what rioters want, and growing homogeneity is what they got” (Horowitz, 2001: 438). There is thus an additional aim to ethnic violence, “degradation”: the establishment of hierarchies, the entrenchment of the domination of the targeted category by degrading its social status in the society (Horowitz, 2001: 424). This might appear contradictory with the aim of homogenization but it is not: “after all, if it is possible to remove the targets by a combination of extermination and expulsion, why bother to humiliate them? Simply because, for

the aggressors, living in an environment with a controlled and degraded target group is a good second-best to living in a homogeneous environment” (Horowitz, 2001: 437-8).

“Degradation” helps understand the widespread use of atrocities. When violence cannot reach complete extermination, it serves the purpose of clarifying ethnic identities, reducing the multiplicity of ethnic identities which can be activated, establishing hierarchies, and inscribing them in the long run. Here, the essentialization of ethnic identities, their links to bodies, blood and a myth of “purity” are important: following Feldman (1991) and Malkki (1995), Appadurai insists on the role of bodily mutilations as identity clarifiers.

The macabre regularities and predictabilities of ethnocidal violence cannot be taken as simple evidence of ‘calculation’ or as blind reflexes of ‘culture’. Rather, they are brutal forms of bodily discovery – forms of vivisection; emergent techniques by exploring, marking, classifying, and storing the bodies of those who *may* be the ‘ethnic’ enemy (1998: 233).

Because ethnic identities are essentialized and understood as linked to bodies, violence is a way to ascribe ethnic identities and to activate them “from the outside”. “The killing, torture, and rape associated with ethnocidal violence is not simply a matter of eliminating the ethnic other. It involves the use of the body to establish the parameters of this otherness, taking the body apart, so to speak, to divide the enemy within” (Appadurai, 1998: 233-4). Atrocities are not merely a residual category of violence: they are intimately linked with ethnic identity activation; they are an integral part of ethnic violence and serve clear purposes. Malkki observed that, in the 1972 massacres in Burundi, “techniques of cruelty actually used were already symbolically meaningful” (1995: 94). Similarly, Feldman (1991: 64) notes that, in Northern Ireland, ethnic violence has the clear symbolic function of transforming the bodies of victims into “specimens” of an ethnic category. In this regard, the act of violence in itself is a symbolic way to activate and polarize ethnic categories. Feldman writes:

The practice of torture in this instance was a production that detached the body from the self in order to transform the body into a sectarian artefact, an abstraction of ethnicity. Mutilation here is the physical erasure of individuality as a deviation from an ethnic construct. The ethnicity of the body is built in its dismemberment and disfigurement. Violence construct the ethnic body as a metonym for sectarian social space (1991: 64).

This symbolic violence has long-term ethnically polarizing effects, first through the traumas it creates, and second through the recollections and the historical constructions it engenders. In her book on Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Malkki (1995) observes how the effects of violence, including

atrocities, and displacement, have contributed to the emergence of a feeling of belonging to the Hutu ethnic group, the construction of a mythico-history of this group, and the construction of an enemy to the Hutu people: the Tutsi. Post-facto narration and recollection of violence were also at the heart of the process: “thus, acts of atrocity are not only enacted and perpetrated symbolically; they are also, after the fact, stylized or narratively constituted symbolically” (Malkki, 1995: 95) and contribute to the long-term persistence and reproduction of the politicization of ethnicity.

This discussion reinforces the point that other forms of violence must be considered as equal to murder – they may even sometimes be worse since they have long-term impacts that homicides do not necessarily have. While murder is an end, rape, mutilations or displacement are a beginning. Whereas a dead body is eliminated, a living body carries with it the physical and psychological pleas of the ethnic domination. Not taking this into account would not allow for a good understanding of the nature of ethnic violence. As formulated by Appadurai, “rape in such circumstances is not only tied up with special understandings of honor and shame, and a possible effort to abuse the actual organs of sexual (and thus ethnic) reproduction, but is additionally the most violent form of penetration, investigation, and exploration of the body of the enemy” (1998: 239).

Rape is also used to mark domination and humiliation of the enemy. As summarized by Diken and Laustsen, “in war, the abuse of the enemy’s women is considered to be the ultimate humiliation, a stamp of total conquest” (Diken & Laustsen, 2005: 118). Nagel further notes, “sexually taking an enemy’s women amounts to gaining territory and psychological advantage” (2003: 181). Again, this is intimately tied to conceptions of honour and dishonour, purity and impurity, not only of the victim, but of the whole group to which she belongs. Sharlach draws an example from Bangladesh: “family honor is in this region and many others linked with female chastity. Woman symbolizes ethnic purity. A Pakistani’s sexual assault upon a Bengali girl or woman represented a sullyng not only of her virtue, but a disgrace of her family and her community” (2000: 96).

The aim is also to leave traces on the long run: psychological sequels contribute to the separation of groups, and thus the continuation of the politicization of ethnicity on the long-run. Forced impregnations can also be read as a way to “occupy the womb” of the victims, months after violence occurs (Fisher, 1996). Finally, there is evidence of deliberate marking of the bodies by letting scars in the skin, thereby leaving life-long marks of humiliation. This is how we must understand the “accounts of biting [that] pervaded the refugees' and internally displaced persons'

(IDPs) stories [in Kosovo]. Nurses who treated rape victims and eyewitnesses who saw women returning after long absences reported that many of the women had visible teeth-marks on their arms and exposed flesh” (Vandenberg, 2000). Rape is also intimately linked to discourses about “purity” an “impurity”, and its “irreversible” effects on the victims and on her ethnic group are hardly deniable. Indeed, “the penetration inflicts on her body and her self a mark, a stigma, which cannot be effaced” (Diken and Laustsen, 2005: 113). Rape thus marks the body with visible and invisible “scars that don't fade” (Thurow, 2000). The symbolic pollution often extends to the victim’s kin, or ethnic group in general (Nagel, 2003: 181-2). The spread of mutilations of both dead and alive bodies in ethnic violence may thus be understood as a further way to humiliate, and inscribe this humiliation in these bodies to ensure it will last.

### ***Ethnic Violence and the Politicization of Ethnic Identities***

In summary, the addition of the qualifier “ethnic” to the concept of violence seems to change the very nature of this violence. Because ethnic attributes are targeted, ethnic violence is indiscriminate, dispossessive and linked to high-levels of physical atrocities. While the violence in civil wars can be indiscriminate and atrocious, ethnic violence is so by definition. Because it aims at the elimination or the degradation of a category of people, ethnic violence does not permit any surrender, nor does it leave room for considerations about guilt or innocence. When its primary goal is not killing, ethnic violence aims to to inscribe domination on the long run, to leave scars on victims’ bodies and minds, in order to interfere in processes of identity activation. All of this sounds like good reasons to try preventing it.

More generally, the discussion provided in this section contributed to our understanding of how ethnic violence contributes to the politicization of ethnicity. In the preceding section, I highlighted the use of violence with the instrumental purpose of politicizing ethnicity. I reviewed various reasons explaining this effect. Amongst them, I noted that violence tends to constructs intra-category solidarity and aversion or antipathy toward outsiders, hyper-nationalist discourses or political mobilization strategies which accompany it contribute to the hardening of identities, and emotions created by violence create long lasting separation of the groups. This section added more intimate and morbid factors to the understanding of the identity polarizing effects of ethnic violence. The techniques of violence appear to be specifically designed (consciously or unconsciously) to mark ethnic separation and domination. Atrocities can be understood as a way to simplify a person’s complexity into an ethnic body, thus marking complete separation between

ethnic categories, creating ethnic certainty, and establishing social hierarchies through humiliation. Moreover, the scars and memories created by ethnic violence contribute to maintaining ethnic identities politicized. In brief, while last section stressed the group polarization effects of ethnic violence, this section highlighted the mechanisms of the activation of ethnic identities at a micro-level. In both cases, violence must be understood not only as an outcome of ethnic politicization, but also as one of its causes.

### **Preventing Ethnic Violence?**

For Kaufmann (1996), the hardening of ethnic identities as well as the security dilemmas brought about by ethnic war leave only one possible solution to ethnic conflicts: the territorial separation of the groups. “To save lives threatened by genocide, the international community must abandon attempts to restore war-torn multi-ethnic states. Instead, it must facilitate and protect population movements to create true national homelands” (Kaufmann, 1996: 137).

While Kaufmann’s argument that ethnic violence contributes to the creation of ethnic groups corresponds well to the constructivist assumptions, his conclusion is problematic. Beside problems inherent to partition as a solution to ethnic conflict (see Horowitz, 1985: 588-595), Kaufmann’s solution is problematic in theory. A first problem is highlighted by Chandra:

The plausibility of Kaufmann’s and Van Evera’s solution depends upon the assumption that homogeneity, once created, is permanent. This view is inconsistent with a constructivist position. Constructivist advances suggest that ethnic homogeneity, like ethnic heterogeneity, is an artefact that can only be created and maintained under specific conditions (Chandra, 2001: 9).

On the other hand, the constructivist approach presented in this thesis shows that the ethnic cleavage may appear in any society as soon as politics starts to be organized on the basis of physical attributes.

The second problem is the opposite of the first one: to paraphrase Chandra, it is the assumption that *heterogeneity*, once created, is permanent. Van Evera is explicit on that point: “individuals do have multiple identities, but in modern times ethnic identities tend to become paramount; and once they become paramount, ethnic identities tend to remain paramount” (2001: 22). Not much argument is provided to explain where this stability of salient ethnic identity would suddenly come from. On the other hand, the current and previous chapters provided some explanations for the stability of the politicization of ethnic identities: formal and informal institutions, violence and

emotions can put constraints on the repertoires of identities and force the activation of ethnic identities. Other factors do probably remain to be identified, but our conclusion is that ethnic identities are mobilized strategically within the constraints provided by these four elements. If sufficient incentives for the mobilization of non-ethnic identities are provided, we might well see another type of political cleavage emerge.

These two theoretical problems thus transform into two practical problems. First, Kaufmann's solution provides no guarantee that a new ethnic conflict will not reappear within the territorially isolated communities. From this point of view, the current situation in South Sudan shows that partition is far from being a panacea for ethnic conflict. Second, Kaufmann's solution obscures another possibility: providing institutional incentives for the use of non-violent strategies, or for the depoliticization of ethnicity after conflicts. Indeed, although the limits on the repertoire of identities brought about by violence and its emotional and psychological legacies might make this difficult, strong incentives may theoretically succeed in turning actors away from recourse to violence, or even the mobilization of ethnic identities.

The analysis conducted in this chapter and the previous one has shown that individuals activate their ethnic identities for strategic reasons: incentives provided by formal and informal institutions, or by violence. Since ethnic violence polarizes ethnic identities, its end does seem to be a necessary prerequisite for the depoliticization of ethnicity. But after its end, actors might react to incentives for the activation of non-ethnic identities. To differentiate between possible and impossible solutions to ethnic conflicts and ethnic violence, close attention should be placed on the mix of incentives that pushes individuals toward the politicization of this cleavage. Weakening these incentives and providing counterincentives might well be the aim of a policy of ethnic conflict transformation. This is the object of the next chapter.

## Chapter 5: The Depoliticization of Ethnic Identities

“To make peace with an enemy one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes one’s partner”

Nelson Mandela, *A Long Walk to Freedom*.<sup>43</sup>

This chapter builds on the theory of the politicization of ethnic identities described in the last two chapters to develop a theory of the *depoliticization* of ethnic identities after ethnic wars. This chapter thus proposes a theoretical framework, but also a normative institutional model for post-war ethnically divided societies.

In the first part, I explain the depoliticization of ethnicity by two factors. On the one hand, *the lifting of the constraints* which limit the repertoires of identities that can be activated to ethnic identities only; on the other hand, *the creation of incentives* for the activation of non-ethnic identities. The model I propose emphasizes three big principles: 1) the provision of institutional guarantees for the political representation of ethnic categories, 2) the provisions of institutional guarantees for the security of ethnic categories, and 3) the establishment of strong centripetal mechanisms which provide incentives for inter-ethnic integration.

As argued in chapter 1, the environment in which power-sharing institutions are implemented has arguably a crucial effect on the functioning of the system. Accordingly, the institutionalization of the three principles proposed in the first section might vary greatly depending on contexts. In this thesis, I restrict the ambitions to neo-patrimonial societies. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, this choice is justified by the fact that this type of societies is arguably the most likely context for post-conflict power-sharing nowadays. Moreover, neo-patrimonial societies share enough common features for developing an institutional framework which might by and large correspond to these various societies. Consequently, the rest of the chapter focuses on the depoliticization of ethnic identities in post-conflict neo-patrimonial societies. Section 2 describes the characteristics of neo-patrimonialism, and identifies imperatives of survival (Zahar, 2003: 3) for three types of actors in neo-patrimonial societies: state leaders, societal elites, and citizens.

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<sup>43</sup> (quoted by Rothchild, 1997: 191).

Section 3 builds on this to evaluate the potential of three models of ethnic conflict management (consociationalism, ethnic amnesia, and hegemonic exchange systems) for the depoliticization of ethnicity. The last section identifies the risks associated with the institutional model proposed in this thesis when implemented in neo-patrimonial societies, and proposes some solutions.

## **A General Framework for the Depoliticization of Ethnic Identities**

### ***Three General Principles: Power-sharing, Securement, Integration***

Chapter two has defined the politicization of ethnic identities as the reduction of the set of nominal identities that can be activated by individuals to ethnic identities only. Conversely, the depoliticization of ethnic identities can be understood as the enlargement of the set of nominal identities that can *and actually are* activated by individuals to non-ethnic identities. Chapters three and four have argued that the principal constraints on the repertoires of identities that can be activated are formal and informal institutions, as well as violence and its emotional legacies. Accordingly, a model of depoliticization of ethnicity must necessarily include two dimensions: on the one hand, the removal of institutional incentives for the activation of ethnic identities, and on the other hand, the provision of security guarantees for the members of ethnic categories. Both are necessary to *enable* the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage. But, even if it is rendered possible, the depoliticization of ethnicity is unlikely in post-war context because the memories of the war and the resulting distrust, resentment or hatred will most likely keep people apart. For this reason, incentives for the activation of non-ethnic identities should also be created to *foster* the depoliticization of ethnic identities.

The theory therefore suggests that three principles may guide a policy of depoliticization of ethnic identities: the repartition of political positions,<sup>44</sup> ensuring the security of the groups, and fostering the integration of the groups.

### ***The Dilemma of Post-war Power-sharing***

The aim of depoliticizing ethnic identities might however be difficult to reconcile with the conditions of the adoption of a power-sharing agreement (Horowitz, 2014). Indeed, an ethnic war

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<sup>44</sup> The repartition of economic resources is also important but more difficult to affect through constitutional design. However, since most resources are centralized in the state in neo-patrimonial societies, political power-sharing might also entice a proportional repartition of economic resources.



is precisely the moment when the salience of ethnic identities is the highest. The negotiations will thus likely be marked by the ethnic cleavage.

Two types of issues might be touched upon in the course of negotiations but, in both instances, each party's demands are likely to be formulated in ethnic terms. The first type are negotiable demands which can be defined as "policy questions with tangible referents—such as goods, jobs, taxes, roads, and schools—and are frequently amenable to political solutions" (Rothchild, 1997: 30). In this case, the groups are likely to demand a share of the resources for their ethnic category. For their part, "non negotiable demands, characteristically rigid and high-wrought, tend to cluster around accurate or inaccurate threat assessments or largely emotionally laden issues such as physical and cultural survival, group status, worth, identity, territory, and subordination" (Rothchild, 1997: 33). These include security issues. Indeed, as Hartzell and Hoddie write: "given that groups emerging from a civil war have only recently ceased using armed force against one another, questions of who will exercise control over the instruments of coercion are likely to be central" (2003a: 320). Since former enemies identify themselves in ethnic terms, guarantees for security are likely to be formulated in ethnic terms too.

In both cases, the ethnic cleavage is necessarily mobilized when answering the mutual demands of the belligerents. The dilemma of post-conflict peacebuilding in divided societies is thus that actors have true political, economic and security concerns that are defined ethnically, but that the establishment of a sustainable peace ideally requires the depoliticization of ethnicity and a process of national unity-building. Wilkinson (2001) summarizes this dilemma as follow: "how to design proposals that address the concerns of existing groups while providing simultaneously for the possibility that the groups themselves might be redefined over time?" (Wilkinson, 2001: 18). The question might even be how can one *at the same time* provide short term guarantees for group security and representation and foster long-term depoliticization of ethnicity?

A solution to this dilemma is to recognise the existence of ethnic divisions and provide guarantees for political representation and for the security of ethnic categories without institutionalizing the ethnic cleavage. This can be done by establishing constitutional requirements for ethnic proportionality not in governmental institutions but in the organisations which structure the political field, notably in the political parties. The model proposed in this thesis therefore recognises the existence of ethnic identities, but it does so in order to foster the decrease of their political and social salience.

## *A General Framework for the Depoliticization of Ethnicity in Post-war Settings*

In very general terms, the three principles can be institutionalized by a power-sharing system which includes:

1. Institutional guarantees for the political representation of all ethnic categories
2. Institutional guarantees for the security of all ethnic categories (military power-sharing).
3. Institutional dispositions (which combine a mix of constitutional obligations and built-in incentives) for the creation of multi-ethnic formal and informal organisations and networks, and, in particular, multi-ethnic political parties.

To use Rothchild's vocabulary, this model provides two types of "non-coercive incentives" to former opponents. The two first dispositions provide "insurance" of "nondefection by an opponent" (1997: 100). They solve problems of "credible commitment" to the peace agreement, which could constitute serious threats to the survival of the power-sharing agreement. They may be regarded as prerequisite to a depoliticization of ethnicity (Lake and Rothchild, 1996). The third disposition is closer to what Rothchild calls "purchase" incentives, namely, "the use of some form of fiscal or tangible incentive" (1997: 99). It is based on the idea that, if enough economic or political resources can be obtained by mobilizing non-ethnic rather than ethnic identities, actors are likely to do so. This model is very general and could be institutionalized in a great variety of ways, some of which are described hereunder.

### *Guarantees for political representation*

Guarantees for political representation of all ethnic categories aim at avoiding permanent exclusion of some groups, and avoid the existence of "frozen" minorities and majorities (Horowitz, 1985; Linder, 1994). The institutional dispositions to do so are those prescribed by Lijphart: grand coalition government, proportional representation (or over-representation of small minorities), veto rights. These can be institutionalized by formal or informal agreements (although formal dispositions are stronger guarantees), by systems of ethnic quotas, adapted majorities, dispositions regulating electoral lists, or other dispositions.

The fact that the model proposed in this thesis includes these elements of Lijphart's consociationalism might give the illusion that the two models are similar. They are not. Instead there are three points of divergence.

First, the definition of success in this model and in Lijphart's consociationalism are opposed. Indeed, Lijphart considered inter-group integration unlikely to succeed and dangerous. Based on his observation of the Netherlands, Belgium and other countries, he proposed a model which fosters the organization of the society in "segments" or "pillars", and where elites only engage in accommodation and bargaining processes which ensure the stability of the society as a whole. Based on the analysis conducted in chapters 3 and 4, I defend another point of view and therefore join many observers who question the use of consociationalism for peacebuilding purposes (Rothchild & Roeder, 2005; Jarstad, 2008). The previous chapters have indeed shown that the political dominance of the ethnic cleavages transforms the nature of political competition and violence in a way that hinders the functioning of a democratic system and potentially thwarts the prospects of sustainable peace. Accordingly, de-politicizing the ethnic cleavage is arguably a necessary first step which makes democratization and peace consolidation possible (without fully guaranteeing it). The model proposed in this thesis has radically different aims than Lijphart's consociationalism. Despite sharing some of the institutional dispositions preconized by Lijphart and while acknowledging the importance of recognizing the existence of ethnic categories, this model aims at fostering a completely different logic: integration rather than pillarization.

The other two differences with Lijphart's model are that this model includes security guarantees, while classic consociationalism did not include this type of considerations, since it was not specifically designed for post-conflict settings. Finally, this model does not only aim at fostering accommodation exclusively at an elite's level, but also amongst the citizens. Based on these three divergences, it can be argued that this model contributes to the centripetalist agenda of power-sharing.

### *Guarantees for security*

Security guarantees are necessary to provide a sense of security for members of the various ethnic categories in post-war settings. The feeling of insecurity which may persist without these guarantees would contribute to the persistence of politicized ethnicity. These guarantees thus make inter-ethnic collaboration and the formation of multi-ethnic parties possible

Many authors have noted that the presence of a third-party enforcer tends to reinforce the stability of power-sharing agreements. Lake and Rothchild note that coercive or non-coercive external intervention can help overcome collective fears by "providing guarantees for ethnic contracts

between the warring parties, at least during an interim period” (1996: 67). More recently, Hartzell and Hoddie (2003a) and Krienbuehl (2010) have also observed that the stability of power-sharing agreements is enhanced by the presence of third-party enforcers.

Some issues however suggest that the formal institutionalization of security guarantees is also necessary. A key issue with international intervention is the commitment of the intervening third party. Insufficient commitment to the intervention might “produce ambiguous policies that may, in the end, exacerbate rather than resolve conflicts” (Lake & Rothchild, 1996: 69). A second issue is that external peacekeeping interventions necessarily represent a temporary solution. As Cooper and Berdal write, “a military force cannot by itself establish a constitution and justice that inspire trust of all involved ethnic groups. Therefore, it does not make sense to make objective of this sort of intervention a full political settlement” (1993: 201).

These issues suggest that, while external peacekeeping might be very useful to provide security guarantees in the short term, long term stability and depoliticization of ethnic identities necessitate the institutionalization of security guarantees for ethnic categories. A reform of the security sector as well as the establishment of civilian control over security forces seems to be necessary to ensure the ethnic neutrality of the police and the army (Höglund, 2008). Military power-sharing—understood as the “rules regarding the distribution of the state's coercive power” (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003b: 320) among ethnic categories—seems to be central. Hartzell and Hoddie (2003b), indeed find that successful implementation of military power-sharing enhances the prospects for lasting peace in power-sharing systems. According to these authors, the implementation of military power-sharing constitutes a strong signal of credible commitment and thus a powerful confidence-building measure. By ensuring that physical security is equally distributed amongst members of different ethnic categories, military power-sharing counters one of the main incentives for the mobilization of ethnic identities.

### *Institutional Incentives for the Formation of Multi-ethnic Parties*

Institutional engineering for the formation of multi-ethnic parties may take two main forms. A first one is the institutionalization of party regulations that constrain the form or composition of the parties. Ethnic party bans are an example of this type of regulation that is widespread in Africa. The aim of these dispositions is to “block” the emergence of overtly ethnic conflict (Bogaards, 2008).

