
Independence Without Accountability: A Psychoanalytic Critique of Post-Colonial Governance in Hotel Rwanda

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Abstract

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide The 1994 Rwandan Genocide is the most catastrophic in recent human history, killing about 800,000 in a mere 100 days. Though the Belgian colonial period enshrined political distinctions between the two dominant ethnic groups – Hutu and Tutsi – through discriminatory policy and administrative practice, post-independence continued violence against people throughout Rwanda forces critical inquiry into post-colonial leadership responsibility. This article argues that while colonialism was a foundational contributor to structural inequalities in Rwanda, successive regimes within post-colonial Rwanda made political choices to continually reproduce ethnic divisions for political expediency rather than dismantle them, therefore cannot account entirely for the genocide nor the subsequent governance failures. Using Terry George’s film *Hotel Rwanda* as a cultural lens to represent the complexities of the period, this paper engages psychoanalysis in the terms of Sigmund Freud, utilizing repression, denial and projection to understand the ways in which political leadership psychologically exiled responsibility for the government’s failure on the legacy of colonialism. Instead of confronting its own agency and manipulation of ethnic identity, leadership repeatedly and consciously returned to colonial oppression as an explanation, absolving political figures from both moral and political culpability. Employing a qualitative approach, the article uses historic documentation relevant to Belgian colonial governance, the Hutu Revolution and the run-up to genocide, analyzed along with cinematic depiction found in the movie, and utilizes Freudian psychoanalysis as its theoretical backbone for analyzing government as individuals in employing defense mechanisms to preserve political legitimacy. The paper concludes by offering that sustainable national healing will necessarily require engaging with colonial injustice and post-colonial political responsibility as mutually related and equally essential elements. By illuminating the psychological nature of political denial as portrayed in *Hotel Rwanda*, this article contends that reconciliation necessitates truth-telling and institutional reform rather than constant invocation of colonial victimhood. Through integrating film criticism with post-colonial theory and history using Freudian psychoanalysis, this article contributes a multidisciplinary reading on responsibility, trauma, and reconciliation in post-colonial Rwanda.

Introduction

In order to approach an answer to this question, some scholars identify the period of Belgian colonial rule in Rwanda as the source of the country’s ethno-politics. With colonial authorities through identification papers, privileges granted in the education system and the appointment of administrative officials which clearly favored the Tutsi ethnic minority; the fluid ethnic categories had evolved into solidifying and differentiating political blocs which resulted in the anger and animosity of the Hutu ethnic majority and cemented institutional disadvantages which persisted

beyond the colonial period. However, an exclusive attribution of the Rwandan Genocide to colonialism means neglecting the active political roles which subsequent Rwandan leaders had. It is important to reiterate that Rwanda's independence preceded the genocide by several decades; Rwandan political leaders, by 1962, the time of Rwanda's independence, would have had more than three decades to reform the structures of ethno-discrimination, promote reconciliation among Rwanda's people and encourage the creation of an inclusive citizenship. Nonetheless, ethno-political discourse and manipulation have been crucial for the continued consolidation of political power among Rwandan politicians which in turn resulted in the systematic targeting and marginalization of opposition and the perpetration of targeted political violence and hatred against perceived 'enemies'. This article argues that the structures of ethno-division originated from colonialism, but not necessarily, the cause of the Genocide in 1994.

