

Rwanda

Ethnicity in Rwanda

Group selection

In Rwanda, we code the **Hutu** and the **Tutsi** as politically relevant groups.

Power relations

1962-1994

Kayibanda (1962-73) and Habyarimana (1973-94) both legitimized their regimes by Hutu majority rule and had an institutionalized structure of discrimination against Tutsi. Hutu majority rule ended with the RPF taking power in July 1994 after the genocide.

1995- 2000

RPF introduced power-sharing arrangements of the Arusha accord, but made major changes such as the installation of a strong executive presidency, imposing the dominance of the RPF in the government, and redrawing the composition of parliament. What Reyntjens calls the “illusion of inclusiveness” is also reflected in the fact that since early 1995, Hutu elites became the victims of harassment, imprisonment and physical elimination, conducted mostly by the RPF. Atrocities committed by the Rwandan army and/or allies during the two Congo wars against Hutu refugees (not only militias) are another case in point. By mid-2000, out of a total of 169 of the most important office-holders, 135 (or about 80 percent) were RPF/RPA and 119 (or roughly 70 percent) were Tutsi (⁴⁴⁰⁶). Tutsi are, therefore, coded “dominant” and Hutu “discriminated”.

⁴⁴⁰⁶ [Reyntjens, 2004]

2001-2021

In a second wave of migration from Rwanda, an intra-Tutsi division became increasingly obvious between returnees and genocide survivors - similar to the split of Hutu under the late Habyarimana regime (North-South division). What further complicates the period from about 2001 to 2005 is that ethnic rhetoric was condemned by Kagame and his party and official posts were increasingly given to Hutu. Since the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2003, Hutu hold 15 out of 29 positions in the government, and even 13 out of 18 ministerial portfolios. With Bernard Makuza a Hutu is prime minister since 1999. However, since access to power is regulated by

the RPF, it seems appropriate to code Hutu still “powerless” and not “junior partner” for the period 2001-2005. But this decision might be disputable.

Additional Information on the power configuration in the national executive, contained in a US diplomatic cable does support the notion that the many Hutu included in the national executive can be regarded as being “token” members of government. “An analysis of the ethnic breakdown of the current Rwandan government shows Tutsis hold a preponderant percentage of senior positions. Hutus in very senior positions often hold relatively little real authority, and are commonly “twinned” with senior Tutsis who exercise real power. The military and security agencies are controlled by Tutsis, generally English speakers who grew up as refugees with President Kagame in Uganda. The 28-member cabinet is evenly split among Tutsis and Hutus, but most key ministries are in the hands of Tutsis (Hutu ministers do head Health and Agriculture, ministries which affect the lives of most Rwandans)” (4407). Furthermore, the exclusion of the persecution of war crimes committed by the RPA before, during and after the genocides by community-based Gacaca Courts is a further indication of the powerlessness of the Hutu.

4407 [Wikileaks, 2014]

Paul Kagame was reelected president with over 90% in 2011. He further strengthened his grip on executive power. “The (political) system is in fact a skillfully designed institutional façade that conceals the real distribution of power. All major political and power-related matters are decided by the president, together with his key advisers” (4408). This assessment is shared by a report of Newsweek, which notes that Kagame concentrates power in a small RPF/Tutsi elite (mostly English-speaking) by harassing, jailing or executing rival opponents. The RPF is reported to build local institutions paralleling and rivaling the state throughout the country. Furthermore, the government continues to regard the Hutus as the sole and collective carrier of guilt for the crimes committed against humanity in the 1990s.

4408 [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

Paul Kagame won the 2017 elections with almost 99% of the vote, being re-elected for a third term. His election was made possible by the 2015 referendum that approved an amendment to the Constitution, allowing Kagame to run for a third term followed by two additional five-year terms. In theory, this would make it possible for him to stay in power until 2034.

Therefore, the ethno-political situation in Rwanda, in which the Tutsi have been the dominant political actor since 1995, remains the same. Political repression against the opposition continues. “At home, [...Kagame] maintains a suffocating grip over his people, fretting that if he lets go, they will rise up and wipe out the ruling Tutsi elite” (4409).

4409 [The Economist, 2017]

In 2018, the release of two critics of Kagame seemed to indicate that the government could have been becoming more tolerant of the opposition (4410). However, by early 2020, there were still reports of death of critics, as in the case of a famous Rwandan singer (4411).