As noted in Chapter 3, a weakness of institutional party regulations is that they are often poorly enforced in neo-patrimonial societies (Reilly, 2006; Bogaards et al., 2013; Kadima, 2008). For this reason, the second option is a necessary complement to increase the chances of emergence of multi-ethnic parties. It is the utilisation of the electoral system to provide incentives for the development of multi-ethnic parties. Dispositions, such as constitutionally determining the composition of party lists, can force parties to integrate candidates from multiple ethnic groups (Reilly, 2006, 2008). “Vote pooling” electoral systems, which encourage leaders to campaign for the vote of citizens from other ethnic categories, or to form alliances with leaders from other ethnic groups have also been advocated by centripetalists since Horowitz (1985, 1991). Reilly (2001) has underlined the moderating effects of “preferential voting” systems. These systems allow citizens to vote not only for their first choice, but to specify their second and third best choices. When no candidate wins an absolute majority, the last one is eliminated and his votes are redistributed to other candidates depending on the secondary preferences of the electors. These systems foster moderate discourses, since candidates will also campaign for secondary votes of citizens from other ethnic groups. They also encourage alliances and bargaining between ethnic leaders for the second and third choices (Reilly, 2001). The last approach is to institutionalize “distribution requirements that require parties or individual candidates to garner specified support levels across different regions of a country, rather than just their own home base, in order to be elected” (Reilly, 2006: 822). These can also foster moderation in discourses and depoliticization of ethnicity.<sup>45</sup>

In this chapter, I try to make the point for further nuance in the study of institutional centripetalist incentives. As argued in chapter 1, a power-sharing system necessarily takes place in an environment where other formal and informal institutional systems co-exist. A close attention to the incentives provided by these environmental institutions is important for two reasons. First, it is necessary to understand the actual behaviour of individuals in power-sharing systems. Second, pre-existing institutions might provide individuals with incentives which are opposed to, or, on the other hand, which reinforce the ones created by power-sharing system. Paying attention to them might thus allow scholars to better understand the success or failure of power-sharing in different

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<sup>45</sup> An interesting path for future research would be to study the potential centripetalist effects of alternative systems such as federalism, direct democracy or democratic sortition (see, Dowlen, 2015; Delannoi & Dowlen, 2015; Sintomer, 2014; Rancière, 2005). Berg-Schlosser (2007) has argued that direct democracy in consociations might have positive impacts. Federalism and direct democracy also seem to have created centripetal dynamics in Switzerland (Linder, 1994).

context. Maybe more crucially, it might also allow constitutional engineers to anticipate actors' behaviour and design systems which are adapted to the institutional context and have greater chances of success.

The potential for research around this question is large because the institutional contexts in which power-sharing systems might be institutionalized vary greatly. In this thesis, I restrict the focus on neo-patrimonial societies because they are arguably the most probable context in which nowadays power-sharing systems could be implemented. The next section develops a theory of the incentives and imperatives which orient actors' behaviour in neo-patrimonial societies.

## **The Politics of Survival in Neo-patrimonial Societies**

### ***Neopatrimonialism***

I have used the term “neo-patrimonialism” without elaborating much on this concept. At this point of our development, more details are however required. The theory of neopatrimonialism has been developed to acknowledge the important differences in the organisation of states and politics in many African and more broadly post-colonial countries as compared to the “weberian” western state (Eisenstadt, 1973; Médard, 1982; Clapham, 1985, Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Erdmann & Engel, 2007; Bach & Gazibo, 2012).

The classification finds its origin in Max Weber's ideal types of political authority: traditional, charismatic, or legal-rational (Weber, 1968). In neo-patrimonial societies, two of these forms of authority are mixed. The bureaucratic structure of the “modern” (legal-rational) state is infused by a patrimonial (traditional) logic (Bratton, 2011; Bratton & van de Walle, 1997) Neo-patrimonialism can be defined as “a form of organization in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines. Officials hold positions in bureaucratic organizations with powers which are formally defined, but exercise those powers, so far as they can, as a form not of public service but private property” (Clapham, 1985: 48). Thus, “the state is simultaneously illusory and substantial. It is illusory because its *modus operandis* is essentially informal, the rule of law is feebly enforced and the ability to implement public policy remains most limited. It is substantial because its control is the ultimate prize for all political elites: indeed, it is the chief instrument of patrimonialism” (Chabal & Daloz, 1999: 9).

As Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) observe, the linkage between citizens and elites in neo-patrimonial systems is not so much based on political programs as it is based on clientelism. “Clientelistic accountability represents a transaction, the direct exchange of citizens’ vote in return for direct payments or continuing access to employment goods, and services” (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007: 2). Political legitimacy in these systems rests on the ability of the leaders to redistribute resources through vertical clientelist networks. In resource-scarce contexts, the main source of resources is the State and its fiscal revenue (Chabal & Daloz, 1999: 15). The resources redistributed are as much monetary as they also concern positions in the civil service or in the army. As a result, clientelist networks take root directly at the top of the state, and resources are redistributed to lower ladders of the social hierarchy (Berman, 1998: 336). To summarize with van de Walle, “it is analytically useful to think of neo-patrimonialism as having three constituent components. First, such regimes are characterized by presidentialism, in which both formal and informal rules place one man – usually the president – largely above the law (...). Second, such regimes rely on systematic clientelism by the president and his immediate followers to maintain the status quo and ensure political stability. Third, and unlike more traditional patrimonial regimes, neo-patrimonial systems rely on the fiscal resources of a modern state to provide the resources that are distributed following a clientelist logic” (Van de Walle, 2012: 112).

### ***Three Types of Actors: State Leaders, Elites, and Citizens***

Neopatrimonial societies include three types of actors. This is acknowledged by various scholars. Radnitz differentiates between “the regime, independent elite and impoverished communities” (2010: 21). De Mesquita et al. (2003: 38) make the distinction between the “leadership”, the “challenger” and the “selectorate”. Beck (2008) studies the relation between “State leaders”, “local brokers”, and the population. In this thesis, I use the terms of state leader(s), elite(s) and citizen(s).

*State leaders* are the incumbent to power. *Elites* can be defined as “those who wield power and influence on the basis of their active control of a disproportionate share of society’s resources” (Eva Etzioni-Halevy, quoted by Radnitz, 2010: 17). Elites are a heterogeneous category which can be either allied with the state leaders or independent. When elites are allied (or clients) of the state leaders, they can act as brokers and create a link between the state and the population.<sup>46</sup> When elites are independent, on the other hand, they may act as challengers to the regime (Radnitz,

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<sup>46</sup> Brokers are individuals who “stand guard over the critical junctures and synapses of a relationship which connect the local system to the larger whole.” (Eric Wolf, quoted by Beck, 2008: 6).

2010: 17-20). Finally, the *citizens* (or the electorate) is the set of actors who are entitled to vote. Even though it might not be the real source of power in practice, it is at least the most legitimate one. For this reason, state leaders are likely to seek their support, at least to ensure international legitimacy.

These three levels are tied together by dyadic clientelist relations (Landé, 1977). Two sets of relations should thus be studied: the relations between state leaders and elites, and the relations between elites and the subset of electors who are their clients. The electorate is thus divided in two subsets. One subset is tied to a state-linked elite and thus have access to clientelist networks of redistribution of state resources, while the other subset is formed by the clients of the autonomous elite, and thus have access to the resources provided by this elite, but not by the state.

### ***Imperatives of Survival***

In neo-patrimonial systems, the reliance on informal institutions instead of formal ones is a way of gaining security and protection in environments marked by resource scarcity, insecurity and uncertainty (Landa, 1981). As Landé puts it, these networks imply “aid in times of need”, and “mutual exchange of favours” (1977: xiv-xv). These networks thus provide protection to vulnerable populations and legitimacy to elites (Berman, 1998: 336). If actors rely on these networks rather than on state institutions, it is in part because of affective ties, but also mainly because they have strong incentives to do so. These incentives center around what can be called the *imperative of survival* (Zahar, 2003: 3). Additionally, each actor develops “strategies of survivals” to answer these imperatives. In the words of Migdal, “all people combine available symbols with opportunities to solve mundane needs for food, housing, and the like to create their *strategies of survival* – blueprints for action and belief in a world that hovers on the brink of a Hobbesian state of nature” (Migdal, 1988: 27). The imperatives and strategies of survival are different for the three types of actors due to their different positions in the social ladder and the different means at their disposition.

### ***State Leaders***

For state leaders, survival can be simply defined as “retaining power” (Zahar, 2003: 3; Radnitz, 2010; de Mesquita et al., 2003; Migdal, 1988). The main goal is thus *political*. As Chabal and Daloz observe while focusing on Africa, state leaders seek to attain this objective by the political instrumentalization of disorder. State leaders are in fact not so much engaged in a struggle against



society for social control of the populations, as Migdal (1988) suggests. On the contrary, state leaders have often made little efforts to implement a “western” model of state, because they find advantages in the neo-patrimonial system (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 13). Migdal recognizes this logic when noting that while the development of a strong state is a necessity, it can threaten a leader’s survival in power, leaders thus have incentives to act against the strengthening of the state (1988: 208). Chabal and Daloz go further and show that “the very weakness and inefficiency of the state has been profitable to African political elites. The development of political machines and the consolidation of clientelist networks within the formal political apparatus has been immensely advantageous. It has allowed them to respond to demands for protection assistance and aid made by the members of their constituency communities in exchange for the recognition of the political prominence and social status which, as patrons, they crave” (1999: 14).

Relying on a clientelist pyramid to remain in power however creates three types of problems: “*controlling the required means*”, or resources necessary to sustain the clientelist redistribution; “*credit claiming*” for the distribution of goods; and “*contract enforcement*” of the clientelist relationship, in other words, monitoring clientelist networks to ensure that followers indeed follow (Müller, 2007: 258-9). To solve these three problems, state leaders have three types of leverage: clientelist redistribution, repression, and identity politics.

As de Mesquita et al. (2003) note, state leaders have three types of “*clientelistic*” leverage as regards redistribution: the determination of a tax rate to raise funds, the spending of this tax revenue, and the delivery of a certain mix of public and private goods (2003: 8). Following Kitschelt and Wilkinson, we can add a third type of goods to this classification: “club goods” “that provide benefits for subsets of citizens and impose costs on other subsets” (2007: 11).

State leaders have a second type of leverage: *repression*. This includes what Migdal calls “dirty tricks” including “illegal imprisonment and deportation, strange disappearances, torture and death squads” (1988: 223), as well as “illegal methods or quick changes of the law to remove key state figures, pre-empting the emergence of competing power centers, and weakening or destroying groups in agencies already powerful enough to threaten the ruler’s prerogatives” (1988: 223).

A last leverage is recourse to identity as a way to mobilize clients, to obtain clientelism “at a discount” (Lemarchand, 1988: 151-154; Beck, 2008). Lemarchand notes that some patrons can rely on traditional loyalties or religious status to reinforce the loyalty of their followers without

spending too much. “Political support may come at a discount where rural notables are cast in the role of saintly figures (as in Senegal) or retain enough legitimacy and trust to inspire respect and affection” (Lemarchand, 1988: 151). In an ethnically polarized context, ethnic violence can also be read as a way of obtaining clientelism at a discount. As we have seen in chapter 4, ethnic violence has the effect of reinforcing communities and making interaction with ethnic others impossible. When an ethnic category is targeted by ethnic violence, the loyalties toward their ethnic leaders is likely to increase without regard to the resources redistributed (Wilkinson, 2006).

Leaders thus define a mix of clientelism, repression and identity politics to maintain themselves in power. The composition of this mix is influenced by resources at their disposition, the strategic interaction with rivals, but also by institutional incentives. They are likely to try to pay the minimal price in order to form a sufficient coalition to win the elections and to maintain themselves in power (de Mesquita et al, 2003).

### *Elites*

Elites are in a middle position: on the one hand, they are the patron of a subset of the population; on the other, they are client of state leaders. Elites are thus engaged in a two-level game (Putnam, 1988). They are located at the intersection of two relations of interdependence. On the one side, state leaders need elites to mobilize support amongst the population and elites need support to gain access to state resources. This access is a necessity since, on the other side, elites need the support and the votes of the population, and the population needs the resources redistributed by this elite. Their imperative of survival is to keep their position; to accomplish this, they need to satisfy both sides of the relationship. The elite is likely to try to gain as much resources as possible from the state, and redistribute as few as possible to the followers, thus keeping a part for personal enrichment (de Mesquita, 2003). Elites can also find alternative sources of resources (foreign aid, economic activity) which can increase their independence toward the state. An independent elite can put pressures on state leaders to influence their politics or even act as challengers and try to replace the current state leaders (Beck, 2008; Radnitz, 2010)

In addition to this two-level game, elites are engaged in a horizontal competition among themselves for the control of clients (Lemieux, 1977). Mobilizing ethnicity might be a way to decrease the number of potential rivals since people will vote for their co-ethnics only. Intra-ethnic competition is however possible (Horowitz, 1985). Multi-ethnic coalitions of elites are also

possible, including coalitions with the purpose of challenging the state leaders, as often seen during revolutionary movements (Radnitz, 2010).

### *Citizens*

The meaning of survival for the population is more straightforward: in contexts marked by poverty as well as resource and job scarcity, survival can be understood in very economic (and physical) terms. Survival is not a matter of retaining a position in the social hierarchy, but a matter of life and death. Gaining access to networks of redistribution of state resource and to positions in the civil service and in the army are thus the main objectives of the members of the electorate. To do so, the population has one main leverage: the vote.

Indeed, many authors note that the introduction of elections gave the population an important tool to influence clientelist networks. Lemarchand notes that “the vote emerged as a critical political resource in the hands of the masses, a resource which could be traded for material rewards of all kinds, ranging from schools and piped water to scholarships and jobs” (1988: 152). By contrast, when countries returned to authoritarianism, or when political participation and democracy have declined, the reciprocity of clientelist networks has tended to diminish, and patrons redistributed fewer resources, preferring self-enrichment. “What must be stressed is the rapid spread of cynicism and corruption that has accompanied the decline of electoral politics” (Lemarchand, 1988: 153). To say it briefly, when clients have nothing to trade, “patrons have ceased to patronize” (Lemarchand, 1988: 155). The correlation seems to hold over time; thirty years later Van de Walle concludes: “As a system democratize and political competition grows more lively, one can expect clientelism to become more overtly redistributive in nature” (2007: 66).

However, the vote is not completely relevant in itself, it depends on the presence of competition amongst the elites. The existence of a multiplicity of potential patrons gives the population a certain autonomy *vis-à-vis* their current patron. Here again, in contexts where ethnicity is politicized, the number of patrons in competition might be reduced as voting for others than co-ethnics is impossible for security reasons.

In sum, the three types of actors identified in this model have specific imperatives for survival, and leverage at their disposition. Put briefly, these imperatives are of three types: electoral, economic, and security. Actors are expected to act instrumentally and develop strategies to minimize their costs and increase their benefits. Electoral institutions and party systems provide incentives and

constraints on actors' behaviour which will influence their strategic calculations. Consequently, actors will build different strategies of survival in different institutional structures. These strategies might lead to the activation of ethnic or of non-ethnic identities. Building on this basis, the next section studies the functioning of three models of ethnic conflict management in neo-patrimonial societies and their effects on the politicization of ethnic identities.

### **Institutions in Context: Three Models of Ethnic Conflict Management**

Beside radical solutions such as the territorial separation of ethnic groups and the partition of states advocated by Kaufmann (1996), three main models of ethnic conflict management have been identified in the literature. The first one, consociationalism, was discussed at length in chapter one of this thesis. The second can be called "enforced ethnic amnesia" (Lemarchand, 2008a: 73), it consists in the implementation of a majoritarian democracy, with rules prohibiting reference to ethnicity. The third is the "hegemonic exchange model". In this system, the ruling elites form a broad multi-ethnic coalition by co-opting the leaders of the main segments of society in order to stabilize their rule (Rothchild & Foley, 1988; Rothchild, 1997). This section studies how these three institutional models create a structure of incentives that affects the formation of party systems, as well as actors' behaviour toward mobilization of ethnic identities. I highlight the effects of these three systems on the triangle of ethnic conflict, to draw mostly pessimist conclusions about the ability of consociationalism and ethnic amnesia to foster conflict transformation and inter-ethnic reconciliation in post-conflict settings (also see Jarczewska, 2013).

#### ***Consociationalism and the Persistence of the Ethnic Cleavage***

The four components of consociational democracy—a grand coalition, segmental autonomies, proportional representation and minority vetoes—purposefully provide incentives for the political mobilization of ethnicity. As Lijphart notes, "it is in the nature of consociational democracy, at least initially, to make plural societies more thoroughly plural" (1977 : 42). Consociationalism aims to use societal "pillarization" or "segmentation", to allow representation of the various ethnic groups and accommodation at an elite level. This segmentation of society also implies that political parties are ethnic. As Maurice Duverger notes, "on the whole [proportional representation] maintains almost intact the structure of parties existing at the time of its appearance" (Horowitz, 1985: 645). Thus, in post-ethnic war contexts, both elites and citizens have strong institutional incentives for politically mobilizing ethnic identities.

At an elite level, leaders of all major groups are represented in the “grand coalition”. In the classic “corporate” version of consociational democracy (Lijphart, 1991), the distribution of seats for each group is pre-determined. This configuration provides strong incentives for leaders to mobilize ethnicity in their discourses and politics. Indeed, in this system, competition for access to power does not take place between ethnic groups, but between co-ethnics. Leaders need to form a winning coalition among the limited subset of their co-ethnics. Since leaders seek to minimize their costs, distributing public goods tends to be irrational since electors from other ethnic groups are necessarily not members of their winning coalition. On the other hand, the candidate or party which promises and indeed redistributes the most benefits to its co-ethnics will be the most likely to succeed. At an elector level, access to clientelist networks will be conditioned on ethnic identities, since the parties and the informal networks of redistribution are organized ethnically. Electors thus have economic incentives for the mobilization of their ethnic identity.

Placed in the context of the conflict triangle, consociationalism thus has three effects. Consociational democracy, by allowing for proportional representation of groups, may induce a more equal *structure* of society and distribution of resources. This structure, however, continues to be ethnically divided. As a result, the *strategies* adopted by actors may be peaceful rather than violent. However, no strong guarantee against a return to violence is provided and actors may well turn back to a violent strategy, for example if they come to put into question the power-sharing formula (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005). Finally, the dominant *cleavage* remains ethnicity. Consociationalism does not allow for the transformation of the hierarchy of cleavages in these societies. It provides incentives at both elite and citizen’s level which reinforce the political mobilization of ethnicity. As Deschouer concludes, “the pillarization did not only provide for a clear system of voter alignments, but also for a fixed language of politics. This has in the consociational countries produced a deeply frozen cleavage structure” (2003 : 221).

As highlighted in this analysis, this system provides incentives for the delivery of private or “club” goods and against the delivery of public goods. It therefore contributes to the perpetuation of ethnically-based clientelism. This analysis can be supported by empirical evidence. Haaß and Ottman (2015) identified a correlation between power-sharing and clientelism in their study of Liberia and Aceh, Indonesia. They argue that “power-sharing reinforces patterns of corruption and patronage, which are detrimental to sustainable peace and development in the long run” (2015: 1).

The example of Lebanon also illustrates the dynamic relationship between consociationalism, clientelism, and the politicization of ethnicity. Hamzeh shows how clientelism was developed and persisted in the country after the second world war. “To be sure, consociational democracy confessional representation provided access since 1943 to governmental patronage; and, in order to maintain a large clientele, it became essential for the *zu‘ama* to be regularly elected as deputies and appointed as ministers” (Hamzeh, 2010: 171). These networks were soon linked to sectarian political parties to form a system of “party-directed clientelism” (Hamzeh, 2010: 173). While rightist parties were directly sectarian and based on vertical clientelist channels, multi-ethnic leftist parties invoking ideologies also emerged. However, these “leftist political parties who have derived much of their support from heterogeneous urban masses failed to move to the public arena” (2010: 173). This can be explained by our model: as access to state resources was tied to ethnic clientelist networks, the electorate, the elite and state leaders had more economic and political incentives to mobilize ethnic rather than other identities. This dynamic also led to the development of a sectarian civil society, which in turn contributed to the reproduction of sectarianism in Lebanon (Clark and Salloukh, 2013; Kingston, 2013). In sum, the incentives provided by consociationalism for the formation of ethnic parties and informal networks in Lebanon, explain the persistence of the mobilization of ethnic identities despite the recurrent calls for the abolition of political sectarianism in the country.<sup>47</sup>

In neo-patrimonial societies, the effect of consociationalism and the segmentation of society are therefore arguably far from “relatively mild” as Lijphart described it (1977: 224). Lijphart’s assumption that “an extended period of successful consociational government may be able to resolve some of the major disagreements among the segments and thus to depoliticize segmental divergences, and it may also create sufficient mutual trust at both elite and mass levels to render itself superfluous” (1977: 228) seems rather dubious in post-conflict neo-patrimonial societies. The politicization of ethnicity is at best likely to remain constant, at worst likely to increase. This segmentation of society turns politics into a zero-sum game, which can lead to eruptions of ethnic violence (Rothchild and Roeder, 2005). The persistence of clientelism over time also hinders the development of efficient public services and, in the end, contributes to the weakness of the state.

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<sup>47</sup> The Lebanese consociational system, defined by the 1989 Taef agreement which ended the Lebanese civil war, was indeed, from the beginning and at least on paper, described as seen as a transitory solution. The Taef agreement clearly stated that “abolishing political sectarianism is a fundamental national objective. To achieve it, it is required that efforts be made in accordance with a phased plan.” (Chapter 1, art. 2G)

### *The Illusions of “Ethnic Amnesia”*

The opposite approach to ethnic conflict management has been the attempts to “erase” ethnicity from the public sphere. While consociationalism explicitly acknowledged ethnic divisions, this approach denies their existence and tries to enforce an “ethnic amnesia” (Lemarchand, 2008a: 73). This approach is often based on the assumption that ethnic divisions are a construction of the colonizers aimed at dividing communities. The solution to this problem is the complete erasing of all reference to ethnicity. “The rationale behind this is that ethnicity in politics inevitably leads to group-based antagonism, and is therefore likely to provoke political instability and violence. What is needed, therefore, are institutions (...) that ban or strongly reduce the impact of such ethnic or other segmentation on politics.” (Vandeginste, 2014: 267).