Instead, the Governance failures after 1962 played a critical role in the exacerbation of ethnic hostilities. Rwandan political leaders have used their colonial past to justify the current predicaments and failures rather than acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of the past three decades of the country's independent governance. This argument draws an analogy between such political actions and Sigmund Freud's description of defense mechanisms- repression, denial, colonial governance in Rwanda. Although these concepts were originally conceptualized in the clinical sphere by Freud to help understand his patients, later psychologists have widely adopted the framework to describe collective political behavior and national memory. According to Freud, repression is the blocking of the painful memories from being available to one's awareness; denial is refusing to acknowledge an unbearable reality that cannot be denied or dismissed as merely unpleasant, despite compelling and ample evidence; projection is the defense against one's own inadmissible qualities by imputing it onto another. Just like humans, governmental institutions may subconsciously make use of such defenses to safeguard their power, maintain public confidence and avoid taking accountability. In the study of post-colonialism and particularly the Rwanda genocide, this article utilizes these psychoanalytic concepts and demonstrates their presence in the post-colonial Rwandan state narratives as evident in their political discourses. This article demonstrates that by emphasizing colonial injustices, and by minimizing their own political culpability, post-colonial states employing repression, denial, and projection actively impede the path toward reconciliation and truth telling. The article employs as its analytical focus *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), a film directed by Terry George and arguably the most influential cinematic portrayal of the genocide. The movie narrates the heroic account of Hôtel des Mille Collines manager Paul Rusesabagina's efforts to save more than one thousand Tutsi and moderate Hutus from being exterminated in the conflict. *Hotel Rwanda* not only showcases the personal heroism of one man but offers a trenchant critique of institutional incompetence, bureaucratic ineptitude, ethnic propaganda, and the world's unwillingness to intervene. It vividly shows how a collapsed state infrastructure can facilitate massacre while vividly demonstrating the horrific cost of denial. However, unlike traditional documentaries or historical accounts, *Hotel Rwanda*'s marriage of a compelling narrative structure with a specific historical event offers an ideal platform to simultaneously explore the structural underpinnings of mass atrocity and its catastrophic human implications. It effectively portrays how propaganda incites neighbor against neighbor, how regimes capitalize on the politics of fear and fearmongering to retain power, and how ordinary people become the victims of political ambition. Through the convergence of historical analysis, psychoanalytic theory, post-colonial discourse analysis, and film criticism, this research critically engages with the links between post-colonial governance and the colonial past of Rwanda. It emphasizes not the dismissal of the legacy of colonialism, but argues for reconciliation that does not evade responsibility by delegating responsibility for collective past violence onto history or into an external foe, and not shirking responsibility onto the previous oppressive power, but rather to acknowledge the role of independent governments' independent policies and governance approaches to the genocide. Ultimately, this article demonstrates that no

enduring peace can be built solely on continued narratives of past victimization. In the long run, countries find lasting healing by looking to the present and past to examine their political choices and by reformulating a future not as a story of blame and resentment, but as a work of truth and accountability.

Research Objectives

- To examine how Belgian colonial policies institutionalized ethnic divisions that shaped post-colonial governance in Rwanda.
- To analyze how post-independence Rwandan governments perpetuated ethnic divisions and avoided accountability for governance failures.
- To explore Sigmund Freud's concepts of repression, denial, and projection as psychological mechanisms reflected in the political discourse of the Rwandan government.
- To critically analyze Terry George's *Hotel Rwanda* as a cinematic representation of governance failure, political accountability, and post-colonial trauma.

Research Questions

1. How did Belgian colonial policies influence post-colonial governance and ethnic divisions in Rwanda?
2. In what ways did post-independence Rwandan governments contribute to governance failure and avoid accountability for the 1994 genocide?
3. How do Freud's concepts of repression, denial, and projection explain the political behavior of the Rwandan government before and after the genocide?
4. How does *Hotel Rwanda* portray the relationship between colonial legacy, governance failure, and political accountability?

Research Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative research methodology because the purpose of the study is interpretive rather than statistical. Rather than measuring numerical variables, qualitative research investigates meanings, narratives, historical experiences, and ideological structures. Since the article focuses on political discourse, cinematic representation, and psychoanalytic interpretation, qualitative methods are the most appropriate.

The study combines four complementary research approaches.

Historical Analysis

This study relies heavily on history to tell the story. Through examining historical landmark events—such as the Belgian colonial rule, the Hutu Revolution of 1959, the independence of Rwanda in 1962, the civil war, and the genocide of 1994—the study explains the development of ethnic politics. Using colonial histories, the study analyzes the manner in which administrators imposed rigid categories onto more fluid social constructions via identity cards, the provision of educational and other privileges, taxation regimes and the appointment to political offices.