4410 [The Guardian, 2019]

4411 [The Guardian, 2020]

The Bertelsmann Stiftung report for 2020 again highlights the the RPF maintains a good hold of political power and, after having blocked the creation of an opposition party in 2010, “The inclusion of two new parties in the last parliamentary elections was permitted because it did not pose any threat to the power of the system.”^(4412, 14) As the Bertelsmann Stiftung explains, “There are no more relevant actors to contest the current authoritarian rule. The president is formally and de facto the most powerful actor.” Therefore, the coding of the Tutsi as “dominant” and the Hutu as “powerless” continues until 2021.

⁴⁴¹² [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Rwanda

From 1962 until 1994

| Group name | Proportional size | Political status |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Hutu | 0.84 | MONOPOLY |
| Tutsi | 0.15 | DISCRIMINATED |

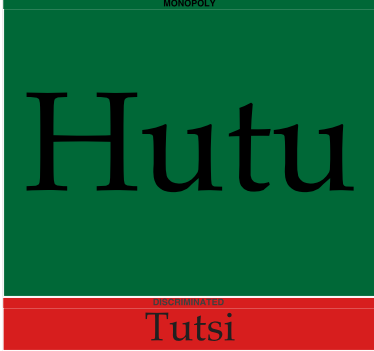


Figure 879: Political status of ethnic groups in Rwanda during 1962-1994.

From 1995 until 2000

| Group name | Proportional size | Political status |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Hutu | 0.84 | DISCRIMINATED |
| Tutsi | 0.15 | DOMINANT |



Figure 880: Political status of ethnic groups in Rwanda during 1995-2000.

From 2001 until 2021

| Group name | Proportional size | Political status |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Hutu | 0.84 | POWERLESS |
| Tutsi | 0.15 | DOMINANT |



Figure 881: Political status of ethnic groups in Rwanda during 2001-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Rwanda

From 1962 until 2021

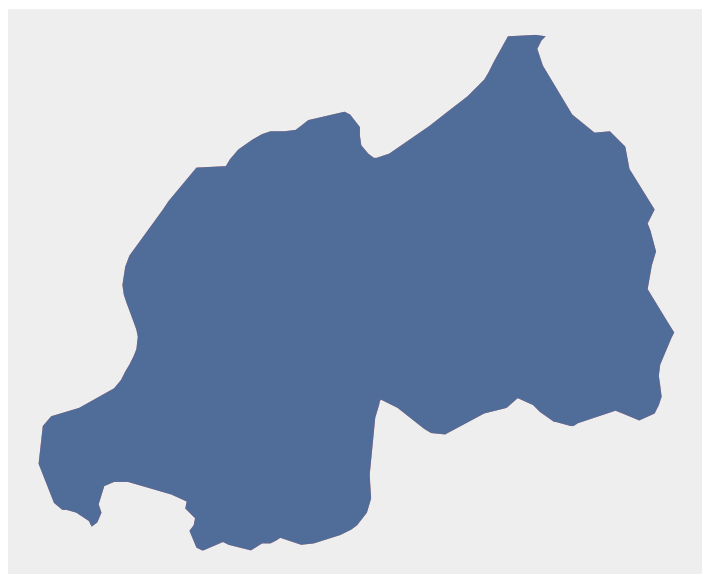


Figure 882: Map of ethnic groups in Rwanda during 1962-2021.

| | Group name | Area in km ² | Type |
|---|------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| ■ | Hutu | 25 133 | Statewide |
| ■ | Tutsi | 25 133 | Statewide |

Table 325: List of ethnic groups in Rwanda during 1962-2021.

Conflicts in Rwanda

Starting on 1990-09-30

| Side A | Side B | Group name | Start | Claim | Recruitment | Support |
|----------------------|----------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Government of Rwanda | FPR | Tutsi | 1990-09-30 | Explicit | Yes | Yes |
| Government of Rwanda | ALiR | Tutsi | 1996-06-11 | Explicit | | |
| Government of Rwanda | ALiR | Hutu | 1996-06-11 | Explicit | Yes | Yes |
| Government of Rwanda | FDLR | Hutu | 2001-05-19 | Explicit | Yes | Yes |
| Government of Rwanda | FDLR-RUD | | 2019-08-17 | | | |
| Government of Rwanda | CNRD | | 2019-11-28 | | | |