In societies marked by a long history of ethnic divisions, this system will however more plausibly mask ethnic divisions than make them disappear. Pre-existing incentives and informal institutions make a change in the politicization of ethnicity unlikely. Elites have incentives to maintain their pre-existing ethnically-exclusive clientelist networks, and citizens will continue to mobilize their ethnic identities to access these resources. Moreover, the elimination of reference to ethnicity also precludes both the establishment of guarantees for security and the undertaking of transitional justice processes or “truth and reconciliation” commissions, which may make inter-group reconciliation more difficult (Jarczewska, 2013). In sum, “ethnic amnesia” does nothing to change the *structure* of the society, or regulate the *strategic interactions* between belligerents. Although change in the dominant *cleavage* may occur on the long-run, it appears unlikely in a neo-patrimonial system and after ethnic violence.

In fact, the stability of an “ethnic amnesia” policy is only possible if the state is sufficiently strong to maintain stability. State leaders’ goodwill may increase the chances of success of this policy, but it is far from guaranteed. Rather, Kagame’s Rwanda or Buyoya’s Burundi show that this policy is often used to mask the domination of an ethnic minority. In Rwanda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) imposed a policy of ethnic amnesia after the 1994 genocide, reference to ethnicity was criminalized and ethnic party bans were adopted and recurrently used. However, these were mainly used to repress or forbid opposition parties, and mask ethnic domination (Lemarchand, 2006b; Niesen, 2013; Buckley-Zistel, 2006). As a result, although not overtly politicized since the regime is sufficiently strong to maintain itself in power, ethnic divisions are latent and the future is hard to predict. As Vandeginste diplomatically summarizes, “while the jury

is still out, most scholars are sceptical about the success of the promotion of Rwandanicity, even among urban youth” (Vandeginste, 2014: 274). In any case, this system has proven to be difficultly conducive to democracy.

### ***Informal Intra-elite Power-sharing: the Hegemonic Exchange Model***

A third model of ethnic conflict management, has been identified in the literature, the “hegemonic exchange” regimes. This type of system is characterised by informal elite power-sharing in a broadly inclusive ruling coalition. The politics of inclusion or cooptation of leaders from all segments of society typically lead to dominant or singly-party systems, which base their stability on accommodation of ethnic demand and “ethnic arithmetic” (Rothchild & Foley, 1988; Rothchild, 1997). Although state leaders’ goodwill play a role in the emergence of such systems, they are also based on more pragmatic calculations (Rothchild, 1997: 43). Due to the institutional weakness of the state, leaders recognise that the inclusion of opposition figures in a grand coalition is the best way to consolidate their rule (Rothchild & Foley, 1988: 238). “Unable to control and unwilling to accept the limitations of formal consociational model, ruling elites in a hegemonial exchange situation are ready to negotiate as necessary with the representatives of various local interests in order to accumulate power at the political centre” (1988: 249). In other words, state leaders adopt the politics of inclusive coalition as a strategy of survival: their neo-patrimonial imperatives of survival are the source of their accommodative behaviour. Communal elites, for their part, take advantage of this cooperation since it gives them access to state resources which can be used to sustain their clientelist networks (Beck, 2008). The people, finally, have economic incentives to adhere to the system since it gives them access to clientelist networks of redistribution. At the three levels, neo-patrimonial incentives act in favour of the mobilization of non-ethnic identities and the depoliticization of ethnicity.

In relation to ethnic conflict, this system has arguably positive impacts on the three tips of the triangle. The *strategy* adopted for the interaction between groups is cooperation and negotiation. As Rothchild observes, this strategy is likely to have self-reinforcing effects: “elite power sharing tends to make conflict more manageable by drawing the representatives of key interest groups into the decision-making circle. The effect of this inclusion is to encourage face-to-face encounters, thus breaking down the distance and promoting reciprocity among rival group leaders” (1997: 48). Regarding the *structure* of society, “ethnic arithmetic” and elite compromises are likely to lead to a fairer share of state resources, and structural grievances may thus decrease. Finally, the salience



of the ethnic *cleavage* may decrease over time. A durable shift in the hierarchy of cleavages is however not ensured so long a political liberalization has not occurred. As noted earlier, hegemonic exchange systems are typically dominant or single party systems. The transition to multi-party politics may well see the re-emergence of ethnic parties. However, if a multi-ethnic political opposition appears, the cleavage between this opposition and the ruling party may become prevalent and ethnicity might be sustainably depoliticized. Overall, although such an evolution is not guaranteed, the nation-building legacy of hegemonic exchange systems has the potential to be positive on the long run: “to the extent that cooperative behaviour is rewarded, such a structure of incentives can lead to the development of linkages and negotiation practices that will carry over into the phase of full political liberalization” (Rothchild, 1997: 48).

Examples of this type of informal power-sharing are numerous, but a particularly eloquent one is Senegal. Although Senegal counts a variety of ethnic groups, ethnicity is not polarized and ethnic groups do in general cooperate peacefully<sup>48</sup> (Beck, 2008: 50). This can be explained by the politics of inclusion led by Senghor’s party after independence.

Léopold Senghor developed his party, the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS), which then became the Socialist Party (PS), by building nation-wide clientelist networks, reaching all regions and sections of society in Senegal. To do so, Senghor developed close ties with the powerful marabouts, heads of Islamic brotherhoods<sup>49</sup> as well as with civil society organizations. He also conducted series of mergers with other important political parties (Beck, 2008: 53). This strategy of inclusion led to a party system that was heavily dominated by Senghor’s party, and finally became a *de facto* single party system. The single party, however, permitted the integration of all major segments of the population at two levels. At the elite level, it formed a “grand coalition” with leaders of the different groups. In the PS, the accommodation between divergent interest happened internally, although it sometimes led to important internal factional rivalries (Dahou & Foucher, 2004: 16). At the citizen level, this system permitted the integration of rural citizens to the central state, through their leaders, but also through Sufi symbolism, which was used as a “language” for integration (O’Brien, 1975; Villalon, 1995). Clientelist networks also created a

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<sup>48</sup> Except for the Casamance region, which needs not be developed here

<sup>49</sup> Senegalese Islam is organized around Sufi brotherhoods, and most Senegalese belong to one of these brotherhoods. The three major ones are the Muridiya, the Tijaniya, the Qadiriya. These brotherhoods are organized hierarchically and act as powerful clientelistic networks with close links to the state. They also controlled the peanut culture, which was of central importance to the Senegalese economy (Beck, 2008: 50).

linkage between citizen demands and the central state. Marabouts' position, as indispensable partners of the state, gave them a certain leverage, which they sometimes used to defend rural interests against the state, as during the peanut economy crisis in 1968-69 (O'Brien, 2003: 37). Overall, this created a political system where ethnicity is not politicized. The system later gradually democratized despite remaining clientelist, to form a "clientelist democracy" where political cleavages are not ethnic (Beck, 2008).

### ***Potential for Conflict Management***

In conclusion, in a post-ethnic war neo-patrimonial context, the prospects for both consociationalism and ethnic amnesia to succeed in managing ethnic conflicts appear to be limited. Consociationalism may create a fairer structure of society and distribution of state resources, and allow for a stable political system, which were the objectives of Lijphart (1977). This system, however, has the disadvantage of maintaining the politicization of ethnicity and fostering clientelism, which carry bad prospects for long term stability, democratisation and economic development. "Ethnic amnesia" has limited chances of building a feeling of national belonging in the long-term as it hinders the reconciliation process and can be used to mask structural domination of an ethnic group. Long term depoliticization of ethnicity is thus not guaranteed by this system either.

Hegemonic exchange regimes, on the other hand, emerge from the joint neo-patrimonial imperatives of survival of state leaders, elites and citizens. They hold the potential of creating a favourable environment for further democratization by creating habits of inter-ethnic cooperation and depoliticization of ethnicity. It should be underlined, however, that the dominant party system is problematic from the point of view of democracy, and may also degenerate into autocratic rule. Spears (2013) has argued that these instances of "African informal power-sharing" may have the best chances to succeed in establishing peace in divided societies because they emerge from African leaders themselves. He argues against the third-party interventions:

The objective in this article, then, is not to explain how the international community can or should be more proactive in the mediation of African conflict. Rather it is the opposite: to allow inclusion to happen on its own. African leaders know that in order to secure and sustain power, they will need to build genuine authority. Insofar as it is necessary, they will also, necessarily, engage in political bargaining with both allies and adversaries to enhance their political base (Spears, 2013: 50).

The example of Senegal illustrates the appropriateness of Spears' observation of the potential of success held by informal power-sharing. However, Spears' conclusion is not completely convincing for post-conflict peace and democracy building in divided societies. Indeed, his assumption that "the kind of power-sharing in evidence in Africa is more likely to *emerge* through incremental and indigenously inspired bargaining than to be planned by outsiders" (Spears 2013: 43) can be questioned.

In post-conflict settings, there are many reasons to believe that, in most cases, informal power-sharing will *not* be established without external intervention. A first reason is that, when they hold sufficient resources to ensure the party domination, state leaders have no incentive to share power. Second, as observed by Horowitz (1985), even in cases where power-sharing would be beneficial to the society, post-conflict emotions might hinder the pragmatism necessary for ethnic accommodation. As Chabal and Daloz (1999) note, elites might also have interests in the perpetuation of instability and benefits in the "instrumentalization of disorder". This is even more true in protracted conflicts where some actors take advantage of the continuation of war and sustain violence for greedy reasons (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). As advocated by the promoters of centripetalism, careful institutional engineering might instead be necessary to shape the incentive structure in a way that encourages leaders to adopt a conciliatory attitude. While intra-party power-sharing might have the best chances for changing the cleavage hierarchy after an ethnic war, its emergence might need a little help from the outside.

### ***Centripetalism in Neo-patrimonial Societies***

The power-sharing model for the depoliticization of ethnic identities presented in this chapter might provide this external input. If successfully implemented, it appears to have the most chances to succeed in neo-patrimonial societies. Indeed, multi-ethnic parties provide incentives at all level for the depoliticization of ethnic identities. State leaders and the elite must campaign for a multi-ethnic electorate, since their parties are multi-ethnic. And citizens have incentives to mobilize non-ethnic identities to gain access to parties' clientelist networks. As the next chapter will illustrate, the successful adoption and implementation of this model also appears to be dependent upon the compatibility of incentives provided by the electoral system and neo-patrimonial imperatives. In Burundi, the ethnic quotas, the ethnic party bans and the neo-patrimonial imperatives have provided mutually reinforcing incentives for party leaders to de-ethnicize their parties. This suggests that neo-patrimonial imperatives should be taken into consideration while designing

power-sharing systems in neo-patrimonial contexts. These same imperatives of survival however, might also be the source of some risks for the system.

## **Risks and Weaknesses**

This framework does not offer a panacea to ethnic conflict. It only aims at establishing an institutional framework which allows for and fosters the depoliticization of ethnicity. This section highlights two risks associated with the implementation of this framework. First, given that politicization can come from non-institutional factors such as violence, this framework cannot guarantee that ethnic politics will not re-emerge. A second risk is that this framework, in neo-patrimonial systems, may lead to the emergence of dominant parties, which may threaten democracy. A close examination of these two problems allows me to argue that they depend on factors which are not related to the institutions and that close monitoring of power-sharing agreements and long-term engagement in the peacebuilding process is needed to address them.

### ***Power-sharing and Democracy***

The question of the compatibility of power-sharing with democracy has been controversial in the literature on consociationalism from its beginning (Lijphart, 1999). The framework developed above introduces a new risk: it may provide incentives for the formation of dominant parties which may become authoritarian. This is because incentives are oriented toward centralization of votes in one party. State leaders are presented with incentives for the integration of candidates with various ethnic backgrounds. In a system where parties do not present strong ideological programs and where parties are multi-ethnic, elites are not tied very strongly to a party and may tend to change their allegiance toward the party which is the most likely to win in order to access state resources. Citizens, for their part, also tend to vote for the party which they expect will win in order to access clientelist networks.

In other words, once a party takes ascendancy, it tends to centralize votes and become dominant. This suggests a causal mechanism for Horowitz's empirical observation that "systems involving multiethnic parties are generally of two types. The multiethnic party either competes with ethnic parties on one or more flanks, as in the case of the Congress Party in the Punjab (...); or else the multiethnic party moves to a single-party position, as the PDCI and a number of other multiethnic parties in Africa have" (Horowitz, 1985: 304). Kadima (2008) confirms this problem in his study of ethnic party bans in Africa.

Although cooperation between different political parties has contributed tremendously to nation-building<sup>50</sup> in African plural societies, it has, at the same time, affected party systems by contributing to the emergence of entrenchment of dominant party systems and weakening the junior partners in alliances and coalitions, often in favour of ruling parties (2008: 214).

There is no easy solution to this problem but three comments are needed. First, as Arian and Barnes remind us, a dominant party system is not in essence non-democratic: “in a sense, it is a competitive system in which electoral results are held constant” (1974: 613). That the dominant party later takes an autocratic turn is possible but so is a return to more electoral competition. In fact, the dominant party system is at a crossroad and its evolution toward democracy or authoritarianism depends on external factors. As Rothchild writes, “gradual movement from partial hegemonic regime to greater political liberalization, even full democracy, can take place—but it is certainly not a given” (1997: 47).

Second, a phase of domination of the political system by a multi-ethnic party may have a positive legacy in terms of nation-building and democratization. Dominant party have the advantage of being extremely stable; they allow for the reinforcement of institutions (which is central to a successful peacebuilding process according to Paris, 2004) and may contribute to the depoliticization of ethnicity. “The dominant party is a microcosm of a partially plural society. Its factions reflect the divisions of the society; its internal decision-making processes are, in effect, identical with those of the polity, and since they are, the close identification between party and polity is reinforced in the public mind” (1974: 602). As we have seen in the last subsection, such types of “hegemonic exchange” systems, with elite power-sharing can lay the basis for – but not ensure – democratization by reducing the divisions of the society. But, as Rothchild notes, “clearly, in the absence of an overriding agreement regarding norms and values, democratic regimes have been difficult to create and, once launched, have inevitably involved risks” (Rothchild, 1997: 48). Jarstad also acknowledges this reality: “successful democratization requires a minimum level of security and consensus on which territory and people constitute the state: without a defined demos, how can you have a democracy?” (Jarstad, 2008a: 28). The dominant party can create the unity that is necessary for a successful functioning of multi-party democracy.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> “Nation building can be defined as the process of constructing a nation by using state power with the aim of unifying the various communal groups within a state and ensuring political cohesion and stability, social harmony and a sense of common (desired) destiny” (Kadima, 2008: 202).

<sup>51</sup> The case of Senegal described in the last subsection illustrates this process. Another example is the formation of the state in Israel. Migdal (1988: chapter 4) notes that despite a great heterogeneity among the Jews in Israel, these ethnic difference “did not become highly politicized” (1988: 167). He explains this by aggregative effects

The question is thus: what are the factors that allow for a return to a more competitive democratic system and prevent an authoritarian turn of the dominant party? In neo-patrimonial societies, Beck (2008) and Radnitz (2010) suggest that the emergence of an independent elite, sufficiently autonomous from the state leaders might be the key. Beck (2008) studies the role of the marabouts in Senegalese democracy. Paying attention to the variations in types of clientelism, she notes that the power of the elites depends on the social authority they have on their followers, and the political autonomy they have toward state leaders. Depending on these two variables Beck differentiates between “limited”, “autonomous”, “dependant”, and “influential” brokers (Beck, 2008: 17). In brief, her argument is that the more independent a broker, the more influential. Democratic alternation in Senegal, can indeed be explained by the pressures and shifts in loyalties of influential mourid marabouts (Galvan, 2001a, 2001b; Fatton, 1987; Beck, 2008).

Because state leaders in hegemonic exchange regimes are dependent on the clientelist networks of the elite, the elite which is not very dependant on state leaders’ resources can act as a challenger. Radnitz (2010) also focuses on the emergence and strategies of this type of “independent elite”, although he tries to explain mass mobilization and revolutions in central Asia. He shows that the political autonomy of the brokers depends in great part on their ability to mobilize resources from other sources than the state. When an elite is sufficiently independent and has resources at its disposition, it can develop autonomous clientelist networks. “By maintaining a revenue base apart from the state, autonomous elites are able to disburse some of their personal fortunes as charity, performing a vital function—provision of welfare—that the state is unable or unwilling to perform” (Radnitz, 2010: 28). These networks can be utilized in a strategy of “subversive clientelism”: mobilizing these networks against state leaders either while voting or in mass protests. “If an elite has made sufficient investments—symbolic and material—in cultivating a base, he can count on a local network of activists and a reliable voting block if running for office or, if necessary, as a resource to be mobilized as a last line of defense against a predatory state” (Radnitz, 2010: 29).

The theories of Beck (2008) and Radnitz (2010) suggest that the emergence of a strong independent elite may allow for democratic alternation and prevent an authoritarian turn of multi-ethnic dominant parties. The dominant party system is at a crossroad and can become either

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of the period of dominance of the labour party in the country. (It should of course be noted that other factors such as continuous confrontation with Palestinians must also be taken into consideration to explain the low salience of ethnic identities amongst Jews).

democratic or authoritarian. From the point of view of the international community, close monitoring, and possible pressures or sanctions (Rothchild, 1997) can help accompanying the process of democratic consolidation. A subsequent issue of importance is the form of the opposition parties that may emerge at the flanks. As underlined by Arian and Barnes, “the [dominant] party tends to take on some characteristics of a catchall party in a two-party system. Its competitors, however, are more likely to behave like the sectarian, group-specific parties often associated with a multiparty electoral system” (1974: 610). Ethnic parties bans and other regulations may provide institutional defense against the emergence of ethnic opposition. Here again, the international community can provide assistance for the effective enforcement of these institutional dispositions. In any case, the emergence a strong, independent, and multi-ethnic opposition is important for the consolidation of democracy in post-war settings. The development of such an opposition could be the object of fruitful future research in the field of ethnic conflict management (Olukoshi, 1998).

### ***Risks of Re-emergence of the Ethnic Cleavage***

While the institutional framework presented in this thesis leaves room for and fosters the depoliticization of ethnicity, it does not pretend to make ethnic identities disappear. Although ethnic party prohibition might be an important safeguard against the re-politicization of ethnicity, this process cannot be fully prevented. This is for two reasons. On the one hand, the memory of conflict and the traumas associated with violence are deep and lasting in post-conflict settings. Even if the institutions foster depoliticization of ethnicity and inter-ethnic cooperation, the reconciliation process is likely to be difficult and to take decades (Sluzki, 2003; Chayes & Minow, 2003; Charbonneau and Parent, 2012). On the other hand, politicizing ethnicity may still be an attractive strategy of mobilization for opportunistic leaders (Wilkinson, 2006). When the system is subject to a stress, which can, for example, be an election, mass mobilizations, the departure of a peacekeeping mission, or a conflict in a neighbouring country, politicians might try to use the remaining ethnic resentment and fears to mobilize supporters. Groups of ethnic hardliners may also try to create ethnic violence and spoil the peace for ideological reasons.

Although institutional guarantees for security and the regulation of political parties might help reduce the probability of return to ethnic politics, they may not always be sufficient. This underscores the importance of the effective implementation of the peace accord (Horowitz, 2014). It can also be noted that, in this regard, psychological approaches to reconciliation, transitional

justice and “bottom-up” peacebuilding might usefully complement institutions and allow their optimal functioning and survival (Chayes & Minow, 2003; Charbonneau and Parent, 2012). Finally, a hypothesis which will be further discussed in the next chapter is that the development of a multi-ethnic associational network may decrease extremism amongst the population and hinder the re-emergence of ethnic conflict.

### ***The Necessity of Long-term Monitoring***

In summary, this chapter proposed a theoretical framework for understanding the depoliticization of ethnicity in neo-patrimonial post-conflict hybrid systems. After modeling the behaviour of actors at state leaders, elite and citizen’s levels, I demonstrated that neither consociationalism nor the “ethnic amnesia” policy held great prospects for the depoliticization of ethnicity over time. Hegemonic exchange regimes have a higher nation-building potential but are unlikely to emerge in post-ethnic war settings. The theoretical framework I propose is based on the assumptions that, in post-war settings, individuals will need strong guarantees for their security and their political representation, but that they may accept to be represented by multi-ethnic parties, if they derive benefits from so doing. The framework I propose thus includes security guarantees, guarantees for political representation and institutional provisions fostering the emergence of multi-ethnic parties. This model can be institutionalized in various ways and is bound to allow for a depoliticization of ethnicity. It however does not provide a complete guarantee against the re-emergence of politicized ethnic identities and may lead to the establishment of dominant party systems. However, efficient implementation of the model as well as international monitoring might help overcome these weaknesses. Both of these risks depend on non-institutional factors and call for a long-term engagement by third parties – state or NGOs. These risks also show that other processes such as economic development are important factors influencing the success of power-sharing agreements. In any case, this discussion shows that peacebuilding and democratic consolidation processes that follow the adoption of power-sharing accords must be understood as a long-term process which necessitates support and monitoring from the international community.



## Chapter 6: Politicization and Depoliticization of Ethnicity in Burundi

“We are all Burundi”.  
President Pierre Buyoya, 1988<sup>52</sup>.

However unpredictable the future might be, the fundamental change that has been witnessed in the Burundian political dynamic since the end of the war is striking. While Burundi’s post-independence history has been marked by ethnic domination and exclusion as well as high-intensity ethnic violence, the salience of the ethnic cleavage has decreased in a “remarkably rapid fashion” (Reyntjens, 2005: 132) after the Arusha Peace Agreement established a power-sharing political system in 2000. Today, the political game takes place between multi-ethnic political parties (Lemarchand, 2006a, Tobolka, 2014, Alfieri, 2016a), and the social salience of ethnicity has diminished (Berckmoes, 2014; Alfieri, 2016b; Schraml, 2011). As an observer has recently reported, in today’s Burundi, people consider that ethnicity “distinguishes, but does not divide”<sup>53</sup> (Lema Landu, 2015).