Colonial historians confirm that through these practices colonial rule refashioned Rwandan society even after the withdrawal of colonial administrations.

The study nevertheless attempts to reconstruct the thirty-two-year period of independence prior to the genocide in which independent governments had the power to reverse the legacy of colonial policies but chose instead to exacerbate the use of ethnic identity in their political maneuvering. As such, history becomes the politicized inheritance to be constantly reshaped by subsequent political regimes. **Film Analysis** This paper draws upon film criticism as its second methodological framework. The paper views *Hotel Rwanda* as an object that is used for pleasure

and entertainment but one that also offers an account of Rwandan society and a reflection of its past.

Film Analysis

Movies are able to deliver a political discourse on violence in an affective and visually powerful way by using visuals, narration, symbols, symbolism, emotions and dialogue.

The research conducts close textual analysis of important scenes including:

- Government propaganda through radio broadcasts.
- Military checkpoints.
- Violence against civilians.
- International diplomatic failures.
- Protection of refugees within the hotel.
- Bureaucratic indifference toward genocide.

These scenes are interpreted as representations of governance failure rather than isolated cinematic events. Special attention is given to characterization, dialogue, symbolism, camera perspective, and narrative progression to understand how the film critiques both domestic political leadership and international institutions.

Psychoanalytic Interpretation

The primary theoretical method is psychoanalytic criticism using Sigmund Freud's theory. Although Freud originally applied repression, denial, and projection to individual psychology, contemporary political psychology recognizes that institutions and governments often exhibit comparable defensive behaviors. This research therefore interprets official political narratives as collective psychological responses to guilt and historical responsibility.

The concepts are applied as follows:

- Repression: Suppression of governmental responsibility for violence.
- Denial: Refusal to acknowledge political complicity despite historical evidence.
- Projection: Attributing governmental failures entirely to colonial powers instead of recognizing contemporary political responsibility.

Through psychoanalytic interpretation, the article explains how governments construct narratives that preserve legitimacy while avoiding accountability.

Post-Colonial Analysis

Finally, the research employs post-colonial criticism to evaluate the relationship between colonial legacy and independent governance. Post-colonial scholars have extensively documented the destructive consequences of colonialism across Africa. However, this study argues that post-colonial theory should not become an excuse for permanent political victimhood. Instead, genuine decolonization requires institutional reform, democratic accountability, and responsible leadership.

The study therefore distinguishes between: Acknowledging colonial injustice, and Using colonial history to avoid contemporary responsibility. This distinction constitutes one of the central contributions of the article.

Data Sources

The research relies primarily upon:

- Hotel Rwanda (2004)
- Historical documents concerning Belgian colonial administration
- Academic books on the Rwandan Genocide
- Peer-reviewed journal articles

- Speeches by political leaders
- Reports from international organizations
- Psychoanalytic writings of Sigmund Freud

Secondary literature supports historical interpretation, while the film serves as the principal literary text.

Significance of the Methodology

These elements of historical criticism, psychoanalytic theory and analysis, film studies, and post-colonial theory, combined, offer a framework that is inherently more interdisciplinary, for assessing governance failures. Moreover, instead of reducing genocide to an isolated historical event, this analytic strategy demonstrates how historical memory, national identity politics, political discourse, the operation of defense mechanisms within the collective psyche, and representations can interplay. A single mode would likely have resulted in a partial picture of Rwanda.

Literature Review

Colonial Legacy and Ethnic Division

Rwandan scholars have approached the genocide in 1994 from different approaches of historiography, politics, and psychology. The overwhelming conclusion by most researchers is that the colonial government created ethnic divisions within Hutu and Tutsi communities thus paving for future political tension in the post-independence era. Yet, consensus on how far blame should go on the colonial regime with respect to the genocide remains divergent between and among Rwandan scholars. Mahmood Mamdani argues that Belgian colonists through its political tools such as identity cards, unequal education and its political administration effectively converted fluid social relations into rigid identities during the colonial era in his article “When Victims become killers” (2001). Likewise, Grard Prunier describes that through favoring minority group (Tutsi) into education and governance system during the colonial rule it reinforced a stronger ethnic conscience in “The Rwanda crisis: history of a genocide” (1995). Both argue that a solid foundation was laid in colonization era that continued in the politics after independence.