The depoliticization of ethnicity in Burundi and its fast pace constitute a particularly puzzling enigma (Lemieux, 2011). Indeed, this rapid shift is surprising with respect to the expectations of the literatures on consociationalism, on post-war reconciliation and on emotions in ethnic conflict, all of which would suggest that ethnic divisions are likely to remain politically and socially salient in the long term, especially after high levels of violence. From its first formulation, consociational theory predicted that power-sharing should increase the political salience of ethnic identities (Lijphart, 1977: 42). This point has later been underlined by both proponents as well as critics of the approach (McGarry and O’Leary, 2006a, 2006b; Rothchild and Roeder, 2005; Jarstad, 2008). For its part, the literature on reconciliation suggests that deep psychological traumas render reconciliation between former adversaries a long and difficult process (Charbonneau & Parent, 2012; Chayes & Minow, 2003; Sluzki, 2003). This is even more true for ethnic conflict, since

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<sup>52</sup> (Quoted by Lemarchand, 1994: 132)

<sup>53</sup> Translated by the author

violence fosters ethnic identity formation (Fearon and Laitin, 2000a; Appadurai, 1998), group separation, the development of extremist discourses (Kaufmann, 1996; Horowitz, 2001) as well as the emergence of “mythico-histories” (Malkki, 1995) and deeply rooted emotions (Petersen, 2002; Schlee, 2002) which might strain inter-group relations even after peace agreements are signed. In brief, “the high level of violence during the war coming after decades of accumulated exclusion, mistrust, and resentments would seem to make [Burundi] a hard setting for quota-based integration policies to succeed” (Samii, 2013: 560). Yet, it did.<sup>54</sup>

This chapter investigates this enigma. By doing so, it conducts a plausibility probe of the theory developed in the preceding chapters. As explained in the introduction to the thesis, this plausibility test is reinforced by the fact that Burundi can be considered a “crucial case” for this theory. It is indeed a “least-likely” case for the depoliticization of ethnicity and the success of power-sharing (Eckstein, 2000).

I argue that the power-sharing agreement adopted in Burundi corresponds more closely to the institutional framework for the depoliticization of ethnicity presented in chapter 5, than to the classic consociational model. Indeed, the power-sharing dispositions of the 2005 constitution introduce strong guarantees for the political and military representation, and for the security of ethnic categories, as well as dispositions which ban ethnic parties and provide incentives for multi-ethnic parties to emerge (Vandeginste, 2015; Lothe, 2007). I explain both the survival of this power-sharing system and its success in depoliticizing ethnicity by the incentives it provided to citizens, elites and state incumbents alike.

I proceed as follows. The first part of the chapter retraces the history of politicization of ethnic identities in Burundi from the pre-colonial period to the civil war. In this process, I argue that formal and informal institutions as well as violence played a major role. This allows me to place the current period in historical context, and to provide a plausibility probe for the theory of the politicization of ethnicity proposed in chapter 2, 3 and 4. The second part focuses on consociational explanations for the relative success of power-sharing in the post-war period in Burundi. After describing the power-sharing institutions and their effects, I argue that the consociational approach experiences much difficulty in explaining these developments because the dynamics at play are in fact not the ones expected by Lijphart. In the third part, I argue that the

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<sup>54</sup> At least between 2005 and 2015, and if we define success as the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage.

model follows instead the centripetal logic of integration described in chapter 5. I use the theory of incentives to explain the survival of the power-sharing system and the depoliticization of ethnicity in Burundi. In conclusion, I evaluate the plausibility of my theory with respect to the Burundian case and comment on recent developments in the country. Amongst these I note that the dynamics of system had the negative effect of fostering the emergence of a dominant party system, which clouds the prospects for democratic consolidation in Burundi.

## **The Politicization of Ethnicity in Burundi**

### ***The Precolonial Period: the Multiplicity of Identities***

Burundi is often presented as a small and poor country of the Great Lakes Region, with a population of 11 million people reportedly composed of 85% of Hutus, 14% of Tutsis and 1% of Twas (CIA World Factbook, 2016; Lothe, 2007: 14). The origin of these categories, however, is a matter of historical controversy (Lemarchand, 1970; Lemarchand & Martin, 1974; Vansina, 1972; Weinstein, 1976; Malkki, 1995: chapter 1; Chrétien, 1993). Briefly summarized, the debate opposes a Franco Burundian school, led by Jean-Pierre Chrétien (1993) to a Belgian Burundian School, led by René Lemarchand (1970) and Philip Reyntjens (1994). Noting the absence of cultural, language or physical differentiation between Hutu and Tutsis, the French School argued that ethnic differences were not real but that they were invented during the colonial period. For its part, the Belgian school acknowledges the existence of these categories and traces them back in all likelihood to different migration waves (Lothe, 2007: 47). The debate was not purely academic; the two theoretical positions were instrumentalized by ethnic leaders: the first by Tutsis and the second by Hutus. Both positions are described by Reyntjens as “*vues de l’esprit*” “which translate a justification, a defense reflex, a well as hope<sup>55</sup>” from these groups (Reyntjens, 1994: 10). Historical data does not help in solving the debate since “oral traditions are silent” on these questions (Chrétien, 1993: 316).

Most observers, however, acknowledge that these categories existed before colonization. When German, and then Belgian colonizers arrived in Burundi,<sup>56</sup> they found a kingdom, which already existed as an independent political unit, and is often referred to as a “nation-state” (Reyntjens,

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<sup>55</sup> « Ces deux versions sont des vues de l’esprit, traduisant une justification, un réflexe de défense et un espoir » (Reyntjens, 1994: 10).

1994: 17). The population was however, “classified” in four pre-existing *amooko*: ganwa (baganwa), tutsi (batutsi), hutu (bahutu), and twa (batwa). Interestingly, the Kirundi word *amooko* does not mean “group”, but rather “category, kind, specie”, “a unit in a system of classification” (Chrétien, 1993: 316). The Ganwa were members of the royal family, the Hutu and Tutsi formed the majority of the population, and the Twa, a small minority, were regarded as inferior by the others (Malkii, 1995: 21-22).

These categories can be considered ethnic since their membership is transmitted by descent (Trouwborst, 1961). However, it is necessary to mention that they contained a degree of fluidity. The difference between Hutus and Tutsis is often considered a professional specialization, Tutsis being pastoralists and Hutus agriculturalists (Daley, 2006: 664). These occupational statuses were far from rigid. Tutsis also had cultivations, and Hutus had cows (Chrétien, 1993: 317; Malkki, 1995: 20-21). More importantly, it was possible to change ethnicity: “passages from one group to another (that is, from the status of Hutu to that of Tutsi, the opposite being virtually unheard of) was not uncommon”, Lemarchand notes (1994: 8). The Ganwa category also shows the relative fluidity of identities; princes “lost their princely status and became Tutsis whenever a king bearing their dynastic name ascended to the throne—a phenomenon known as *gutahira*, loosely translated as ‘social demotion’” (Lemarchand, 1994: 8).

Arguably more important than this limited fluidity of ethnic identities is the fact that ethnicity was neither the only nor the principal political and social cleavage in pre-colonial Burundi. Trouwborst notes that “the relations between superiors and inferiors in Burundi were determined by at least three structures, a political structure, a clientship structure and a caste structure” (1962: 9). A same individual, Trouwborst explains, could have different roles in each of these structures and be considered superior, inferior or equal to the same other individual depending on the structure activated in specific situations (1962: 10-11). Lemarchand underlines the necessity to distinguish, in pre-colonial Burundi, between social status and ethnicity. Complicating the matter, however, is the fact that the same terms (Hutu and Tutsi) are utilized to designate both phenomena:

In Kirundi, the term has two separate meanings: one refers to its cultural or ethnic underpinnings, the other to its social connotations. In the latter sense, Hutu refers to a “social subordinate” in relation to somebody higher up in a pecking order. (...) Thus a Tutsi cast in the role of client vis-à-vis a wealthier patron would be referred to as “Hutu,” even though his cultural identity remained Tutsi. Similarly, a prince was a Hutu in relation to the king, and a high ranking Tutsi was a Hutu in relation to a prince (1994: 10).

In addition to clientelist and political roles, other identities such as clans, kinship affiliations, regional affiliations or intra-ethnic categories (the Tutsis were divided between Tutsi-Hima and Tutsi-Banyaruguru) played important roles in defining social hierarchies. By no means was ethnicity the only determinant of social status (Lemarchand, 1994: 11-13; Berckmoes, 2014: 59-62; Kadende-Kaiser & Kaiser, 1997: 31).

Prior to colonization, political conflict in Burundi was therefore not ethnic. Although “pre-colonial Burundi had a long tradition of war”, these wars were motivated by either territorial conquest or defense (Alfieri, 2016b: 237); they could also be wars of succession (Trouwborst, 1961) which resulted from competition for power between Ganwa clans (the principal clans being the Batare and the Bezi) (Berckmoes, 2014: 60). “However, everyday political life was not marked by physical violence, and violence was not an ordinary way to rule” (Alfieri, 2016b: 237). This absence of ethnic conflict can be explained by the multiplicity of politically and socially relevant identities.

The multiplicity of cleavages was expressed in political institutions, but also in informal institutions, which are identified in the literature as a major source of stability and unity beside royalty. Clientelist relationships were widespread in pre-colonial Burundi. Known as *ubugabire* or *bugabire*, dyadic clientelist relationships were based on asymmetry, but also on reciprocity and mutual benefits. The patron would most often give his client a cow (sometimes land or other goods), in exchange for loyalty and various services (Trouwborst, 1961; Chrétien, 1993: 318; Maquet, 1961). Although hierarchical, these contracts created links of solidarity, loyalty, interdependence and even strong friendship between patrons and clients (Trouwborst, 1961: 68). These networks were typically multi-ethnic. They “functioned at all levels of society and associated Bahutu and Batutsis” (Gahama & Mvuyekure, 2003: 309). As such, these informal institutions were central in maintaining social cohesion and stability in Burundian society (Lemarchand, 1994: 12-13). In fact, “through the institution of clientship (*bugabire*) Hutu and Tutsi were caught in a web of interlocking relationships extending from the very top of the social pyramid to its lower echelons, with the Mwami [the king] acting as the supreme Patron—which in turn underscores the unifying aspects of the monarchy as a symbol and an institution” (Lemarchand & Martin, 1974: 7).

In brief, multiple cleavages existed in pre-colonial Burundi and were expressed in formal and informal institutions, which contributed to social cohesion in the country (Daley, 2006: 666). To

use the vocabulary developed in this research, the repertoire of identities that could be activated was far from being restricted to ethnicity. This contrasts with the situation 60 years later when ethnicity became the dominant identity that could be activated politically. The process is summarized by Lemarchand: “from a society characterized by complex socio-political hierarchies, Burundi has now [1994] become greatly simplified, consisting of separate and mutually antagonistic ethnic aggregates” (1994: 14).

The rest of this section traces the process by which individual identities that can be politically activated were narrowed down, in other words, the politicization of ethnic identities. For clarity purposes, I somewhat artificially discuss institutional factors and the role of violence separately. The discussion also allows for a brief overview of the history of Burundi.

### ***Institutional Factors of Politicization***

The arrival of Europeans in the Great Lakes region dates back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After a bloody conquest, Germany established a colony in the Kingdom of Burundi in 1903. After World War I, Belgium occupied these territories and was attributed the mandate over the ‘Ruanda-Urundi’ area in 1924 (Berckmoes, 2014: 56-7). Given the strength of pre-existing political structures and the lack of resources, Germans decided to apply indirect rule (see Mamdani, 1996; Young, 1994) in Burundi. Belgium continued with this policy (Reyntjens, 1994: 17).

The sources of politicization of ethnicity can be traced back to this period as Europeans applied their racist preconceptions to determine political hierarchies in their colony. According to the “Hamitic myth”, which guided European policies in the region, “everything valuable in Africa had been brought there by Hamites” (Reyntjens, 1994: 18). The Tutsis were supposedly “hamitic” populations, descendants of Cham, and originating from Egypt or Caucasus (Malkki, 1995: 29), while the Hutus were “bantous” local populations. The stereotypes attributed physical and moral qualities to both groups. The Tutsis were considered “faux nègres”, white people with a dark skin, and thus “naturally superior” to Hutus and adapted for ruling (Chrétien, 1993).

In the 1930s, Belgian colonizers undertook a wide administrative reform. Based on the Hamitic myth, they adopted a policy of “tutsification”. As per the data (see table 3) provided by Chrétien (1993), although the Ganwa had historically represented most the chiefs, by 1929, Hutus and Tutsis had respectively 20 and 23% of the chiefdoms. Hutu chiefs were however progressively replaced until all political power was removed from Hutu hands. In 1945, Tutsis occupied 10 out

of 35 chief positions while Hutus occupied none. The monopolization of power is still more striking if we consider the fact that, since the end of the monarchy in 1966, Ganwa are generally classified as Tutsis (Reyntjens, 1994: 21). There were also important inequalities in education. The system was indeed designed to build a Tutsi elite and access was difficult for Hutus. The latter were thus less educated and, therefore, less eligible (Daley, 2006: 665).

The colonial period has undeniably established the basis of a politicization of ethnicity. However, while some ethnic tensions apparently already existed (Kadende-Kaiser & Kaiser, 1997: 333), the political sphere was not ethicized under colonization and in the first years of independence. When the country gained independence on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1962, it was still a constitutional monarchy and the political game was organized around the two main Ganwa clans, Batare and Bezi. The UPRONA (Union pour le Progrès National, pro-Bezi party), led by the charismatic Prince Louis Rwagasore, won the first elections in 1961 (Lemarchand, 1994). At the time, it was still a multi-ethnic party. A few months later, however, Rwagasore was assassinated and ethnic tensions arose amongst UPRONA members. The then recent revolution in Rwanda, where Hutus had become politically dominant, created fears amongst Tutsis that the same model would be applied in Burundi. The answer of Tutsis to these fears seems to correspond to the “security dilemma” theory: preemptive action guaranteed that they would not be dominated (Uvin, 1999). In 1965, a coup led by Tutsi-Hima officer Michel Micombero, put an end to the monarchy and, by the same token, to the political participation of Hutus (see table 4).

Table 3: Chiefdom Repartition in Burundi (1929-1945)

Territoires	Nombre total	Batare	Bezi	Batutsi	Bahutu
<i>1929</i>					
Usumbura	16	1	4	6	5
Muramvya	15	4	2	7	2
Rutana	15	11	1	0	3
Ngozi	10	1	6	3	0
Ruyigi	6	6	0	0	0
Bururi	13	6	5	1	1
Kitega	54	10	17	11	16
Muhinga	4	2	0	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>133</b> (100 %)	<b>41</b> (31 %)	<b>35</b> (26 %)	<b>30</b> (23 %)	<b>27</b> (20 %)
<i>1933</i>					
Usumbura	13	2	3	6	2
Rutana	5	5	0	0	0
Ngozi	6	1	4	1	0
Ruyigi	4	4	0	0	0
Bururi	7	2	4	0	1
Kitega	8	1	7	0	0
Muhinga	3	1	2	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b> (100 %)	<b>16</b> (35 %)	<b>20</b> (43 %)	<b>7</b> (15 %)	<b>3</b> (7 %)
<i>1937</i>					
Usumbura	7	1	2	4	0
Muramvya	4	0	1	2	1
Rutana	4	4	0	0	0
Ngozi	6	1	4	1	0
Ruyigi	4	4	0	0	0
Bururi	7	2	4	1	0
Kitega	9	2	7	0	0
Muhinga	3	1	2	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b> (100 %)	<b>15</b> (34 %)	<b>20</b> (45 %)	<b>8</b> (19 %)	<b>1</b> (2 %)
<i>1945</i>					
Usumbura	6	1	0	5	0
Muramvya	2	0	1	1	0
Rutana	3	2	0	1	0
Ngozi	4	1	3	0	0
Ruyigi	3	2	0	1	0
Bururi	6	1	3	2	0
Kitega	7	0	7	0	0
Muhinga	4	1	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b> (100 %)	<b>8</b> (23 %)	<b>17</b> (48 %)	<b>10</b> (29 %)	<b>0</b> (0 %)

Source: Chrétien, 1993; Gahama & Mvuyekure, 2003.



**Table 4: Ethnic Composition of Governments in Burundi (1961-1993)**

Government head: title and ethnic origin	Duration and fate of government head	No. of Hutu	No. of Tutsi	Total
Louis Rwagasore, Prime Minister, Ganwa	2 weeks: Sept. – Oct. 1961 (assassinated)	n/a	n/a	n/a
André Muhirwa, Prime Minister, Tutsi	18 months: Oct. 1961 – June 1963 (resigned)	4 (37%)	7 (63%)	11
Pierre Ngendandumwe, Prime Minister, Hutu	9 months: June 1963 – March 1964 (resigned)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	13
Albin Nyamoya, Prime Minister, Tutsi	9 months: March 1964 – Jan. 1965 (resigned)	5 (38%)	8 (62%)	13
Pierre Ngendandumwe, Prime Minister, Hutu	1 week: 7 – 15 Jan. 1965 (assassinated)	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	15
Joseph Bamina, Prime Minister, Hutu	8 months: Jan. – Sept. 1965 (executed)	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	15
Leopold Bihumugani (Biha), Prime Minister, Tutsi	14 months: Sept. 1965 – Nov. 1966 (arrested)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10
Michel Micombero, President, Tutsi	10 years: Dec. 1966 – Nov. 1976 (overthrown)	5 (36%)	9 (64%)	14 (Dec. 1966)
Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, President, Tutsi	10 years: Nov. 1976 – Sept. 1987 (overthrown)	4 (20%)	16 (80%)	20 (Nov. 1976)
Pierre Buyoya, President, Tutsi	5 years: Sept. 1987 – July 1993 (lost democratic elections)	5 (26%)	14 (74%)	19 (1987)

*Source: Ndikumana: 2005: 416*

**Table 5: Classification of Provinces according to their “Privilege Index”**

	Number of pupils	Number of classrooms
Privileged	Muramvya (0.25), Cibitoke (0.33), Makamba (0.46), Karuzi (0.50), Bubanza (0.73), Cankuzo (0.78), Rutana (0.83)	Muramvya (0.25), Karuzi (0.37), Cankuzo (0.43), Makamba (0.61), Rutana (0.74), Bururi (0.80), Bubanza (0.91)
Consistent	Bujumbura (1.00), Bururi (1.00)	Bujumbura (1.00)
Underprivileged	Ngozi (4.52), Kayanza (2.34), Kirundo (2.00), Gitega (2.00), Muyinga (1.86), Ruyigi (1.40)	Ngozi (2.51), Kayanza (2.34), Kirundo (2.00), Gitega (2.00), Muyinga (1.86), Cibitoke (1.56), Ruyigi (1.10)

*Source: Ngaruko and Nkurunziza, 2000: 383*

From then until the end of the 1980s, power was centralized in the single party, UPRONA, which has been described as a vehicle for the monopolization of power and resources by a small rent-seeking clique of Tutsi-Hima from the southern province of Bururi (Ngaruko & Nkurunziza, 2000). Bloodless coups succeeded one another but, in terms of ethnic background and regional belonging, the identity of leaders<sup>57</sup> did not change. In 1979, Micombero was overthrown by Bagaza, who would himself be deposed by Pierre Buyoya in 1987. Tutsis progressively monopolized power in the army, in political positions, and in the civil service (see Lemarchand, 1994; Reyntjens, 1994; Kadende-Kaiser & Kaiser, 1997). Under the Bagaza regime (1976-87), the reference to ethnic identities was officially forbidden (Berkmoes, 2014: 108; Lemarchand, 1994: 10) as Tutsis emphasized “national unity” and denied the existence of ethnic divisions so as to legitimate their domination (Lothe, 2007: 47). Despite this policy, the ethnic monopolization of resources is attested by data.

Politically, a vast majority of leadership positions were attributed to Tutsis, although “cosmetic cooptation” (Reyntjens, 1994:49) of Hutu politicians happened. Data provided by Reyntjens indicate for example that in 1985, Hutus represented “4 out of 20 ministers, 17 out of 65 representatives in the National Assembly, 2 members of the central committee of the UPRONA, 2 provincial governors out of 15, 1 ambassador out of 22, 10 teachers out of 90, and about 20% of graduate students” (1994: 41). On the military side, the army was progressively purged of all Hutu elements, especially amongst the officers (Daley, 2006: 669; Lemarchand, 2006a). Finally, since state resources represented most economic opportunities in the country, their distribution was ethnically and regionally biased (Ndikumana, 2005). Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2000) find significant discrepancies in the territorial repartition of public investment. For instance, the southern provinces, including Bururi, were favoured in terms of investments in education (2000: 382-3) (see table 5). The use of public employment as a resource redistributed through clientelist networks, as well as the fact that “almost all large private firms belonged to former high-ranking civil servants” (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza, 2000: 387-8) allow for a good understanding of the limited economic opportunities open to Hutus during this period.

The instrumentalization of the state by this Tutsi clique led to a reorganization of clientelist networks on an ethnic basis (Lothe, 2007: 60; Nimubona, 2010). Indeed, as the data show, state resources were distributed through UPRONA’s clientelist networks, which were ethnically

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<sup>57</sup> Almost all of them were Tutsi, officers at the time of the coup and from the province of Bururi.

exclusive. A “segmentarity of political clienteles” progressively developed (Chrétien, 1993: 315) and ethnic clientelism soon became the “hegemonic form of solidarity” in Burundi (Chrétien, 1993: 486; Nimubona, 2010). Beyond clientelist networks, at least an important share of informal organizations was under state control: “the state also hijacked civil society organizations to consolidate state ideology. Youth and women’s associations and labour unions were branches of the single party, and were used as propaganda instruments” (Ndikumana, 2005: 417). This provided both formal and informal incentives for the mobilization of ethnic identities on the Tutsi side (Nimubona, 2010). Moreover, this contributed to the framing of politics as a zero-sum game of resource distribution played by Tutsis against Hutus.

As Hutus were *de facto* excluded from state-linked formal and informal networks of redistribution, they developed their own networks which became Hutu-exclusive. Daley notices the links between ethnic extremism, Belgian clericalism and informal networks: “as social mobility was largely dependent on political patronage, young Hutus, without access to state elites, embraced the patronage of younger Belgian clerics, fresh from the Walloon/Flemish factionalism in their home country. Hutus were schooled and politicized in such a way as to see the Tutsi, and not the colonial state, as their oppressors” (2006: 667). But the most important Hutu informal networks were of a different nature: politico-military organizations. The principal ones were FRODEBU (Front pour la démocratie du Burundi) and Palipehutu-FNL (Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération Palipehutu). FRODEBU was founded in the 1980s in Rwanda by exiled Burundians. It defended a pacific struggle for democracy and equality (Alfieri, 2016b: 240-241). In 1994, CNDD-FDD (Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces de défense de la démocratie) split from FRODEBU. It would become one of the major actors in the country’s wartime and post accord politics. More radical was Palipehutu, a Hutu political party with a military wing, the FNL. They were founded respectively in 1980 and 1983 in the Mishamo Hutu refugee camp in Tanzania (Wittig, 2016: 145-146). Palipehutu’s founder, Remy Gahutu, won the confidence of the population by teaching them agriculture, quickly transforming the poor refugee camp into exporters of crops in the area. Part of the revenues was given to the party at every harvest (Alfieri, 2016a: 6-7). Through the infiltration of Palipehutu in Burundi, the movement developed Hutu political networks across the country (Alfieri, 2016a: 10-11). These Hutu movements built informal networks which provided incentives for mobilizing ethnic identities and played an active role in the spread of Hutu extremism in Burundi.

Whereas political conflict in pre-colonial Burundi was not ethnic, in the post-colonial period, the structure of society was ethnically organized, the strategic interaction between actors was understood in ethnic terms, and the dominant cleavage was ethnicity. However, most observers note that ethnicity was not the *only* cleavage in this period. Regional and sub-ethnic divisions (between Tutsi-Hima and Tutsi-Banyaruguru) were also politically salient. In fact, Ngaruko and Nkurunziza note that this “can be represented as concentric circles: the chances of social success are higher for Tutsi than for Hutu. However, among the Tutsi ethnic group, those chances are higher for those originating from the southern province of Bururi, and are highest for military Tutsi originating from this province” (2000: 382). However, ethnicity was clearly the *dominant* cleavage, which was particularly observable during violent episodes. Intra-Tutsi divisions, rather than attenuating inter-ethnic tensions, seem to have contributed to their exacerbation, following the “ethnic outbidding” logic identified by Horowitz (1985) (Daley, 2006).

In brief, the transformations that occurred in the colonial and post-colonial periods led to a deep reorganization of formal and informal institutions in a way that provided strong incentives for Tutsis to mobilize their ethnic identity. From a diverse but cohesive society, Burundi became a deeply divided country, and ethnicity became the major fault-line around which politics, understood as a zero-sum game, was organized. As Lemarchand summarizes:

The hardening of Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy presumably rules out alternative forms of social identity, including those born of the reciprocities that once formed the core of clientage relations and ran through the entire social pyramid holding it together in a seamless web of mutual rights and obligations. [...] Unlike in the traditional society, where one type of identity did not necessarily coincide with the other, in [1994]’s society, the two meanings of the term [Hutu] have become almost interchangeable. With few exceptions, in the urban sectors most Hutu are in a position of social and economic inferiority vis-à-vis Tutsi elements. Furthermore, the Tutsi—more specifically the Hima—are preeminent power-holders. And because their privileged access to the social and economic benefits of power, their collective self-awareness as Tutsi is inextricably bound up with their politically, socially, and economically dominant position (1994: 15).

### ***The Polarizing Effects of Violence***

Beside this institutionalization of ethnic violence in the process of state formation, recurring cycles of ethnic violence have strained the country’s history. Series of interethnic massacres started in 1962, continued in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988, and 1991 culminating in a decade-long civil war which began in 1993. Amongst these massacres, the 1972 episode, known as *Ikiza*, can be

considered a defining moment in Burundi's history (Uvin, 1999: 258). Following a Hutu coup attempt and massacres of Tutsi, the political leadership answered in the form of widespread repression by the Tutsi-dominated army, targeting Hutu elements and most particularly the educated ones. In a few days, between 150'000 and 300'000 people were killed in the massacres. A systematic purge of Hutu elements in the army, in the police, in schools and universities, and even in churches followed. This process played a major role in the monopolization of power by Tutsi<sup>58</sup> (Lemarchand, 2008b; Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007).

The 1972 “*événements*” were followed by recurring violent episodes, the most important of which happened in 1988. As Ngaruko and Nkurunziza observe, “from the first violent episode of the conflict in 1965, the country has fallen into a ‘conflict trap’, whereby a subsequent episode of violence has its roots in the previous” (2000: 379). The episodes indeed followed “the same pattern: in response to rumours and fear, Hutu peasants attacked and killed local Tutsi, power-holders and even ordinary people. The army was then sent in to restore order and indiscriminately killed vastly more [Hutu] people in retaliation” (Uvin, 1999: 259). Although it has never been officially recognized by the United Nations as such, the genocidal character of these events is acknowledged by most observers (Lemarchand, 1974).

It is interesting to note that the motives of perpetrators were not exclusively ethnic. Chrétien thus notes that “lists of suspect were established across the country and many people have been victims of personal vengeance. One or another Hutu family (which means thousands of people) were executed because their Tutsi neighbour coveted their land, was their debtor, or had lost a trial against them” (1993: 424-5). Similarly, Lemarchand notes that “in the countryside, anti-Hutu violence stemmed from a variety of motives, some of a personal nature, others rooted in crassly material calculations. The anticipation of material gain from seizure of the victim's property (...) appears to have been a major inducement to violence” (1994: 102). Therefore, “to impute genocidal intentions to all Tutsi is clearly unwarranted.” However, “whether or not intentions made a difference is another matter” (Lemarchand, 1994: 102).

Violence reflected the three characteristics of ethnic violence identified in chapter 4. It was mostly *dispossessive*, since it aimed not only to coerce victims, but to explicitly eliminate them. It was *indiscriminate*, since membership in an ethnic category replaced any judgment of guilt or

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<sup>58</sup> It should not be obscured however, that Tutsis, although representing a small fraction of the victims, were also targeted (Lemarchand, 2008b; Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007).

innocence. For example, one of Berckmoes' interviewees reports that some areas of Bujumbura (Kamenge and Kinama) were emptied of all Tutsis during the war so that indiscriminate killings could be facilitated: "the Burundian army participated in the evacuation and had made available trucks to move Tutsis who did not have their own means [of transport]. As such, the army came to have free range to systematically kill without having to worry about victimizing even a single Tutsi" (Berckmoes, 2014: 85). The "selectivity" described in the last paragraph was indeed only applied *inside* an ethnic category. Guilt did not matter, the first criterion of selection was thus category membership; further selection only determined who would be killed first in a given category. These vengeance were in fact made socially acceptable by the fact that the ethnic cleavage was the dividing line for violence. Thus, mass violence resulted from an alignment of politicians and local actors' aims around the ethnic cleavage, as theorized by Kalyvas (2006: 365). Finally, the violence was manifestly *atrocious*, with the use of multiple techniques of mutilations, including impalement on bamboo poles and rape<sup>59</sup> (Malkki, 1995: 89-96; HRW, 2003; AI, 2004). Violence displayed not only the will to exterminate, but also the will to mark and to kill in highly symbolic ways.

While ethnic self-awareness and interests in preserving or modifying the institutional structure of the society were certainly a crucial factor for certain groups of politically active ethnic extremists, other mechanisms were also conducive to ethnic violence in the country. Daley notes that "in Burundi, ethnic extremists appeal to ethnic sentiments by emphasizing the threat posed by the other group" (Daley, 2006: 670). The fear of being the *target* of ethnic violence (which does not necessitate any pre-existing feeling of group belonging) was indeed one of the main triggers of preemptive violence, and the source of nearly all violent episodes in the country (Uvin, 1999). In Burundi, violence was therefore not only an outcome of ethnic conflict but also fully contributed to identity formation and the exacerbation of ethnic tensions, which culminated in civil war.

The identity formation effects of this ethnic violence were indeed strong, and left traces for the long run. In her book *Purity and Exile*, Malkki brilliantly describes how the recollections of 1972 violence in Hutu refugee camps in Tanzania created strong feelings of Hutu self-awareness as a

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<sup>59</sup> Although the evidences of "intra-ethnic" rape are also widespread (Nduna & Goodyear, 1997) a report by Amnesty International suggests that rape was also used specifically as a "technique" for marking ethnic domination: "while many cases of rape and sexual violence appear to be indiscriminate and due to lack of discipline and accountability among troops, in some instances it appears that rape is used more systematically to ill-treat, humiliate and degrade the population as well as to promote the dominance of the perpetrating group, be it government or opposition" (2004: 11).

victimized people. Central in this process was the constitution of a Hutu “mythico-history” which “represented not only a description of the past, nor even merely an evaluation of the past, but a subversive recasting and reinterpretation of it in fundamentally moral terms” (Malkki, 1995: 54). This version of the past was thus at the basis of the Hutu extremism.

As political institutions contributed to the process of politicization of ethnic identities in Burundi, so did violence. As Chrétien emphasizes:

What is being a Hutu or a Tutsi? Neither is it being Bantu or Hamite, nor serf or lord! It is to recall who killed one of your relatives fifteen years ago, or ask yourself who will kill your children in ten years, every time with a different answer. Ethnic identification in this country, instead of being cultural or marked on [identity] papers are inscribed in the hearts in terms of reminded or dreaded violence (Chrétien, 1993: 330).<sup>60</sup>

### ***From Hope to Hell***

In sum, the combination of two processes, the alignment of formal and informal institutions with ethnic divisions and ethnic violence, resulted in a high politicization of ethnicity. In the early 1990s, all elements were in place for the outbreak of an ethnic confrontation. The times, however, were a period of political opening and democratization, which allowed certain authors to formulate a cautious optimism for the future (Lemarchand, 1994; Chrétien, 1993; Reyntjens, 1993). After three decades of ethnic exclusions, the dilemma of democratization was well present, and Chrétien formulated the problem in terms very similar to the concerns expressed earlier in this thesis:

The weight of the historical legacy of the last thirty years put the civil societies in Rwanda and Burundi in a sort of dilemma that needs to be weight carefully: the necessity to take into account the belonging to the Hutu, Tutsis or Twa components in order to ensure the absence of professional discrimination and the effective ethnic pluralism of political parties, without, on the other hand, having recourse to systematic ethnic affiliation which could fix and exacerbate the cleavages<sup>61</sup> (Chrétien, 1993: 492).

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<sup>60</sup> Translated by the author from French: “Qu’est-ce qu’être hutu ou tutsi ? Ce n’est ni être bantou ou hamite, ni être serf ou seigneur ! C’est se rappeler qui a tué un de vos proches il y a quinze ans ou se demander qui va tuer votre enfant dans dix ans, chaque fois avec une réponse différente. L’identification ethnique dans ce pays, à défaut d’être culturelle ou marquée sur les papiers se fait dans les cœurs en termes de violences remémorées ou redoutées” (Chrétien, 1993: 330).

<sup>61</sup> Translated from French by the author. “La pesanteur de l’héritage historique des trente dernières années met donc les sociétés civiles au Rwanda et au Burundi dans une sorte de dilemme qu’il faut bien peser : la nécessité de tenir compte (...) de l’appartenance aux composantes hutu, tutsi ou twa afin de veiller à l’absence de discrimination dans la vie professionnelle et au pluralisme ethnique effectif des partis politiques, sans pour autant recourir à des fichages systémiques, qui figent les clivages et les envenimement” (Chrétien, 1993: 492).

The 1990's attempts to solve this dilemma, however, were not successful (Sullivan, 2005; Vandeginste, 2009; Lothe, 2007).

After the violent events of 1988, the Buyoya government, which was subjected to considerable international pressure, started a process of democratization and transition to multipartism. In 1992, a new constitution was adopted (Reyntjens, 1996; Vandeginste, 2009). Emphasis was put on "national unity" in the constitution and a "Charter of National Unity" was adopted. Ethnic parties were also banned (Reyntjens, 1994: 78-84). But democratization represented a risk for Tutsis since they were a small demographic minority. During the campaign for the 1993 elections, UPRONA contributed to the politicization of ethnicity by accusing its rival, FRODEBU of ethnic favouritism, and by putting pressure on Tutsis to vote for UPRONA (Travanglianti, 2014: 18). Apart from that, the campaign was not held in ethnic terms.

FRODEBU won the 1993 elections and Melchior Ndadaye was democratically elected president. The results indicate that the vote did not follow a purely ethnic logic: "in ethnic terms, the breakdown in the membership of the new assemblée nationale [...] is as follows: 69 (about 85 per cent) are Hutu, and 12 (about 15 per cent) are Tutsi. Of the latter, eight are FRODEBU and four are UPRONA, which means that about 12 per cent of FRODEBU's members are Tutsi, compared to 25 per cent of UPRONA's" (Reyntjens, 1993: 572). However, the election resulted in the reversal of Tutsi domination of the political system. Most importantly, "even across party lines the Tutsi do not have a blocking minority of 20 per cent, should they feel that a proposed constitutional amendment were to threaten their vital interests" (Reyntjens, 1993: 572). Tutsis quickly expressed feelings of fear (Sullivan, 2005: 87-89, Vandeginste, 2009: 68). The vote, if not completely an ethnic census, has been interpreted as such (Reyntjens, 1993: 577). Although FRODEBU's program was not ethnically biased, and Ndadaye treaded carefully, trying to appease Tutsi fears, ethnic appeals from extremists on both sides ruined his attempts to stabilize the country. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1993, a Tutsi-led coup attempt resulted in the assassination of the President. Moreover, for the first time, Hutus were organized and ready to retaliate (Berckmoes, 2014: 89). Quickly, massive inter-ethnic violence erupted in all parts of the country. This was the beginning of a decade long civil war (Reyntjens, 1993).



## **Burundi in the Light of Consociationalism**

Following several failed negotiation attempts, peace negotiations started in earnest in June 1998 in Arusha, with Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela (as of 1999) as mediators. After a difficult process, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi was signed on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000 (Wolpe, 2011; Weissman, 1998; Lemarchand 2009: chapter 10). The success of this accord has surprised many. Indeed, at the time of its adoption, observers were deeply sceptical about its success for at least three reasons: “(i) the important reservations expressed by several signatories, (ii) the important matters that were left unresolved, and (iii) the absence of the (predominantly Hutu) rebel groups CNDD-FDD and the Palipehutu-FNL among the signatories” (Vandeginste, 2009: 72). What Reyntjens has called a “non-accord” (2005: 118) moreover had almost no effect at the time of its signature, since fighting with the Hutu rebel movements continued across the country (Vandeginste, 2015: 6).

Despite this early scepticism, ceasefire agreements were later signed with CNDD-FDD (November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003) and Palipehutu-FNL (September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006) (Vandeginste, 2009: 73) and power-sharing is today widely acknowledged as the main explanatory factor for the relative success of the peace transition in Burundi. Most of the observers would agree with Vandeginste that “more than anywhere else on the African continent, power-sharing played a central role in Burundi’s political transition serving the dual purpose of war termination and of more inclusive political governance” (2015: 6). The successes brought about by this agreement are twofold. First, it established a 15-year period of stability in the country, which, despite being threatened today, remains an exception in Burundi’s post-independence history. Second, and probably more importantly, it has led to an “unprecedented [ethnic] de-polarization of the political arena” (Lemarchand, 2006b: 11).

Vandeginste called the longevity and the relative success of power-sharing in Burundi a “miracle – an event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws” (2015: 6). This section argues that this success cannot be easily explained by consociational theory, because the logic of power-sharing in Burundi differs radically from the logic developed by Lijphart. After describing the power-sharing system as established by the 2005 Constitution and the subsequent elections, this section reviews the consociational literature on power-sharing in Burundi and underlines its weaknesses. I then show that Burundi’s case corresponds far better to the centripetalist model described in chapter 5.

### *The 2005 Constitution and the Post-war Elections*

After a five-year transition period, a new constitution was adopted on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005. It established a complex power-sharing system. Its main dispositions are summarized hereunder.<sup>62</sup> Executive power is held by of a President, two Vice-Presidents and the government (art. 92). The President is elected in a two round (or run-off) system, for a five-year mandate which can be renewed once (art. 96). The Vice-Presidents are appointed by the President. Power-sharing dispositions are introduced in this regard: article 124 stipulates that the Vice-Presidents shall belong to two different ethnic categories and two different political parties.<sup>63</sup> The government is nominated by the President (in consultation with the Vice-Presidents). The constitution introduces strong power-sharing guarantees in government. First, the government must be composed of 60% Hutu and 40% of Tutsi, with a minimum 30% women (art. 129). Second, power-sharing between political parties is ensured since parties that succeed in garnering more than 5% of the seats in the National Assembly are allocated a proportional share of governmental positions (art. 129). Third, since the security sector was a particularly sensitive issue, the constitution states that the Defense Minister and the Minister of Public Security should be of different ethnic categories (art. 130).

Legislative power is held by a bicameral parliament composed of the National Assembly and the Senate (art. 147). The National Assembly must respect the proportions of 60% Hutu, 40% Tutsis, and 3 Twa, as well as a minimum of 30% women. Should these quotas not be reflected in the result of elections, a mechanism of cooptation appoints additional deputies to respect these proportions (art. 164). The electoral system is proportional representation (art.164) by closed party lists (art. 168), “the country's 17 provinces<sup>64</sup> being equal to 17 electoral districts” (Tobolka, 2014: 3). These lists must themselves be multi-ethnic: of every three candidates, a maximum of two can belong to the same ethnic category (art. 168). The Senate, for its part, is based on the principle of ethnic parity. It is formed by two delegates by province (one Hutu and one Tutsi), who are elected by provincial (multi-ethnic) electoral colleges composed of members of the Communal Councils.

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<sup>62</sup> I mainly base this description on the text of the Constitution itself, but the following secondary sources have been consulted: Reyntjens, 2005; Lemarchand, 2006b ; Vandeginste, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2015; Manirakiza, 2011; Lothe, 2007; Tobolka, 2014, 2015. The 2005 Constitution as well as all previous constitutions of Burundi can be found on the University of Anwerp's Institute of Development Policy and Management's webpage: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/rg/iob/centre-great-lakes/dpp-burundi/constitution/aper-u-hist-const/>.

<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, the paragraph notes that the selection must also take into account the dominant ethnic composition of their respective parties (Vandeginste, 2009: 74).

<sup>64</sup> A recent law has created a new province, bringing the current total number to 18. <http://www.assemblee.bi/IMG/pdf/10%20du26%20mars%202015.pdf>

The members of the Senate also include three Twas and the former Presidents. A minimum of 30% women is also required (art. 180).

The constitution imposes power-sharing in various other bodies. The most important are the security forces which must respect strict ethnic parity (art. 257). Dispositions also ensure (although in vague terms) the ethnic representativity of the local and provincial bodies (art. 138 and 260). Art. 260 specifies that no more than 67% of communal administrators must belong to the same ethnic group. Power-sharing dispositions are also institutionalized in the judiciary (art. 208 and 217). Finally, public administration and public enterprises must also respect the quotas of 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsis amongst their employees (art. 143).

Two elements can be underlined: on the one hand, the presence of strict dispositions for the power-sharing between ethnic groups, but also between political parties; on the other hand, the repeated emphasis put on national unity, which principally took the form of ethnic party bans. The constitution thus renders multi-ethnic lists compulsory. The Law on Political Parties, voted on June 26, 2003, further emphasized this disposition since it stipulates that political parties cannot be formed with more than 75% of members belonging to the same ethnic group (Nindorera, 2012: 26).

The first postaccord elections were held in 2005. Amongst a myriad of small parties, the main opponents were FRODEBU, the former Hutu-rebel movement CNDD-FDD and the former single-party UPRONA. Although electoral violence occurred, the elections were mostly held in a calm atmosphere, and there were few minor irregularities (Reyntjens, 2005: 122-123). Ethnicity was not the main issue during the campaign, although there were some references to it (Reyntjens, 2005: 122), and ethnic voting was “by no means general” (Reyntjens, 2005: 124). CNND-FDD registered an overwhelming victory receiving 62.6% of the votes in the municipal elections, while its closest competitor, FRODEBU, only received the support of 20.9% of the electors (see table 6). These results were confirmed in the parliamentary elections, and the CNDD-FDD leader, Pierre Nkurunziza was elected President<sup>65</sup> on August 19<sup>th</sup> (Lemarchand, 2009: 170). The composition of the government more or less respected the ethnic quotas (in fact, the Tutsi minority was even more represented than required by the Constitution, since 55% of the ministers were Hutu and 45%

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<sup>65</sup> The president was not elected in a popular consultation, “as the constitution provides that the first post-transition president is indirectly elected by the national assembly and the senate sitting in joint congress” (Reyntjens, 2005: 129).

Tutsi). However, the proportionality that the Constitution guaranteed to the political parties was not closely respected; the CNDD-FDD was overrepresented whereas UPRONA and FRODEBU were under-represented (Reyntjens, 2005: 130).

As the 2005 composition of the National Assembly shows (see table 7), the formerly Hutu-dominated rebel groups had succeeded in integrating Tutsi candidates on their lists and Tutsis were widely represented in their parliamentary block. UPRONA failed to have Hutu elected, but this is not necessarily a proof that the party was mono-ethnic. Rather, this can be explained by the fact that “in no province did UPRONA secure more than one seat: as [the] first-placed candidates were Tutsi, only Tutsi were elected” (Reyntjens, 2005: 126). In general, the effect of these elections appeared to have been positive since ethnicity was less salient and “the more extremist forces on both sides of the ethnic divide” had been marginalized (Reyntjens, 2005: 131).

The 2010 elections may nuance the view of Burundi as a peacebuilding “success story”. Indeed, the electoral process was marked by voter intimidation and political violence, although it should be noted that the ethnic cleavage was not mobilized and the competition took place mainly between (multi-ethnic) parties (Travaglianti, 2014). Despite this depoliticization of ethnicity, “in the range of hybrid regimes between fully authoritarian and liberal democratic, Burundi has taken a step backwards” (Vandeginste, 2011: 325). The elections were generally deemed “free and fair” by the international community, but the opposition reacted to its defeat at the communal elections by boycotting the rest of the electoral process (Vandeginste, 2011: 317-19) (Table 8). Despite pressures from the international community, UPRONA was the only important opposition party to participate in the national assembly elections (Vandeginste, 2011: 320), which allowed the party to have a small number of ministers (Table 9). President Nkurunziza was re-elected without competition.

The 2015 elections confirmed the increasingly authoritarian bent of the ruling party. After Nkurunziza was endorsed candidate for a third mandate judged unconstitutional by many opposition parties and members of his own party, protests erupted in Bujumbura and a violent repression ensued. A coup attempt failed on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2015. The following repression allowed Nkurunziza to crush criticisms inside his own party, in the security forces, and amongst the opposition. Despite international criticism, elections were held, boycotted by the opposition, and generally deemed not free and fair by the United Nations (Daley & Popplewell, 2016: 1-3). Although ethnicity does not appear to have been mobilized during the crisis (except in a few

instances), these events are worrying for the future of Burundian democracy and the stability of the country (Jobbins and Ahitungiye, 2016: 214).

**Table 6: Municipal elections results (2005)**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Percent of votes</i>	<i>Percent of seats</i>
CNDD–FDD	62.6	55.3
Frodebu	20.9	25.5
Uprona	5.2	8.1
CNDD	4.1	4.1
MRC	1.7	2.7
Parena	1.1	2.3

CNDD, *Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie*; FDD, *Forces pour la défense de la démocratie*; Frodebu, *Front pour la démocratie au Burundi*; MRC, *Mouvement de réhabilitation du citoyen*; Parena, *Parti pour le redressement national*; Uprona, *Union pour le progrès national*.