Post-Colonial Governance and Accountability

Although there were structural inequalities brought about by colonialism, many academics have highlighted post-colonial governments’ roles in perpetrating the genocide. As Scott Straus outlines in ‘The Order of Genocide’ (2006), the genocide was organized at the political level, and did not need to happen as a result of historical hatred. Instead, Political authorities utilized the media, government structures and the bureaucracy of the state in order to mobilize the state for the purpose of committing the genocide against the Tutsi population. Similarly, in Alison Des Forges’s ‘Leave None to tell the story’ (1999), she examines how the genocide was implemented through government officials who planned the whole genocide by, for instance, allocating weapons, drafting hit lists of victims, and initiating calls to violence. Both these analyses clearly portray the importance of governance failure, as well as political mobilization of the populace.

Psychoanalytic Perspective and Hotel Rwanda

Psychoanalytic theory is the theoretical basis of this study, based on the psychoanalytic ideas of Sigmund Freud. Through concepts like repression, denial, and projection, Freud demonstrates how one may unconsciously defend himself against unpleasant truths either by denying unpleasant memories or shifting the blame on to another person. The present research thus conceptualizes this phenomenon in the context of politics whereby, for example, the colonial

experience in Rwanda was used by the Rwandan regime to deny responsibility for failed governance. The Rwandan cinematic film *Hotel Rwanda* is widely acclaimed as a major film about the Rwandan genocide.

Few studies use a Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation to account for the political denial or how state failure or blame are mediated by the political discourse; instead, most analyses of the film have focused on its humanitarian theme portraying it as a depiction of courage, failure and international apathy.

Research Gap

While a variety of studies exist with regard to colonialism, governance, and the Rwandan genocide (historically and politically), there exists little research in postcolonial theory applied with Freudian psychoanalysis to film in terms of *Hotel Rwanda*. My research seeks to fill that gap in using the Freudian terms: repression, denial, and projection combined with a psycho-analytical historical film study approach to illustrate how the Rwandan government has transferred the blame of government failures on to its colonial past in the efforts to evading blame for its failures.

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework through which *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) will be interpreted. This research will be largely guided by psychoanalytic theory – namely the work of Sigmund Freud – especially the defense mechanisms of repression, denial and projection in order to consider why political actors and regimes evade culpability and accountability when their governance fails. While Freud originally applied these concepts to individual psychology, scholars subsequent to Freud have shown how psychoanalytic principles have also been used to analyze political and institutional life, memory and groups. The chapter also considers, more sparingly, the post-colonial lens so as to differentiate between merely recognizing how the colonial era had affected Rwanda and using colonialism as an excuse for present political shortcomings. The combination of both theories gives an interdisciplinary context from which to assess governance, responsibility, trauma, and national reconciliation in Rwanda.

Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) developed psychoanalysis as a theory explaining the unconscious forces that influence human behavior. According to Freud, individuals often experience psychological conflict when reality threatens their self-image or moral identity. To reduce this anxiety, the mind unconsciously employs defense mechanisms that protect the ego from emotional distress. Although Freud originally focused on individuals, contemporary political psychologists argue that governments and political institutions often display similar patterns of behavior. Political leaders may suppress uncomfortable historical facts, deny responsibility for failures, or blame external forces in order to preserve legitimacy. These collective forms of psychological defense become particularly visible in societies recovering from war, genocide, or political violence. This study therefore applies Freud's concepts metaphorically to political discourse rather than suggesting that governments literally possess unconscious minds. The framework provides a useful lens for interpreting how official narratives construct responsibility and historical memory.