*Source: Reyntjens, 2005: 123.*

**Table 7: Full composition of the 2005 national assembly**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Hutu</i>	<i>Tutsi</i>	<i>Twa</i>
CNDD–FDD	64	43	21	–
Frodebu	30	23	7	–
Uprona	15	–	15	–
CNDD	4	3	1	–
MRC	2	–	2	–
Twa	3	–	–	3
Total	118	69	46	3

CNDD, *Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie*; FDD, *Forces pour la défense de la démocratie*; Frodebu, *Front pour la démocratie au Burundi*; MRC, *Mouvement de réhabilitation du citoyen*; Uprona, *Union pour le progrès national*.

*Source : Reyntjens, 2005: 127*

**Table 8: Communal elections results (2010)**

Voter turnout: 90.6 %		
Party	% of votes	Seats
CNDD-FDD	64.03	1,203
FNL	14.15	291
UPRONA	6.25	152
FRODEBU	5.43	123
MSD	3.75	92
UPD	2.21	32
FRODEBU NYAKURI	1.36	8
CNDD	1.26	19

*Source: Vandeginste, 2011: 317*

**Table 9: National Assembly elections results (2010)**

Voter turnout: 66.68 %					
Party	% of votes	Seats (after co-optation)			Total
		Hutu	Tutsi	Twa	
CNDD-FDD	81.19	54	27	0	<b>81</b>
UPRONA	11.06	5	12	0	<b>17</b>
FRODEBU NYAKURI	5.88	3	2	0	<b>5</b>
Twa				3	<b>3</b>
Total		62	41	3	106

*Source: Vandeginste, 2011: 321.*

### ***Consociationalist Interpretations***

Power-sharing in Burundi has been mainly approached through the lenses of consociational theory. These contributions (principally those of Stef Vandeginste and René Lemarchand) are invaluable for our understanding of the functioning of power-sharing in Burundi. I however argue that their arguments do not really fit the theory of consociationalism as developed by Lijphart, for the simple reason that the dynamic of power-sharing in Burundi is radically different than that identified by Lijphart in the Netherlands, Belgium, Lebanon or other countries. Instead of using consociationalism, these contributions tend to (i) emphasize contextual factors, (ii) use arguments from the centripetalist or peacebuilding literature, (iii) explain the failures of the peace process by highlighting discrepancies with Lijphart's model, which opens the gate to logical inaccuracies.

First, research on Burundi's power-sharing tends to explain the adoption and survival of power-sharing by external, contextual factors. Lemarchand is not alone into thinking that "more than the technicalities of constitutional provisions, contextual factors are the key to an understanding of what the future may hold in store" (2006b: 9). Vandeginste (2015) links the adoption of the power-sharing agreements to the "ripeness" of the conflict (Zartman, 1989), the configuration of power between opponents (Horowitz, 2014) and the presence of international pressure (Vandeginste, 2015: 12-13). He also explains the survival of power-sharing by referring to contextual factors: the existence of overarching loyalties, cross-cutting cleavages and common threats (2006: 198-203), as well as previous experiences with power-sharing in Burundi (2009) or the presence of the South-African peacekeeping mission during the transition phase (2015: 15). For his part, Lemarchand notes that the widespread poverty, the persistence of Tutsi and Hutu extremism, as well as the regional situation with the threat of neighbouring Rwanda are potentially dangerous for the stability of power-sharing in Burundi (2006b: 12). As for the successes of the agreement, he notes that "one may (...) wonder whether the relative stability so far achieved is the result of consociational engineering or a reflection of the generally favourable societal circumstances" (2006b: 16). These explanations, while probably true, say little about the specific impact of consociational mechanisms.

Rather paradoxically, a second tendency is to explain the positive aspects of the transition using arguments drawn from the peacebuilding literature on power-sharing or from the centripetalist literature. The main explanation for the stability of power-sharing in Burundi is thus its centripetalist dimension, namely the existence of multi-ethnic parties which allowed for a

depoliticization and depolarization of the political arena (Vandeginste, 2015: 15). Other institutional factors are also deemed important, such as military power-sharing (Lemarchand, 2006b: 12; Vandeginste, 2006: 186) and the institutional guarantees for credible commitment (Walter, 2002) provided by the consociational dispositions of the agreement (Vandeginste, 2015: 15). While relevant, these are not the exact same factors identified by Lijphart although institutional guarantees of credible commitment could be said to be functionally equivalent to minority vetoes.

A third set of arguments is closer to consociational theory. These link the failures of the peace process to the gaps in implementation of Lijphart's model. The logic of these arguments can be summarized as follows. 1–Negatives aspects of the situation are identified; 2–Discrepancies between Burundi's power-sharing system and Lijphart's model are identified; 3–A causal link is implied between 2 and 1 (Vandeginste, 2008; also see Sullivan, 2005; Manirakiza, 2011). The argument is not wrong *per se*. In his analysis of the 1993 events, Sullivan (2005) develops precisely the causal mechanism between 2 and 1. For him, it is the threat on the Tutsi "minority veto" which prompted the failure of power-sharing in Burundi in 1993. Manirakiza (2011) also convincingly links minority vetoes and the immobilism of the system. However, the argument rests on a relatively shaky implicit counterfactual, namely the assumption that if Lijphart's consociational formula had been perfectly institutionalized and implemented, the peace transition would have been optimal. A number of critics of consociationalism put into question the validity of this counterfactual (see chapter 1; Roeder & Rotchild, 2005; Jarstad, 2008; Horowitz, 1985). For example, governmental instability has been identified as a problem in the post-war period. Vandeginste suggests that this may result from the absence of ethnic parties which "constitutes a handicap from the consociationalist point of view" (2008: 68). However, nothing guarantees that pillarization would have provided a better outcome (I actually argue that the opposite is true). On the other hand, this instability might result from other factors, which have nothing to do with the consociational institutions. Vandeginste indeed notes that institutional instability results mostly from intra-party instability which is due to neo-patrimonialism and politicians' individualism (2008: 69).

A related problem rests in the "inadequate specification of consequences" of power-sharing (Horowitz, 1985: 570-1); in other words, the lack of a definition of the expected successes of power-sharing. Vandeginste for example notes that "by and large, when measured against the



objective of war termination, the use of power-sharing can – so far – be considered to be a success story in the case of Burundi. At the same time, when measured against more ambitious state-building purposes (rule of law, human rights, democracy, effective and accountable governance), Burundi clearly has a very long way to go and consociational power-sharing has so far not been able to make a difference” (2009: 81; also see Vandeginste, 2008: 73). The problem is that the consociational model was initially aimed mainly at establishing stable democracies; it was never said to provide guarantees for state-building, especially “effective and accountable governance”. Uvin and Bayler (2013) link the governance deficit to the neo-patrimonial constraints of state incumbents.

In sum, the causal link between consociationalism and the success or failure of the peace process is never fully made explicit. This can be understood by the fact that the Burundian power-sharing system, despite being close to Lijphart’s model, functions according to a radically different logic.

### ***Integration, not Pillarization?***

Most authors follow Lemarchand in considering that “measured by the extent to which it approximates Lijphart’s consociational formula, Burundi today stands as a unique case. No other state anywhere on the continent offers a more faithful image of the ideal consociational polity” (2006b: 3). The approximation, it is true, is very close. The system of quotas provides for the *grand coalition* and the *proportionality* requirements, while the combination of majority requirements and quotas ensures *veto rights* to the Tutsi minority (Manirakiza, 2011; Vandeginste, 2006; Lothe, 2007). The main difference with Lijphart’s model is the absence of *segmental autonomies*. This absence, however, is most often not deemed problematic. Because there is not cultural difference between Hutus and Tutsis, many authors note that these “segmental autonomies” are simply irrelevant or unnecessary (Sullivan, 2005: 84-85; Lothe, 2007: 70).

Big differences are sometimes hidden in details. Not only is the absence of segmental autonomies unproblematic, *it is the very aim* of Burundi’s power-sharing system. The addition of ethnic party bans, through the requirement of multi-ethnic electoral lists, changes the dynamic of the whole system. Indeed, the explicit aim of power-sharing in Burundi was to counter the segmentation of the society, as testified by the multiple references to national unity made in the 2005 Constitution. Segments (which are a defining characteristic of “plural societies” and central in consociational theory) appear in fact to be disappearing in post-war in Burundi. Vandeginste already noted in

2006 that segments were hardly identifiable in Burundi (2006: 178-180) and that politicians did not really represent particular segments (2006: 187). Two years later, he further notes that political parties themselves do not represent segments and that politicians are not connected with other segmental (e.g. ethnic) networks (2008: 68). This absence of segments indicates that the dynamic at play in Burundi is very different than the dynamic envisioned by Lijphart. Indeed, “the final objective [of power-sharing in Burundi] is not to perpetuate segmentary divisions, but to alleviate the antagonisms and reduce the violent potential of the political exploitation of segmental divisions” (2006: 204-205). This objective is at odds with the consociational model. Indeed, as shown in chapter 5, Lijphart (1977: 24) considered this objective both risky and unlikely to succeed. He instead recommended a model that fosters the pillarization (or segmentation) of society, and where bargaining and accommodation happen only at an elite level. In Burundi, instead, the accommodation takes place at the societal level, and in the parties, rather than exclusively amongst elites.

The difficulty of explaining the success of power-sharing in Burundi with consociational arguments arguably comes from the fact that Burundi does not correspond to the model imagined by Lijphart. The importance of multi-ethnic political parties, the depoliticization of ethnicity and parity in the security forces are instead acknowledged by the authors studying power-sharing in Burundi. This suggests that the model may better correspond to the one proposed in chapter 5. Hence, “ironically, [Burundi’s case] provides substantial ammunition on the side of [consociationalism’s] critics” (Lemarchand, 2006b: 16). The next section examines this hypothesis and explains the depoliticization of ethnicity as well as the survival of power-sharing in Burundi by the theory of incentives developed in the last chapter.

### **Political Institutions and the Depoliticization of Ethnicity**

Despite common features with consociationalism, I argue that the logic of power-sharing in Burundi is much closer to the centripetalist logic and model described in the last chapter. Indeed, the system corresponds to the three points listed in our model. First, guarantees for the security of both ethnic categories are present since the constitution imposes parity in the security forces. Second, strong guarantees for political representation, and by way of consequence, economic distribution of state resources, are present under the form of ethnic quotas. Finally, ethnic party bans are in place and the constitution underlines the obligation of presenting multi-ethnic lists.

Moreover, incentives are arguably provided at both party leaders and electors' levels to become multi-ethnic, through the system of ethnic quotas.

In this section, I explain the depoliticization of ethnicity in Burundi by three factors. First, institutional and neo-patrimonial incentives have allowed for the creation of multi-ethnic parties, which have countered the incentives for the political mobilization of ethnicity. Second, security and political representation guarantees have countered a good share—but not all—of the inter-ethnic fears resulting from the civil war. Third, the literature suggests that multi-ethnic parties, multi-ethnic security forces and informal networks of multi-ethnic associations have created “bargaining arenas” which have had a positive impact on the depoliticization of ethnicity. In conclusion, I argue that the institutional framework has played an undeniable role in the depoliticization of ethnicity in Burundi, but that external, contextual factors must also be taken into consideration. The current situation in the country shows that power-sharing is not a panacea for building peace after civil conflicts in neo-patrimonial societies.

### ***Incentives for the Creation and Survival of Multi-ethnic Parties***

The depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage in post-war Burundi is widely attributed to the presence of multi-ethnic parties (Vandeginste, 2009: 75). The existence of these parties results from a process of deethnicization of formerly ethnically-dominated political parties or rebel movements (Alfieri, 2016b). This process cannot be straightforwardly explained by the constitutionally enforced ethnic party bans. Indeed, and as noted in chapter 5, such bans exist in a wide range of countries across the continent, but often fail to be fully implemented (Kadima, 2008; Bogaards et al., 2013). In post-war Burundi, both state weakness and emotions render the success occurrence of the process even more surprising.

Reasonable doubts can be expressed about the capacity of the Burundian state to enforce those bans during the transition period, especially when it comes to big parties and powerful rebel movements such as the CNDD-FDD. In fact, close attention to the Burundian party landscape shows that the bans were not fully implemented. Small ethnic (mainly Tutsi) parties do in fact continue to exist. Their political marginalization appears to result from the dynamics of the electoral process more than from a strict application of the bans (Reyntjens, 2005)<sup>66</sup>. Moreover,

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<sup>66</sup> Reyntjens notes after the 2005 elections that « although ‘ethnic voting’ was by no means general, about 9 percent of the electorate voted for ‘Tutsi’ parties, but these votes were scattered over ten parties. » (2005: 124).

the post-war period was characterised by widespread interethnic mistrust. In these conditions, the fact that Tutsi candidates decided to join—and were successfully integrated—in previously Hutu-dominated parties (and to a smaller extent vice versa) is puzzling in more than a way. Even more critical is the existence of cross-ethnic voting.<sup>67</sup> Only five years after the signing of the Arusha Accord and less than two years after the CNDD-FDD had laid down its arms, it would not have been unexpected that the vote followed ethnic lines. Instead, cross ethnic voting happened widely, and numbers of Tutsis voted for the CNDD-FDD. This deserves a more sophisticated explanation.

This puzzle can be solved by the theory of incentives in neo-patrimonial systems elaborated in chapter 5. In this subsection, I argue that the imperative of survival of both politicians and citizens provided them with incentives for deemphasizing their ethnic identity, even if they may have had an ethnic bias. In this regard, the neo-patrimonial context in which power-sharing has been implemented in Burundi is key in understanding the logic of the actors during the transition period.

The fact that Burundi corresponds well to the neo-patrimonial model is well acknowledged in the literature (Tobolka, 2015; Lothe, 2007). Uvin and Bayer (2013) observe that neo-patrimonial logics have survived the war and that “the new political economy [is] a perfect copy of the old” (2013: 274). They explain this by the “political imperatives of the new government”:

The post transition government was weak on almost all fronts: militarily threatened by the FNL, by militias of other parties, and by possible dissent within the army; politically challenged by disgruntled elements everywhere (including inside its own party); presiding over one of the world’s poorest economies, with few opportunities for economic security and advancement except through the office of the state; and in charge of a state that was little more than an empty shell, a network of personal allegiances rather than a collection of functioning institutions. To establish control and strengthen their position, what else could leaders effectively do but return to the practices that were known to work? (...) Doing differently (...) would have seemed suicidal from the perspective of Burundi’s new rulers. And in doing so, they of course recreated the system they fought and promised to change (Uvin & Bayer, 2013: 275).

Curtis (2012) notes that these neo-patrimonial logics have infused the peacebuilding process—and by way of consequence the power-sharing system—in Burundi. She shows that the peacebuilding process has been deeply affected by the “complex interplay between outside ideas and interests, and multiple Burundian ideas and interests”. The institutions and practices brought in Burundi by

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This proves that small ethnic parties existed. However, none of these parties achieved the minimal threshold of 2% necessary to be represented in the National Assembly (Reyntjens, 2005: 123).

<sup>67</sup> If we follow Horowitz’s view, cross-ethnic voting may be the most critical element in the transition since “the test of an ethnic party is simply the distribution of support” (1985: 291).

international peacebuilders were “renegotiated and reinterpreted” by Burundian politicians (Curtis, 2012: 3). In the light of this observation, the fact that the strategic choices of individuals in the electoral processes were influenced by constitutional rules but also ethnic preferences and neo-patrimonial imperatives sounds almost obvious.

Two periods should be distinguished when thinking about the mix of incentives in post-war Burundi. The first one is before CNDD-FDD reached power as the outcome of the 2005 elections. In this first period, it can be considered that there was no state incumbent since no party had a sufficient hold on the state to monopolize its resources and control its repressive apparatus. However, given the growing control of the CNDD-FDD on the state resources, from 2005 onward, the party can be considered the state incumbent in the second period. The difference between these two periods is that, in the 2010 and 2015 elections, the CNDD-FDD had many more “options” to influence the result of the elections. The 2010-2015 period, which illustrates the dangers associated with a model of ethnic integration in neo-patrimonial systems, will be quickly discussed in conclusion. For now, I mainly discuss the 2005 period, which is central in explaining the emergence of multi-ethnic parties. This period was critical since it is during the early phases of the transition, and mainly the first election, that the actors took strategic decisions which then shaped the dynamics of the peace-process in the long-run (Shvetsova, 2002: 56). I first discuss the interest of the parties to integrate candidates from other ethnic categories in their ranks. I then turn to the motivations for the candidates to present themselves on the lists of parties that were formerly dominated by members of other ethnic categories. Finally, I discuss why citizens engaged in cross-ethnic voting.

### *Integrating ethnic minorities in ethnically dominated parties*

While the will to respect the constitution and the goodwill associated with the recent signing of the peace agreement (Paris, 2004) undeniably played a role in the transformation of ethnically-dominated parties to multi-ethnic ones, the presence of specific incentives must also be taken into consideration. The system of quotas established by the 2005 constitution not only provided guarantees for political representation of the ethnic categories, it also created incentives for integrating candidates from all ethnic categories. Indeed, parties were required to present candidates from a certain ethnic category to access the seats which were reserved for this category. Presenting Tutsi candidates was, for example, the only mean for the CNDD-FDD to place some of its deputies on the seats reserved for Tutsis. In other words, remaining mono-ethnic would have

limited the possibilities of expansion of the CNDD-FDD to 60% of the National Assembly. This was even more critical in the Senate, since this chamber works on the principle of ethnic parity: had they not presented Tutsi candidates, formerly Hutu-dominated parties should have shared between themselves a mere 50% of the seats. The results of the 2005 elections in the National Assembly show that this principle of inclusion was beneficial to formerly Hutu-dominated parties: the CNDD-FDD occupied 54% of the seats and FRODEBU 25% (Reyntjens, 2005: 127), which totals far more than the 60% of seats reserved for Hutus.

That this logic was well understood by the party leaders is proved by the fact that this had been the matter of important disagreements between the Hutu (G-7) and Tutsi (G-10) coalitions during the Arusha negotiations (Vandeginste, 2009: 75). As Lemarchand reports, “although the principle of minority overrepresentation met with broad-agreement among Hutu and Tutsi, the critical issue during the constitutional debates hinged upon the political affiliation of Tutsi representatives. Could any Tutsi qualify, irrespective of party affiliations, or only those Tutsi who belonged to all-Tutsi parties, that is the G-10 parties?” (2009: 169). As Reyntjens explains, Tutsi-dominated parties “feared that Tutsi aligned with ‘Hutu’ parties would take up most or all functions in government and parliament allotted to Tutsi, and they insisted on taking into account political–ethnic affiliations, i.e. that Tutsi would have to belong to ‘Tutsi’ parties” (2005: 119). Insistence of the G-10 coalition can also be interpreted as the will to institutionalize guarantees for the leaders of small Tutsi party to remain in power after the transition (Vandeginste, 2006: 190). The G-7 and the mediator refused the option proposed by the G-10 and imposed multi-ethnic parties. While the result of the 2005 election shows that this mechanism has indeed clearly worked against Tutsi-dominated parties, it is arguably one of the most important centripetalist elements of the Constitution. It provided electoral incentives for both Hutu- and Tutsi-dominated parties to integrate candidates from the other ethnic group. In this case, electoral incentives are closely tied to neo-patrimonial imperatives, as described in chapter 5, since access to governmental positions also means access to a share of state resources which are crucial for sustaining political parties’ clientelist networks.

### *Joining ethnically dominated parties*

A second question is why candidates would join parties which were formerly dominated by another ethnic category than their own? More specifically, why would so many Tutsi politicians join the formerly Hutu rebel movement CNDD-FDD, especially so soon after the end of the war?

The weight of neo-patrimonial imperatives, here too, seems to be necessary to take into consideration. The fact that Burundian parties are not programmatic is indeed well acknowledged (Vandeginste, 2008: 68). Political parties are thus in great part a vehicle for politicians' access to political positions and the resources that go with them. As one of Schraml's interviewees states explicitly, "the biggest recourse, be it in Rwanda or in Burundi... the safest and the quickest way of accessing resources, is politics"<sup>68</sup> (2011: 15). Although personal greed is certainly not absent of politicians' considerations, these resources are most importantly necessary to sustain politicians' clientelist networks. From this neo-patrimonial nature of the political parties results a certain "flexibility in political loyalties" (Lothe, 2007: 101) since some politicians shift their allegiance to the anticipated winner to maximize their chances of being elected. This mechanism explains that many Tutsis joined the ranks of the CNDD-FDD in 2005. Indeed, as Reyntjens points out, due to the widespread discredit of FRODEBU and UPRONA which ruled the country during the war, "the handsome victory of the CNDD-FDD did not come as a surprise" (2005: 123). In this context, "many Tutsi supporters (...) at the last minute switched from the notoriously pro-Tutsi Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA) to join the Nkurunziza bandwagon" (Lemarchand, 2006b, 8; see also Lemarchand, 2009: 170). The ethnic quotas also meant that, as Tutsi candidates in a dominantly-Hutu party, their chances of being elected increased:

For reasons of political opportunism rather than out of political conviction, many Tutsi in Bujumbura adhered to the CNDD-FDD. They anticipated its victory and hoped to capture positions thanks to the ethnic quota. They realised indeed that they stood a better chance in a winning 'Hutu' party than in a losing 'Tutsi' party (Reyntjens, 2005: 122).

Hence, here again, the neo-patrimonial imperatives of survival acted in favour of the de-ethnicization of political parties.

#### *Voting for formerly ethnically-dominated parties*

The last question concern electors' incentives for cross-ethnic voting. Alfieri's work (2016a, 2016b) shows that reasons for political engagement are very diverse in Burundi. By no mean can ideology be completely cast aside. However, neo-patrimonial logics also often strongly weigh in individual strategic decisions, which may explain a good share of the cross-ethnic voting. Lidewyde Berckmoes's *Elusive Tactics* (2014) is invaluable to help us understand these logics in

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<sup>68</sup> Translated by the author from French: "La plus grande ressource, [...] que ça soit au Rwanda ou au Burundi...le chemin le plus sûr et le plus rapide d'avoir accès aux ressources, c'est la politique" (Schraml, 2011: 15).

Burundi. Her extensive field work with Burundian youths—a critically significant category of the Burundian population (Somers & Uvin, 2011)—sheds lights on the dynamics of voting decisions for citizens in Burundi (Berckmoes, 2014: chapter 5; Berckmoes, 2015).

Confronted with the scarcity of economic opportunities, youth in Burundi were preoccupied daily with ‘searching for life’: “in local parlance, *chercher la vie* referred simultaneously to the economic dimension of looking for sources of income – long-term wage labor – and the social and existential dimension of what kind of adult, spouse, parent, and person one could become through stable employment or a good economic position” (Berckmoes, 2015: 9). This issue is directly tied to politics since the employment opportunities are commonly perceived to depend on personal connections with politicians. As one of her interviewees put it: “if you are not in the political party that is in power, you will not find a job” (Berckmoes, 2015: 9; 2014: 151-154). Most of the young people do not have such connections, but see the electoral period as an opportunity to create them, a “critical moment” to develop patronage relations with party leaders (2015: 13; 2014: 150). Doing so not only implies voting, but also extensively displaying loyalty for a party. Youths are conscious that this provides no guarantee for success, but this offers a minimum chance to find a position after the elections (2015: 13).

Evidence indeed shows that the CNDD-FDD built a patronage system based on the “distribution and allocation of key political positions, jobs, and financial contracts to ruling party members” (Wittig, 2016: 152; Tobolka, 2014: 4-5). These patronage practices are not limited to the CNDD-FDD. Alfieri for example notes that many youths engaged with the FNL with the hope of receiving a professional position (2016b: 246). She also notes that the economic prospects associated with the demobilization programs were another reason for many youths to join the FNL (2016a: 16; Berckmoes, 2014: 152). One of Berckmoes’ interviewees suggested, in 2009, that all parties tried to engage in clientelist distribution of goods—but the CNDD-FDD seems to be the one who had the most to offer. Asked if propaganda had already started, the interviewee answered: “A little; but only small meetings. For instance, across the street (...) three political parties passed already. They promised a lot of things. CNDD-FDD says: ‘We will give you a phone, 100.000 Burundian francs (about 75 euro’s)’ They [youth] say: ‘Okay, come and give’” (2014: 153).

The chances of getting a job (or other benefits) after the elections depends, of course, on election results and whether patronage connections were developed with the “right” party. Who to vote for is thus a delicate decision, which does not only imply ideology, but also neo-patrimonial



considerations.<sup>69</sup> Youths engage in what Berckmoes calls “judicious opportunism” (Berckmoes, 2014: 133) while making this decision, and neo-patrimonial imperatives often overrule ideological preferences. They try to anticipate the winner and create links, or display loyalty towards this party. Indeed, although not socially valued, “the practice of shifting [political loyalty] was very common” (Berckmoes, 2015: 17). Once again, since the CNDD-FDD’s victory was expected in 2005 (as well as in the following elections), part of the votes for this party may result from opportunistic strategic decisions. This may particularly well explain the fact that a high number of Tutsis voted for this party despite probable feelings of resentment against this formerly Hutu-dominated rebel movement. Just like Tutsi candidates who joined the CNDD-FDD, many Tutsis electors must have favoured survival imperatives over ethnic preferences.

Another explanation for the depoliticization of ethnicity in Burundi is worth mentioning briefly. The argument is that the confrontation between the two main Hutu-dominated armed groups – the CNDD-FDD which signed the Arusha Agreement, and the FNL which did not – has proven to the Burundians that ethnic cleavages were not “real” but instrumentalized by elites (Alfieri, 2016a, 2016b). In other words, according to this argument, the cleavage hierarchy had already changed *during* the civil war (Vorrath, 2009). This factor is certainly an important explanation for the depoliticization of ethnicity in Burundi. However, there are reasons to think that it cannot completely account for this depoliticization. Indeed, this interpretation focuses on the ideas and beliefs of voters, but the analysis developed in this thesis has shown that ethnic identities are not mobilized only for ideological reasons. Rather, the interests of the actors (which are shaped by the institutions and by violence) also play a decisive role in their decision to mobilize ethnic or non-ethnic identities. The analysis provided by this chapter may thus shed light on these other, non-ideological, explanatory factors and thus allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

This analysis does not deny the fact that ideology plays a role in the political decisions made by Burundians (Alfieri, 2016a; Tobolka, 2015). By no mean do I want to suggest that African voters are exclusively driven by neo-patrimonial considerations. The fact that the CNDD-FDD generated a positive image, popular enthusiasm and hopes for a real change toward peace and good governance is undeniable (Nindorera, 2012: 27). This is also a reason that has pushed some Tutsis to join the party. For example, Alfieri reports the words of Desirée, a Tutsi, who is now a former

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<sup>69</sup> As well as personal security issues (Berckmoes, 2014: 162; Travaglianti, 2014)

CNDD-FDD member: “I decided to join CNDD-FDD because I believed that it would be a change. This party had included all ethnic groups, religions, tendencies. It represented the break with the past” (2016b, 248). Without denying this dimension, however, my argument is that these ideological preferences were confronted with survival imperatives, and that, in Burundi’s harsh economic context, neo-patrimonial considerations often overrule ideological or ethnic preferences (Tobolka, 2014: 12). This confrontation is also acknowledged by Berckmoes who notes that it is the source of many “moral dilemmas” amongst young Burundians (2014: 161). The exact extent to which ideology or neo-patrimonialism respectively oriented the vote is hard, if not impossible, to measure. However, the fact that the results of the CNDD-FDD have not decreased in the following elections despite widespread acknowledgement that the promises of change had not been kept suggests that neo-patrimonial incentives were not negligible.<sup>70</sup>

Tobolka goes in the same direction when trying to explain the survival of the opposition in Burundi’s context, which is marked by both monopolization of state resources by the CNDD-FDD and widespread repression. He observes that opposition parties are maintained alive by a small core of members who are committed to an ideology (which may be ethnic or not) but “do not profit from their political engagement in any tangible way, rather the opposite” (Tobolka, 2014: 9). His analysis thus suggests that, in Burundi’s resource scarce and violent environment, few citizens have the luxury of voting according to their ideological or ethnic preferences. Neo-patrimonial logics, on the other hand, have a decisive impact: “There are politically minded and morally driven individuals that are deeply committed to practising opposition politics. However, given the harsh circumstances, they are only few” (Tobolka, 2014: 12).

In sum, the emergence of multi-ethnic parties in Burundi is arguably explainable by two factors whose relative importance is difficult to establish: post-conflict goodwill and institutional incentives. Amongst this last set of factors, I underlined that electoral incentives for the integration of “ethnic others” in ethnically dominated political parties were created by the system of ethnic quotas. It has been necessary to take neo-patrimonial imperatives into account to explain that many Tutsis joined the ranks of formerly Hutu-dominated parties in a context that was still marked by strong inter-ethnic mistrust, as well as the fact that extensive cross-ethnic voting was observed.

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<sup>70</sup> Widespread repression is also a factor that enters into consideration. However, if Travagianti (2014) is correct, pre-electoral violence was mostly committed toward *Hutu* citizens, while my main interest in this subsection was to explain *Tutsi* cross-ethnic voting. It should also be acknowledged that the credibility and reliability of the official election results is difficult to determine.

Another factor might also be taken into consideration, not so much as a cause of the establishment of multi-ethnic parties, but as an enabler of this process: the presence of strong political and security guarantees in the 2005 Constitution.

### ***Security and Political Guarantees***

The fact that political and security guarantees have had a huge impact on the pacification of Burundi is well established. Ethnic quotas have guaranteed each group will have a say in the decision-making, and Tutsis have sufficient veto points to guarantee no political decision would threaten their existence. Equally important, the over-representation of Tutsis in the army and the simultaneous integration of Hutu rebels in the security forces provided guarantees for both groups that the army and the police would not undertake genocidal violence as was the case in the past.

Amongst others, Nindorera notes that:

The CNDD-FDD insisted on its crucial role in reforming the defence and security forces, and on its ability to defend its electoral gains and any possible sabotage attempt like that on the 1993 democratic experiment. These two messages were meaningful to the Hutu majority who, after that traumatic experience, understood that control of the security forces was indispensable for governing. Hutus viewed the integration of the former rebel forces into the army and the police as a guarantee against any usurpation of the democratic process. [...] The Tutsi community, for its part, reacted with indifference or resignation to the CNDD-FDD's victory. A large number of Tutsis had joined the party, serving to tone down its radical image. Tutsis were also reassured by constitutional guarantees regarding their participation in State institutions (2012: 27; also see Lemarchand, 2009: 169; Reyntjens, 2005; Vandeginste, 2006).

These guarantees have also worked to dissuade certain actors to spoil the peace process by resorting to violence. As Lemarchand notes, “what appeared both feasible and desirable in 1993, from the perspective of Tutsi interests, today seems so fraught with dangers as to be almost impossible to contemplate” (2006b: 15).

That these guarantees have also paved the way for the depoliticization of ethnicity can be understood by the fact that violence and exclusion (and the emotions it creates) have been one of the major factors contributing to the politicization of ethnicity in Burundi. The best way to demonstrate that this process has indeed happened in Burundi is perhaps to pay attention to the portions where it is still unachieved. Indeed, despite the end of the war, violence has not fully disappeared in Burundi. Rather, the country has been described as stuck in a “no-peace, no war” situation (Wittig, 2016), and marked by enduring “indeterminacy”, “unintelligibility” and

“unpredictability” (Berckmoes, 2014: 23). In fact, guarantees for political representation and security do exist, but the fear that they may fade away is still present amongst many Burundians. This has had the effect of decreasing the importance attributed to ethnicity, without allowing it to disappear completely as a subject of preoccupation.

Here too, Berckmoes’ fieldwork provides important data for demonstrating the existence of this dynamic.<sup>71</sup> She observed that ethnicity was not a day-to-day worry for her interlocutors and the subject was almost never brought into the conversations, and was often referred to as a thing of the past (2014: 109). However, what results from her analysis is that the preoccupation about ethnicity was still present, not as a matter of self-identification, but as the fear that members of other ethnic categories would use these identities for negative purposes. In fact, “standpoints on ethnicity differ not per person or environment, but per moment” (2014: 111), arguably depending on the level of fear experienced by these persons in specific circumstances. “What was questioned and feared were not the categories as such, but *their potential for being employed by others*: the treacherousness of ethnic identification depended on other persons potentially using an ethnic frame for exclusion and violence” (2014: 129, emphasis added). This backs the hypothesis put forth in this research: ethnic violence contributes to the activation of ethnic categories not by perpetrators but by potential victims who feel threatened (Chapter 4).

This is particularly well illustrated by an episode of Berckmoes’s fieldwork (2014: 111). She reports her discussions with Sylvère, a Tutsi taxi-men. Although repeatedly insisting on the non-relevance of ethnicity in today’s Burundi, Sylvère holds a radically different discourse on one occasion.

In the evening I called a taxi to take me to town. As Sylvère picked me up, he seemed to head toward *Quartiers nord*. I jokingly said that it was too late for me to go to my

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<sup>71</sup> It could be noted that Schraml (2012, 2014) also worked on the perception of ethnicity in Rwanda and Burundi. However, her work tends to homogenize perception of ethnicity in three ways: within the countries, between the two countries, and across time. On the other hand, my concern here is precisely with these variations in the salience of ethnicity. Moreover, the general “primordialist” or “constructivist” perception of ethnicity of the locals is probably not the key issue, since Berckmoes’ analysis seems to show that the main concern of the Burundians were not with how they perceived ethnicity than how others perceived it, and more importantly how they may perceive it in an undetermined and unpredictable future. “My interlocutor hardly ever questioned the existence of ethnicity and they paid little attention to the veracity of differences in character traits or bodily aspects ascribed to Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Their attention was directed in the first place at actual and potential effects of people thinking and acting on the basis of ethnic differentiation” (2014:108). For these reasons, Berckmoes’ work seems to be more adapted to the purpose of this chapter.

interlocutors for research. He faked a surprised look. ‘Ah,’ he exclaimed: ‘so you are just like me, scared to be there. Scared for the people of Kamenge!’

He continued, saying that he was always scared to go to that part of town. ‘Because at the moment of change, ‘they’ can suddenly change. Just like when the war broke out. They forget about all the lending hands (*services*) given over the years and the friendships built.’

‘Only people from Kamenge,’ I carefully elicited: ‘or Hutu in general?’

‘In general,’ he answered without hesitation (2014: 111).

What emerges from this conversation is that while Sylvère does not consider ethnicity relevant in everyday life, he is still concerned by the risks that members of the other category “change” and return to the war logics of ethnic confrontation. Fear due to the uncertain context is central in explaining this residual persistence of the relevance of ethnicity.

The same dynamic is also illustrated by the fact that youth engage in “mapping practices” (Berckmoes, 2014: chapter 3). They create “mythical-maps” which attribute moral or ethnic qualities to the inhabitants of the various areas of Bujumbura. When meeting strangers, the question “where do you live?” (2014: 99) was commonly asked to localize them on this map. These practices, notes Berckmoes, “can be viewed in light of an anticipation of violence as an ever-present possibility. (...) Through mapping practices potential allies and adversaries can be identified” (2014: 106).

In sum, both examples illustrate that, from the point of view of Burundians, “the negative potential of ethnicity still loomed threateningly. The actualization of this potential depended largely on how others could and would employ ethnicity now or in the future, rather than on their own ideas and practices. The salience of ethnicity depended on the people around oneself” (2014: 122). This can be attributed to the remaining gaps in political and physical security, and the perceived unpredictability of the future. However, the fact that these preoccupations are not considered relevant in permanence but only in contexts when the risks and fears are higher, and mostly seen as a potentiality for the future rather than a threat in the present, shows that the political and security guarantees provided by the 2005 Constitution have already greatly reduced these fears, and, by way of consequence, the activation of ethnic identities.

### ***Informal Networks, Bargaining Arenas & Discourses***

Despite these remaining fears, what transpires from Berckmoes’ observations is that Burundians mostly consider that ethnicity has lost relevance since the end of the war. While the subject is not

often discussed, Berckmoes identifies three ways in which ethnicity is referred to: “in expressing that ethnicity is disappearing or has already disappeared as a relevant category for meaning in Burundi; by disapproving all relationships based on ethnic similarities and dissimilarities; and by expressly avoiding the topic of ethnicity” (2014: 112). It can be concluded from this analysis that not only the *political* but also the *social* salience of ethnicity has decreased in Burundi (Posner, 2004).

In this subsection, I argue that this phenomenon is an indirect effect of the power-sharing system. More precisely, the literature identifies two factors for explaining the de-emphasis of ethnicity in everyday life. First, discourses held by politicians and multi-ethnic political parties strongly condemn reference to ethnic antagonisms; they are reverberated in the population. Second, “arenas of bargaining” (Reilly, 2001) have been created by the power-sharing system and contribute to the decrease of inter-ethnic tensions. These arenas include the army and the security forces, the parties’ informal networks, and civil society’s informal networks. For both, limited empirical data make the confirmation of the causal link difficult. However, I judge them sufficiently plausible to deserve a short discussion.

### *Discourses*

Just like the CNDD-FDD political parties have shifted to an anti-ethnic discourse since the end of the war (Reynjens, 2005: 132; Lemarchand, 2009: 171). This is a direct consequence of both the fact that Hutus and Tutsis are integrated in the political bodies, and the fact that the parties themselves have become multi-ethnic. Alfieri (2016a), for example, shows that the FNL’s ethnic discourse dramatically lost in relevance when Hutus were integrated in the institutions, and that the de-ethnicization of its discourse in 2009 was in fact a way to gain new popular legitimacy.<sup>72</sup> A particularly telling example of this disappearance and condemnation of ethnic discourses in the political arena is an episode of the 2010 electoral campaign. “FNL dissident Pasteur Habimana, who campaigned calling upon all Hutu to vote for Hutu candidates in order to prevent a Tutsi return to power, was immediately and unanimously condemned by all political parties, including those siding both with the government and with the opposition” (Vandeginste, 2011: 329).

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<sup>72</sup> The process is illustrated by the quote of a militant: “they used to tell us to hate the Tutsi, they used to tell us our history, that a Tutsi was a criminal. But they couldn’t tell us this as Hutu and Tutsi studied together, and as we had realized that their ideologies were not true. They told us that Hutu had not power at all, but yet FRODEBU and CNDD-FDD were there” (Alfieri, 2016b: 244).

The decrease in social salience of ethnicity in Burundi can partly be explained by the spread of this anti-ethnic discourse at all levels of society. Vandeginste notes that it was quickly endorsed by the medias (2006: 185). Indeed, “major public-interested independent news outlets appeared on the scene in the early 2000s, and most had missions aimed at promoting dialogue and supporting the peace process.” (Jobbins & Ahitungiye, 2016: 211). Berckmoes (2014) shows that using ethnicity as a criterion for forging relations or social interactions is widely condemned and criticized amongst youths in Bujumbura. Interestingly, this rejection of the activation of ethnic identities is not limited to the Hutu/Tutsi divide but extends to other identity categories such as religion. When asking an interlocutor if he was Protestant, she was answered: “You should not say that! Don’t say ‘I am Catholic,’ ‘I am Protestant.’ The most important thing is to believe, read the bible, accept Jesus Christ... Otherwise you’ll get the same sort of things like ethnicity” (2014: 115).

#### *Informal networks as arenas of bargaining*

A second explanatory factor is that the power-sharing agreement created many “arenas of bargaining” which put into contact members of different ethnic categories and therefore contributed to the creation of links of friendship, solidarity, or interdependence, as well as the decrease of tensions and stereotypes (Reilly, 2001).

A first set of arenas results from the “security guarantees”, namely military integration. As Samii demonstrates, this process has generated close, personal contacts between Hutu and Tutsi soldiers. The integration has indeed been conducted down to the lowest level: soldiers’ barracks. “Given that soldiers in the same barracks live and train together, integration down to this level would require regular and intense interethnic contact” (2013: 561). This process has resulted in a cohesive institution which could be deployed for peacekeeping missions in Sudan and Somalia without reports of inter-ethnic tensions (2013: 562). Moreover, Samii’s quantitative analysis suggests that the integration has indeed reduced prejudice, although other factors might enter into consideration (2013: 568).

A second set of bargaining arenas is constituted by the multi-ethnic political parties and their informal networks. Political parties have developed wide networks across the country. This is especially true for the CNDD-FDD. Tobolka notes that this “party’s territorial penetration is very deep in most provinces. (...) CNDD-FDD structures do exist, they are not imaginary: regular meetings are held, attendance sheets signed, minutes taken, reports written and archived, small- or

large-scale activities organized” (2014: 5). Other major parties also have nation-wide structures. For example, Alfieri reports having assisted to the creation of FNL structures across all provinces of the country. She observed that FNL offices in Bujumbura were opened on an ongoing basis and that militants engaged in various activities including awareness-raising and recruitment campaigns (2016a: 4). Politicians’ clientelist networks can also be added to these structures, since (as noted in the first section of this chapter) clientelist networks have historically played a big role in ensuring social cohesion in Burundi. All these networks have political functions, but they can also be considered as arenas where Hutus and Tutsis interact, which may contribute to the decrease in inter-ethnic divisions. Due to the lack of empirical research on these questions, I can only mention this as a hypothesis. However, it would certainly be a fruitful direction for future research.

A third set of arenas of bargaining is formed by the civil society (Putnam, 1993). Berckmoes mentions a few multi-ethnic associations. For example, the *Centre Jeunes Kamenge*, which aims at uniting young people “despite their differences” (2014: 76). She also reports that many associations devote particular efforts to describe their membership in inclusive terms, in order not to be perceived as exclusionary (2014: 120-1). Given these elements, it sounds plausible that associational networks are widely multi-ethnic in Burundi, but the lack of empirical data does not allow us to precisely determine whether multi-ethnic organisations are widespread or not (Berckmoes, personal communication, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016). The potential for associational networks to build “civic capital” and foster peacebuilding has been acknowledged by many NGOs that develop trust-building projects at many levels (Jobbins and Ahitungiye, 2016: 215). The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars led The Burundi Leadership Training Program to build trust and cooperative behaviour amongst Burundian elites (Wolpe and McDonald, 2012). Search for Common Ground also led various activities aiming at uniting youth in multi-ethnic (and multi-party) events. This included support for a multi-ethnic radio channel which promoted peace, or the creation of “Peace festivals” which were organised by young leaders and brought together members of different parties and ethnic groups.<sup>73</sup> These associational networks might well have

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<sup>73</sup> Many thanks to Katrin Wittig for the suggestion. See for example: Search for Common Ground, “Youth inspired: now and tomorrow”, <https://www.sfcg.org/youth-inspired-now-and-tomorrow/>, “Mobilizing Burundi’s Youth for peaceful elections” <https://www.sfcg.org/mobilizing-burundis-youth-for-peaceful-elections/>, consulted on September 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.



acted as “bargaining arenas” and contributed to the decrease of social relevance of ethnicity. This is also a potentially fruitful topic for further research.<sup>74</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided a plausibility test of the theory developed in the last chapters. The first section has described the process of politicization of ethnic identities in Burundi. From a pre-colonial period where ethnicity was not the unique cleavage, formal and informal institutions as well as violence have led to a situation where ethnicity became the only identity that could be activated (with regional identity for a small part of the population). This process fits closely with the theory of politicization of ethnicity developed in chapters 2, 3 and 4. The literature however shows that an additional factor participated in this process: the influence of ethnic tensions in neighbouring Rwanda. In this regard, it can be noted that I did not pretend that the two factors highlighted in this thesis are the only explanatory factors for the politicization of ethnicity, I just identified them as the two principal factors emerging from the literature. The identification of additional factors and their mechanisms is left to further research, and the influence of neighbouring countries is probably one of these.

The second and third sections focused on the power-sharing institutions and the depoliticization of ethnic identities after the war. In section 2, I argued that the consociational literature on the question has difficulties explaining the success of power-sharing in Burundi for the main reason that the dynamic at play is not the one identified by Arendt Lijphart. Rather than a consociational system, I argued that Burundian power-sharing is much closer to the centripetal model presented in chapter 5, since it includes political and security guarantees as well as ethnic party bans and institutional incentives for the creation of multi-ethnic parties. In other words, power-sharing in Burundi did not aim at the “pillarization” of the society but instead aimed at the integration of Hutus and Tutsis.