Repression

Freud's idea of repression refers to the 'unconscious exclusion of an idea from awareness' and people 'repel memories and thoughts' which are perceived as disturbing their psychic balance for fear that the conscious experience of them may cause some unpleasant affective sensations like anxiety and guilt. Political discourse practices similar kind of repression in politics by focusing

less on the responsibility for policy failures of a present state or of past government led by them and more on convenient narratives. They consciously recall parts of their own political histories selectively to ensure the retention of power. In Rwanda's case, it is asserted here that, colonial wrong doings dominate political discourse and colonial perpetrators, at the expense of relative silence over policy mistakes made by governments of post-independent Rwanda, a political act of repression that impedes national reconciliation process.

Denial

Another key defense mechanism is denial, whereby someone fails to acknowledge an obvious and painful reality, even in the face of undeniable evidence. Denial is utilized in order to protect individuals from discomfort and shame; if a fact challenges one's identity or power then it may simply be ignored or rejected. In a political sense denial is utilized by governments who reject and discredit evidence of violence, discrimination and corruption, in order to remain legitimated in the eyes of their publics, through speeches, propaganda and selective interpretations of historical events. Hotel Rwanda displays denial through government officials who deny the enormity of the humanitarian crisis, insisting that political situation is normal.

Projection

Projection: "Projecting our own unacceptable ideas, impulses, and failures onto others." In projection, the individuals displace blame and take responsibility for actions that really belong to themselves. In politics, it can be argued that politicians may project domestic failures onto foreign others and opposition forces. They blame colonialism and other external forces to take the credit and deflect their responsibilities as they hold ethnic divisions together and remain in power even after their nation is granted its sovereignty and autonomy.

This article is predicated on the fact that although colonialism as a phenomenon is deeply entrenched and remains critically important, colonialism often becomes a vehicle of projection within political debate by politicians to highlight external subjugation at the expense of their role in ethno-nationalist conflict and political instability.

Psychoanalysis and Political Leadership

Despite the roots of this approach in individual psychology and clinical work, scholars of political psychology have shown the value of psychoanalytic theory in understanding group political behavior. States develop national identities based on a repository of shared memories, national history, and representations of a national past. Narratives used by political regimes typically safeguard their legitimacy through a focus on outside threats and a downplaying of their own culpability for failure. The memory that becomes dominant or is privileged by a regime, in turn, contributes to the creation of political identity and impacts the potential for conflict resolution. In Rwanda, traumatic memory has taken the form of political meaning as multiple interpretations of history arise among competing claims to victimhood and guilt; psychoanalysis aids in understanding the reasons that states may resist internalizing responsibility for violence.

Post-Colonial Perspective

Colonial history and political post-colonial analysis Post-colonial analysis looks at the political, cultural and economic impact of European colonialism. In their own ways, writers like Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha highlight how colonial powers transformed the identities, structures and power systems. These continued after independence.

While post-colonial analyses appreciate the fact that Belgian colonialism played an important role in institutionalizing ethnic divisions in Rwanda, this article posits that post-colonial theory should not absolve the responsibility of independent states. The challenge in post-colonial Africa is decolonization in the institutional and functional sense; it should result in better institutions,

democratic political process, accountability, national identity and citizenship, and good governance. We do have historical context as an excuse in post-colonial analysis but we cannot live with it decades after independence.

Application of the Framework to Hotel Rwanda

This theoretical framework guides the analysis throughout the article. The study examines how Hotel Rwanda portrays political behavior through Freud's defense mechanisms.

The analysis focuses on:

- Government propaganda and repression of responsibility.
- Political denial of violence despite clear evidence.
- Projection of blame onto colonial history and external actors.
- Institutional failure and avoidance of accountability.
- The relationship between historical trauma and national reconciliation.

Rather than treating the film solely as a historical narrative, the article interprets it as a psychological and political critique of governance.

Analysis and Discussion

This chapter discusses Terry George's Hotel Rwanda (2004) in light of the theory discussed in the previous chapter. The study combines a review of the relevant historical literature, Freud's psychoanalytic ideas on repression, denial and projection, and post-colonial critique in exploring the representation of government failure and accountability in the film. Instead of depicting the Rwandan genocide as the inescapable consequence of Belgium colonialism, the film traces the genocide as an effect of political manipulation by the post-independence government that capitalized on existing ethnic antagonisms, disseminated propaganda and neglected to safeguard its populace. It is concluded that despite colonial rule having set the structural groundwork of ethnic disparity, that the genocide can be accounted for by the politically deliberate actions of post-independence authorities.