The analysis developed in section 3 seeks to answer the central question of this thesis, namely: how can one explain the depoliticization of ethnic identities? In Burundi’s context, I argued that the principal explanation was the emergence of multi-ethnic parties. I explained this phenomenon by the behaviour of individuals in the power-sharing institutions at three levels: 1–party leaders

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<sup>74</sup> The direction of the causal relationship between depolarization of ethnicity and the emergence of multi-ethnic informal networks would also need to be clarified. The question of whether these networks have the potential to hinder processes of ethnic re-polarization would also be interesting to explore.

integrating members of other ethnic categories; 2—candidates joining parties previously dominated by the other ethnic category; and 3—cross-ethnic voting by citizens. While neo-patrimonial imperatives are not the only motor of Burundians' political actions, nevertheless, given the harsh economic circumstances, a significant number of actors has apparently had to favour neo-patrimonial imperatives over their ideological or ethnic preferences. Second, the strong guarantees for political representation and security of both groups have enabled a depoliticization of ethnicity by alleviating fears. This process, however, has not been fully completed since violence never fully disappeared and uncertainty about the future remains. Third, I noted the probable impact of discourses and arenas of bargaining created by informal networks in the decrease of the social salience of ethnicity. These factors were suggested by the literature and I considered them sufficiently plausible and interesting to discuss at least briefly.

This analysis fits quite well with the theory of depoliticization of ethnic identities developed in chapter 5. Most importantly, the analysis demonstrates that an exclusive focus on formal institutions is not sufficient for understanding the dynamics of power-sharing *in context*. Close attention should be given to individual behaviours, which are also influenced by the pre-existing informal institutional order. In Burundi, the imperatives of survival associated with the neo-patrimonial environment appear to have deeply influenced the functioning of the power-sharing system. This conclusion echoes Curtis (2012) or Spears, who noted that “Burundi (...) is the exception that still proves the rule that, despite the best efforts of the international community, peace in Africa continues to revolve around issues of resources and patronage rather than institutions” (Spears, 2013: 49). The main difference is that—however unsettling this conclusion might be—evidence seems to suggest that neo-patrimonial logics, and individual opportunistic calculations have not only had negative effects on the Burundian peace transition. They are also central in explaining the successes of this transition, the main one being the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage.

Paradoxically, though, these neopatrimonial logics do *also* carry with them the seeds of the further degradation of the situation. In 2005, Reyntjens had noted that “the temptation of authoritarian rule [would] need to be resisted by the CNDD-FDD” (2005: 132). That the temptation of authoritarian *can* actually be resisted in these conditions, however, remains to be proved (Uvin & Bayer, 2013). Indeed, once arrived in power in 2005, and even more since it reinforced its hold on state institutions in 2010, the CNDD-FDD controlled nearly all the means available to a state

incumbent. These include the control of state resources and employment as well as the control of the security forces, including the powerful secret services. These two elements have been used respectively to sustain the party's clientelist networks and to exact heavy repression on the parties' opponents (Tobolka, 2014). Taken together, they have led to the centralization of the votes by the ruling party, and growing authoritarian tendencies which led to the current crisis (Daley and Popplewell, 2016). These events are well summarized by Jobbins and Ahitungiye:

The current crisis erupted in April 2015 after the president announced that he would run for a third term, as opposition protesters took to the streets of Bujumbura claiming this violated the term limits clause of the constitution. In May, army officers launched a coup d' etat while the president attended crisis talks in Tanzania. While the coup was eventually controlled, many of the nations' media outlets were damaged. (...) Parliamentary, presidential, and local elections were held throughout the summer, with the boycott of many opposition candidates. President Nkurunziza was successful, with the only opposition coming from longtime FNL leader Agathon Rwasa. Since President Nkurunziza's reelection, the country has experienced dozens of targeted assassinations of government, opposition, and civil society figures in apparent reprisal attacks, the coalescing of an opposition in exile, and at the time of writing, escalating rhetoric and rumors of armed activity (2016: 212-213).

These dynamics, however, appear to be less a consequence of the power-sharing system than of the neo-patrimonial context and the legacy of the wars (Wittig, 2016). Rather, because power-sharing allowed for the participation of the opposition in both the legislative and the executive, it has acted as a "safety valve in [these] times of electoral turmoil" (Vandeginste, 2009). This safety valve has been weakened, however, by the fact that the opposition has at times proven to be a "poor loser" (Reyntjens, 2005: 124). Its decision to boycott the 2010 elections although "probably also based on a genuine conviction that the game had been rigged from the start – was inspired by a strategic speculation that a boycott would encourage the international donor community to call for a rerun of the elections" (Vandeginste, 2011: 319). This strategy turned out to have catastrophic long-run consequences. Rather than dismissing power-sharing as a peacebuilding tool, the tragic developments of the situation in Burundi do thus in fact confirm that power-sharing is not a panacea, and should be accompanied by other peacebuilding measures and a close monitoring in the long run (Jobbins and Ahitungiye, 2016). Amongst these measures, growing importance should be attributed to the development of opposition parties that are multi-ethnic, strong and independent, but also genuinely committed to democratic principles.

Amongst the clouds of the current crisis, three positive points have however been noted by observers. First, paradoxically, the crisis shows that democratic reflexes have emerged amongst

the population in Burundi, which is a positive development in a country marked by decades of authoritarianism. “The key word of the protest movement against the third mandate of the outgoing president was *Sindumuja* (we are not slaves), the expression of a claim for social justice and the will to set limits to his exercise of power. In fact, top-down authoritarian repression by the government is met by increased willingness of the grassroots to confront authority and to become involved in politics, despite the risks” (Alfieri, 2016b).

Second, as most observers agree, and with the exception of a few cases (HRW, 2016) ethnicity has not been re-politicized during the crisis (Chrétien, 2016, Daley & Popplewell, 2016: 6; Alfieri, 2016a: 19): “Apart from isolated cases, six months into the political crisis, we have not seen widespread ethnically motivated hate speech, mobilization, or violence. (Jobbins and Ahitungiye, 2016: 224). The stabilizing effect of the power-sharing system may well be one of the causes of this success. An important factor being that the opposition parties, as well as the CNDD-FDD, are multi-ethnic.

Third, a direct consequence of this second point is that the logic of violence has considerably changed since the end of the war and this remains mostly true in 2015. In 2010, Travaglianti found that, instead of ethnic violence, “in several instances, violence was ‘selective’ and targeted specific political actors and almost none of the violence targeted the masses” (2014: 20). This is also observed by one of Berckmoes’ interviewee: “Violence today is against particular, targeted people, like the chef de colline that was killed the other day” (2015: 5). Remarkably, the United Nations reported in March 2015 the death of 474 people since the beginning of the 2015 crisis.<sup>75</sup> The tragic character of these events should be fully acknowledged, but it can be noted that this number is a far cry from the thousands of deaths which used to follow the Hutu-rebellions during the pre-war period (Uvin, 1999). As Jobbins and Ahitungiye write, “it would have been unthinkable ten or fifteen years ago in Burundi that the country would experience a crisis marked by urban protests, a coup attempt, and a political impasse, and that there would not be ethnic overtones” (2016: 214). I would add ethnic massacres. Much of the credit for these three positive trends is owed to the power-sharing system.

Risks of re-politicization of the ethnic cleavage are however sadly growing, as the CNDD-FDD appears to be ready to do almost anything to remain in power, including coming back to the ethnic

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<sup>75</sup> UN, “Senior UN official warns Burundi's tensions could fuel violence throughout Great Lakes region”, 22 March 2016: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53522#.WGqDd6N7Su5>.

rhetoric that had almost fully disappeared from the Burundian political landscape, and reviving ethnic rivalries in an attempt to mobilize Hutu supporters (Daley and Popplewell, 2016: 6). The recurring declarations and actual attempts of the incumbents to change important dispositions of the constitution—therefore threatening the very system that allowed for the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage in the country—are also worrying (Vandeginste, 2009).

For these reasons, there are risks that the current crisis may re-activate ethnicity, since this cleavage has not fully disappeared in Burundi. This is true for the political parties, where internal ethnic hierarchies have never completely faded. “There are party members and there are party owners, it’s different”, a CNDD-FDD member told Wittig (2016: 15). This is also true for the army. The failed 2015 coup and the purges which have followed have indeed instilled much fear of the reappearance of ethnic divisions in the army. The same also holds true for the society where residual inter-ethnic fears remain. During the crisis, the opposition has recurrently drawn the attention of the international community to the potential risks of genocide. While the actual risks are difficult to evaluate, these calls are at least testimonies of the dramatic increase in inter-ethnic fears in the country. Although the CNDD-FDD’s attempts to instrumentalize ethnicity appear to have failed until now (Alfieri, 2016a: 18), the risks of a re-politicization of ethnicity—and the dramatic consequences it could have—must be taken seriously.

All of this finally goes in the same sense as the definition of success proposed in the introduction of this thesis: well-designed ethnic power-sharing can lead to the depoliticization of ethnic identities, which facilitates democratic consolidation and the diminution of violence but by no way guarantees it. If there is one last lesson to be learned from power-sharing in Burundi, it is thus that—as almost everything in peace transitions—its successes are infinitely fragile.

## Conclusion

“Que voulez-vous? Nous ne sommes pas maîtres de certains réflexes. Il m’est facile de penser désormais aux uns et aux autres avec une égale pitié.”

Georges Bernanos, *Les grands cimetières sous la Lune*, 1938

Theory and practice, I wrote earlier, are never very far from each other when it comes to power-sharing. Despite its wide acceptance amongst academics and practitioners as the favoured option for peacebuilding in multi-ethnic societies, power-sharing’s capacity to establish sustainable peace has been put into question by an important literature. Moreover, as observed by Horowitz (2014: 7), power-sharing has a poor record in practice; few countries which have been subject to ethnic conflicts have adopted this system and there are even fewer cases of successful implementation.<sup>76</sup> “Only a handful—between four and six, depending on how one chooses to count—could be said to have achieved a reasonable degree of sustained power sharing, and even among these there are some serious political pathologies” (Horowitz, 2014: 8).

This thesis began from the intuition that these practical inefficiencies are related to weaknesses in the theoretical underpinnings of power-sharing, notably an implicit primordialist conception of ethnicity, an a-contextual approach of institutional design, and an elite-bias. Instead of rejecting power-sharing out-of-hands, this thesis attempted to address these theoretical weaknesses, which may in turn help formulating solutions to some of the practical problems of power-sharing. This conclusion summarizes the theoretical specifications proposed in the thesis and then tries to evaluate their potential practical contribution.

### Theoretical Contribution and Main Arguments

The main contribution of this thesis is its attempt to approach power-sharing theory through (1) the lenses of a constructivist theory of ethnicity which leaves room for change in ethnic politics, and (2) a neo-institutionalist approach of institutions, which pays attention to the interaction of institutions with their environment and to citizen-elite linkages. This approach, the theoretical

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<sup>76</sup> According to Horowitz’s count, out of the “78 countries [which] experienced one or more serious ethnic-conflict incidents between 1980 and 2010” only 20 adopted power-sharing agreements (2014: 7).

foundations of which were discussed and defined in chapters 1 and 2, has led me to break with the traditional literature on power-sharing.

First, I have argued that ethnic cleavages have a specificity as compared to other types of cleavages. This specificity is due to the “stickiness” of ethnic identities and to the fact that these identities are “descent-based” (Chandra, 2012): when ethnicity is the dominant cleavage in a society, politics becomes a zero-sum game, and the fluidity of political affiliations which is necessary for the good functioning of a democratic system disappears. Moreover, as argued in chapter 4, the logic of violence across ethnic lines tends to be indiscriminate, dispossessive and associated with widespread atrocities. Based on this analysis, I developed an answer to the sometimes neglected and often ambiguous question of the goal of power-sharing in post-conflict settings. I argued that “success” of power-sharing after ethnic conflicts can be defined as the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage. While it does not fully guarantee the establishment of peace and democracy, reaching this objective appears a necessary pre-requisite for the establishment and consolidation of sustainable peace and democracy.

Second, understanding how to reach this objective required a prior understanding of the process of politicization of ethnic identities. In chapter 2, building on Chandra (2012), I conceptualized the politicization of ethnicity as the reduction of the set of nominal identities that can be activated by individuals to ethnic identities only. In chapters 3 and 4, I identified factors which play a key role in the politicization of ethnic identities. I argued that formal and informal institutions, as well as violence and its emotional legacies can provide constraints on the repertoires of identities and incentives for the mobilization of ethnic identities. The Burundi plausibility case study conducted in chapter 6 has suggested that these factors have played a major role in the politicization of ethnic identities in Burundi, but that additional factors—such as the influence of ethnic conflicts in neighbouring countries—could be identified. More generally, this case study has proved that this conceptualization can be applied successfully for the analysis of ethnic politicization process in context.

Third, in chapter 5, I built on this analysis to propose general principles for the depoliticization of ethnic identities. The general rationale is that constraints on identity repertoires must be removed in order to *enable* the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage, and incentives for the mobilization of non-ethnic identities should be provided, in order to *foster* cleavage shift. Constitution- and electoral-system design may arguably achieve these two objectives. I argued that a power-sharing

system which combines 1–Institutional guarantees for the political representation of all ethnic categories, 2–Institutional guarantees for the security of all ethnic categories, and 3–Incentives for the creation of multi-ethnic parties, may be able to foster the depoliticization of the ethnic cleavage. The study of power-sharing in Burundi suggests that this model may indeed contribute to the depoliticization of ethnic identities in post-war settings, but also carries some risks of authoritarianism. More generally, this case study proved that the model has theoretical value: while Burundi’s power-sharing is often considered to follow the consociational model, consociational theory does not allow for a good understanding of its functioning and its success. The proposed model arguably corresponds more to the case of Burundi and allows for a better understanding of its functioning. This might be the case for other power-sharing system, such as, for example, the Swiss one, which also includes political and security guarantees for ethnic categories, and multi-ethnic parties (Linder, 1994).

These last incentives however, can only be understood *in context*, since individual calculations not only depend on the incentives provided by constitutional dispositions and electoral institutions but also by the environment and pre-existing institutional order. For this reason, specific institutional design can only be determined in context. In this thesis, I only focused on one specific context: neo-patrimonial societies. I built a three-level model of individual actors’ behaviour which identified imperatives and strategies of survival for the state leaders, the elites, and the people. This model may help understand actors’ behaviour in power-sharing institutions established in neo-patrimonial contexts. The explanation of the adoption and functioning of power-sharing in Burundi has shown that including neo-patrimonial imperatives in the analysis is necessary to fully understand why the implementation of power-sharing agreements might be more or less successful in different contexts.

### **Limits and Prospects for Further Research**

As noted in the introduction, this thesis can be considered as “theory-proposing” research. Although the study of the “crucial case” of Burundi suggests that the arguments developed are plausible, the theory of the politicization and (more crucially) of the depoliticization of ethnic identities needs further rigorous testing. This could be done either by expanding the number of case studies, or by conducting quantitative research (Lijphart, 1971). As the number of available cases appears to be limited, I would favour the first option.



The theoretical developments proposed in this thesis suggest interesting areas for further research. First, the question of the specificity of the ethnic cleavage is one of the most important for a constructivist analysis of ethnicity. This thesis has not provided a definitive answer to this question. This is because answering it necessitates, in my opinion, a deep reflection on the bonds that unite a community, and how different cleavages might disrupt these intra-societal linkages. This question emerged during my research, and it grew in importance as I reflected on ethnicity. I now consider that this may be one of the richest fields for further research on post-conflict reconciliation and positive peacebuilding. Research in this field would require a re-integration in conflict studies of contributions and methods of disciplines such as (micro-)sociology and anthropology, which are neglected particularly in North American academe. For example, I recently identified elements in the works of Marcel Mauss (1923, 1969), such as the concept of reciprocities, that may provide a promising foundation for such research.

Second, the identification of additional factors of politicization of ethnic identities is needed. The Burundian case study suggested that the regional environment might be an important one. Close attention should be paid to causal mechanisms. More generally, I have focused on *external* constraints on the politicization of ethnic identities. A question is whether *internal* constraints might also exist. By internal constraints, I mean factors that do not depend on the environment but on the *content* of ethnic categories. For example, religions or cultures might carry internal rules and values which could contribute to the politicization of ethnic identities. My intuition is that most of the time internal constraints are not as important or as external ones. In countries where religion is politicized, such as Lebanon, religious principles appear to have less causal importance than the organization of political institutions, political parties and clientelist networks. However, it might be an interesting area for further investigation.

Third, the question of the role of informal networks appears as another very interesting area for further research on the politicization and depoliticization of ethnic identities. The role of multi-ethnic informal networks needs further clarification. Many questions would deserve to be investigated: can multi-ethnic informal networks foster the depoliticization of ethnic identities? Or are they only a consequence of such depoliticization? On the other hand, can multi-ethnic networks hinder processes of politicization of ethnic identities? And can the existence of strong multi-ethnic networks increase the chances of success of power-sharing systems? In brief, linking

studies of ethnicity and power-sharing to the “social capital” literature (Norris, 2002; Putnam, 1993) appears to be a particularly promising field for future research.

Fourth, the model for the depoliticization of ethnic identities that I proposed is mainly suited for neo-patrimonial societies. In an era of globalization, where all societies are becoming increasingly diverse, developing the reflection on the depoliticization of ethnic identities in other types of societies is important. This cannot be limited in scope to what used to be called “third world” countries at the time power-sharing theory appeared. Emerging ethnic tensions in Europe and North America show that the study of ethnic conflict and institutional engineering for its management in the West is not only necessary, but increasingly urgent.

### **Potential Practical Contributions**

In sum, there remains much to be researched, and much to be debated in this field. But to conclude, I would like to attempt to evaluate if the theoretical developments proposed in this thesis might help address some of the practical weaknesses of power-sharing. One way to do so is to examine the potential answers to the “three big problems” of power-sharing identified by Horowitz in 2014: the adoption problem, the immobilism problem, and the degradation problem.

The *adoption* problem is linked to the countless obstacles which face the adoption of a power-sharing agreements during a civil war. For Horowitz, a majoritarian group will only accept to share power at times when it is “momentarily weak” (2014: 8). As for centripetal regimes, Horowitz notes that three situations can be conducive to the adoption of such institutions. First, when experts recommend it, which is rare; second, when the party of the majoritarian group needs the votes of the minority; third, when the future is unpredictable and all groups are likely to be the next victims of violence (Horowitz, 2014: 9-10). The adoption problem, is linked to the negotiation process, and is therefore more closely related the “civil war mediation” research agenda than to the “institutional design” research agenda which is the focus of this thesis. However, this thesis might still provide some ideas for solving this problem since it has shown that institutional design influences the strategic calculations of actors when it comes to adoption a power-sharing system. At first sight, the adoption of power-sharing in Burundi might correspond to the first explanation of Horowitz: both the majoritarian group (Hutu) and the dominant group (Tutsi) were weak after years of violence. However, the analysis conducted in chapter 6 has also shown that the system was successfully implemented because the votes (and candidatures) of the

minority (Tutsi) had become valuable to the Hutu-dominated parties. This was partly due to a pre-existing situation (the multiplicity of Hutu parties), but also to institutional design, which provided incentives for integrating Tutsis. Moreover, this thesis has tried to erase the “groupism” problem, which is still residual in Horowitz’s analysis of the adoption problem. I have argued that attention should be paid to the constraints and incentives affecting individual repertoires of identities. A carefully designed power-sharing system might provide such incentives. Individuals’ opportunistic behaviour might well lead them to jump across the ethnic divide. In this thesis, this reflection was more targeted at the survival of the power-sharing than at its adoption; however, a similar reflection might be fruitful in research on power-sharing negotiations.

The second problem identified by Horowitz is *immobilism*, namely, the great difficulty to modify power-sharing agreements after their adoption. The model proposed in this thesis is arguably less likely to be subject to this problem. Indeed, one of the idea of this model is to set up a positive dynamic of depoliticization of ethnicity, from the earliest stages of its implementation (Shvetsova, 2002). In an ideal case, where implementation would be fully successful, the power-sharing model would progressively become irrelevant and could even be removed. In reality, it is trickier to determine if and when such a system could be suppressed. As reconciliation is a long-term process, I doubt that this could happen in the short- or medium-term after the end of the civil conflict (Sluzki, 2003). More importantly, in diverse societies, the risk that ethnicity becomes politicized remains present even if the ethnic cleavage is not dominant. For this reason, I believe a combination of guarantees for representation of all ethnic categories coupled with incentives for mobilization of non-ethnic identities should be maintained at all time in these societies. The case of Switzerland demonstrates this: even if ethnicity is not a dominant political cleavage in the Swiss political landscape, institutional dispositions for the representation of all groups in political institutions are maintained and carefully applied (Linder, 1994). The case of Burundi also tends to demonstrate that the system must be maintained in the long run since the temptation of instrumentalizing ethnicity might well tempt elites in time of crisis. The regular attempts of the CNDD-FDD to modify dispositions of the Burundian constitution represent a threat to the survival of power-sharing (Vandeginste, 2011). In this case, the robustness of the agreement and the difficulty to modify it—in one word, its immobility—is not so much a weakness as a strength.

The last problem is *degradation*: the majoritarian group which accepted a power-sharing agreement when it was weak might be tempted to challenge this accord if it becomes powerful

again (Horowitz, 2014: 10). Here too, the proposed model may arguably help us to think about solutions. The close attention I proposed to pay to the citizens, and the incentives that are provided for moderation and inter-ethnic reconciliation at the level of people might be the key. Indeed, a moderate people might act as a break against the potential ethnic extremism of elites. The recent events in Burundi provide an example of this dynamic. While the state leaders have progressively turned back to an ethnic discourse, the people have, in majority, not followed. Although some instances of ethnic violence have been reported and should be acknowledged (HWR, 2015), the eruption of massive ethnic violence that had been witnessed during each crisis in the post-independence decades has not happened in 2015. Although more elements would be needed to prove this hypothesis, it is quite probable that the multi-ethnic political parties, clientelist networks and associational networks have played a key role in developing a moderate people which has not followed ethnic extremists leaders. Whereas consociationalism proposed that moderate elites can appease extremist people, it should also be acknowledged that a moderate people can alleviate elites' extremism. As proposed in this thesis, further reflection is needed on the ability of formal institutions to induce moderation amongst the people.

In sum, the potential practical consequences of the theoretical analysis developed in this thesis still need to be developed. However, the research might at least suggest new directions which could provide solutions to some of power-sharing's most worrying problems, most particularly immobilism and degradation. Anchoring institutional conflict management in a rigorous and up-to-date theoretical ground is not a vain exercise.

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Reduced to its most simple expression, the central idea of this study is surprisingly close to the observation formulated by Tocqueville almost two centuries ago, and quoted at the very beginning of this thesis: if they are to build a society in common, the "art of associating" must be developed amongst former belligerents in parallel to the equality of their condition. Only then can one hope that individuals who have engaged in the worst forms of violence against each other on the sole basis of their ethnic identities might one day, like Georges Bernanos in the epigraph of this conclusion, express compassion for their former allies and their former enemies alike. A compassion that can also be called reconciliation—the stone on which peace and democracy can find their most solid foundation.

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