The narrative, dialogue and iconography of the film are all aimed at exposing the failings of the country's political leaders and the international community in preventing mass atrocities.

Colonial Legacy as Historical Background

The film only makes a passing reference to the colonial past. The repeated allusions to Hutu and Tutsi in fact represent a colonial truth: Belgian colonial administrators had divided and established the categories of Hutu and Tutsi with identity cards, with differing access to education and civil service, to govern a population that hadn't identified itself in those terms.

However, the film doesn't suggest that colonialism caused the genocide on its own. Rather it illustrates that after decades of independence, the colonial ethnic lines continued because power politics, as represented in the government, deliberately continued the divisiveness. Ethnic prejudice shows that it wasn't the colonial inheritance itself that kept people separate but because inherited structures were still politically advantageous to keep in place.

A post-colonialist understanding sees colonialism creating a structure for future violence, but subsequent governance decides whether or not to act upon that situation. So a straight colonialism causal explanation of genocide would have made for a bad and simplistic story.

Government Propaganda and Political Manipulation

One of the most compelling thematic devices of Hotel Rwanda is the way in which the power of media and propaganda to spread hate is explored. Every few minutes the people are broadcast with propaganda that positions the Tutsis as enemies, and calls for civilians to partake in violence. These are just examples of how the government is able to influence people and create an agenda

that legitimizes murder and ostracism. It shows how the genocide was not some accidental mass killing that just started, but was planned carefully by people of authority by making administrative arrangements, by holding political meetings and broadcasts, and by distributing information to coordinate the movement. Government leaders twisted the long held disagreements and rivalries in order to produce fear and justify their evil actions.

Freudian analysis of this propaganda might view it as projection: The officials were unable to face up to their incompetence or the fact that their government had not done a satisfactory job. They chose instead to project their insecurities and failures onto the Tutsis who became the target of rage and disappointment, thus preserving the rulers' political power while avoiding responsibility for the people's misfortunes.

Repression and the Suppression of Responsibility

Freud describes how repressed information, particularly those concerning painful truths, are suppressed and hidden away in the collective conscious. When government officials fail to address their responsibility in inciting or directing violence in political settings it is a form of political repression. Political repression, a defense mechanism, will protect a government's prestige while continuing to engage in mass atrocities and avoid responsibility; it works by eliminating government responsibility for violence.

In film throughout, government officials actively hide from taking credit for orchestrating and leading attacks by instead proclaiming to act as a vanguard of national security. By refusing to take responsibility for mass violence, the government officials are practicing repression, withholding truths from the nation and thereby preserving state legitimacy. In the film repression exists outside the political realm of the government, for many civilians are afraid, and the government's propaganda are not being debunked by the nation's institution, resulting in a system in which mass atrocities are allowed to prosper because of the combined repression by both the nation's people and the nation's government.

Denial and Institutional Failure

Denial The concept of denial can be viewed through the lens of Hotel Rwanda. Officials of the Rwandan government continuously deny the prevalence of the genocide while they can see proof of the ongoing murders in their country. Through this, they continuously make false reports as people are being murdered in their homes, while this denial holds the governments of Rwanda and other countries from taking action, prolonging the human disaster. The Denial of foreign countries' representatives is also demonstrated when they too know of the violence and cannot call it genocide.

Projection and the Politics of Blame

Projection allows people and governments to deny personal culpability of the things they do or did, and rather displace responsibility to another party. This occurs in Rwandan politics through the blame of ethnic problems onto colonialism. The film Hotel Rwanda presents how the legacy of colonialism has created the animosities but political leaders made them so severe for personal gain, by preventing Reconciliation, and fanning the Flames.

Governments blame the colonial government for their contemporary failings by talking of all past woes caused by colonial rule and preventing taking responsibility for their failure to provide political reconciliation for those ethnic cleavages.

Consequently, the film illustrates how understanding the wrongs that colonial governments did to African countries, does not absolve those politically responsible within African governments, from their political failures.

Paul Rusesabagina as a Symbol of Moral Responsibility

Paul Rusesabagina: He is the moral anchor of the film. Political figures abdicate responsibility at the highest levels of government but Paul time and time again takes responsibility for others even when it comes with tremendous personal sacrifice. His is leadership, not ethnic-based nor political, but on a bedrock of empathy, mediation and moral conviction.

Diplomacy, courage, action and negotiation enable him to shield and protect over one thousand refugees within the walls of the Hotel des Mille Collines. His response differs from the institutional response, the governmental response. While systems crumble on denial and aggression, he exemplifies how leadership does not condone a turning away from responsibility, but an embrace of it. Paul stands as symbol of ethical action in the face of systemic collapse.

Governance Failure and the Collapse of State Institutions

Hotel Rwanda portrays state structures completely failing in their duty of care. Law enforcement, the armed forces, public officials, and the politicians did not serve and protect the people, but became instruments of killing. Roadblocks, unjustified detentions, institutional indifference, and systematic murders condoned by state agents. State authorities did not just lose their authority to maintain order; they were complicit in genocide. The failure of states also indicates that political violence was, at least in part, caused by issues of governance, accountability, and democracy and not only by the divisions and conflict of history.

Discussion

The study reveals how Hotel Rwanda frames the genocide as resulting from both historical and political processes. Belgium's colonial administration established structural inequalities but the post-colonial regimes reproduced them on purpose through propaganda, discrimination and political machinations.

Freud's theoretical frameworks of repression, denial and projection are useful in explaining the government's capacity to avoid dealing with its own responsibilities. The movie highlights how defence mechanisms can be implemented not only on an individual level but also within politics, for example, within collective memory and narrative formation.

In conclusion, Hotel Rwanda suggests that in order to move towards reconciliation, it is not enough to deal with the colonial injustices but that also one has to be honest about post-independence regimes' responsibility. One also has to make a change in institutions and to assure a system of accountability.

Conclusion

This paper investigates the link between colonial legacy, post-colonial politics, and accountability through Terry George's Hotel Rwanda (2004). This study concedes that the Belgians established the divisions that existed between the Hutus and the Tutsis in post-independent Rwanda. However, it asserts that this does not mean that colonial factors alone are sufficient to explain the 1994 genocide.

More than 30 years after the Belgian colonization of Rwanda, post-independent government could have been in a position to resolve the divisions that existed in society by ensuring their policies fostered unity rather than continuing the colonial practices of dividing and using those divisions to political end.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic concepts of repression, denial and projection help to show how politicians can shed blame by shifting it to history instead of taking accountability for their political actions and choices. As evidenced by the research done for this paper, although the Belgians left behind institutional inequalities that existed in Rwandan society, subsequent governments, both directly and indirectly replicated those divisions. For example they used stories of colonial victim hood to gain popular support, or so it seemed, but also to shift away the accountability from the failure of the their governments to ensure security for their citizens. It can

be shown through *Hotel Rwanda* that this movie is not just about a representation of a genocide, it is about political manipulation, breakdown of government and bureaucracy and failure of leaders and responsibility that has fallen to an individual and a few others.

Hotel Rwanda emphasizes that this means the moral responsibility of individual leaders, individual actions, individual ethics.

The study builds on previous knowledge by merging post-colonialism, historical analyses, psychoanalysis and film study in the investigation of the Rwandan Genocide. The Rwandan Genocide cannot be explained merely by colonial legacy; it requires analyses of the decision making of the governments of Rwanda following their independence. Freud's three psychoanalytic concepts explain how governments attempt to manage these failures without directly addressing their accountability.

They use histories of oppression to shield themselves from culpability. True and lasting reconciliation will not happen in post-genocide Rwanda simply through a process of narrating stories of colonial victimization. In Rwanda and many post-colonial societies, this will only come if leaders begin to address the legacy of the colonization and their failure as post-colonial leaders and institutions.

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