A Thesis

entitled

Tropical Africa and Generation Kalashnikov:
The AK47’s Role in Shaping an African Identity

By

Michael Strauss

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the Master of Arts Degree in Geography

Dr. David Nemeth

Dr. Bhuiyan Alam

Dr. M. Beth Schlemper

Dr. Patricia Komuniecki, Dean
College of Graduate Studies

The University of Toledo

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Many African nations became sovereign following the Second World War. The new African leaders were confronted by arbitrary boundaries and inherited state structures in ethnically diverse regions. Failing to realize their country’s potential, the first generation of leaders fell into kleptocratic methods of governing. Ethnic based grievances led to the quest for greed which boiled over into violence. Ethnic communities, political leaders, warlords and civilians soon discovered the most effective and efficient path to power and personal gain to be achieved with the simplicity and lethality of small arms, and in particular, the AK47.

Equatorial Africa has an abundance of natural resources and raw material, and illicit arms trade. Porous borders help facilitate movement of arms, combatants, and violence. The region continues to struggle to find an identity. Young men have little to few opportunities,
except those opportunities using the AK47 as a tool. Governments provide no economic opportunities for the society. Individuals, groups and organizations form in order to seek wealth, security and an identity of their own. Simultaneously, governments struggle to provide for the people while seeking personal wealth, security and identity. Grievance, greed and small arms are prolific and ubiquitous throughout Equatorial Africa. The AK47 is the tool that shapes identity in Africa’s cycle of kleptocratic semi-democracies.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The following paper will discuss how the AK47 has come to provide Tropical Africa and Tropical Africans a shared identity. Before setting the geographic context, a discussion on identity, nationalism, and patriotism will establish definitions and context.

Identity is a complex variable to define and measure. Social class, race and ethnicity, culture, tradition and language are just a few examples of the numerous variables that can define a peoples’ identity. For a generic definition, www.merriam-webster.com defines identity as;

“1a: sameness of essential or generic character in different instances; b: sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing.

2a: the distinguishing character or personality of an individual; b: the relation established by psychological identification.”

The second definition above best describes how identity will be defined in this paper. This paper will focus on one ‘distinguishing characteristic’ in transforming and creating
African individual and national identities. Contributing to the discussion will be the history of circumstances, or ‘instances’ involving this one characteristic that has affected the mentality and psychology of the people.

In Winner’s 1980 article, “Do Artifacts have Politics?” he states, “…machines, structures and systems of modern material culture can be accurately judged not only for their contributions of efficiency and productivity… but also for the ways in which they can embody specific forms of power and authority.” The AK47 for many Africans is such an artifact and the common characteristic.

1.2 Identity

Identity is not rigid and defining identity cannot be rigid. It is important to note that identity change is inevitable, and the factors and conditions that change identity are also shifting. For the purpose of this paper, the author’s assumption is as follows; the identity of and within Tropical Africa has been regularly shifting and never settling, until recent events. It is these events and agents that have effectively changed the identity of a region and its people.

Identity can be understood as a category of social attributes in which individuals have pride and passion. These attributes are more-or-less unchangeable with rules of membership including a shared history, historical myths, religion, language, and customs (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Many social and cultural attributes, however, can and do change over time. Defining the difference between identity and social category is blurry at best. Identity and social categories are social constructions of that and other social and cultural groups. As
social and cultural attributes change over time, so do boundaries between them and the identities and social categories defined by them (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Identity, nationality, and social category alone can cause groups to become violent. Radically politicized ethnicity, however, can lead to greater fractionalization between groups, leading to conflict. This is further facilitated by group identities and ‘differentiating one’s self or one’s group from an Other’. Recognizing the group’s Other creates an antagonistic relationship with a potential towards violent conflict (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

1.3 Ethnic Identity

“It is now conventional wisdom in ethnic studies that ‘the key to identifying communal groups is not the presence of a particular trait or combination of traits, but rather the shared perception that the defining traits, whatever they are, set the group apart’” (Uvin, 1997).

Ethnicity is a component in defining identity. Within ethnic groups members share language, race, culture, and heritage, creating common bonds. These shared characteristics bond the group together creating a group identity and the individual’s own identity as a member of the ethnic group. Ethnic identities, however, may also be tools of the elite or other individuals with alternative agendas. Ethnic violence frequently occurs following the construction of antagonistic identities by one group’s elite seeking to gain or maintain their power. “…ethnic violence is explained as both a means and a by-product of political elites’ efforts to hold or acquire power. Elites foment ethnic violence to build political support; this process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favors more violence” (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).
Members of ethnic groups are typically deluded with psychological games by their elites and leaders. Often members of an ethnic group ignore or discount the atrocities, actions and demands of their leaders and elites. “…if people have an innate desire for self-esteem, then they may be irrationally reluctant to believe that members of their own group, and especially their leadership, could be responsible for reprehensible acts” (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Leadership and elites manipulate the group with false propaganda and public violence meant for the community’s best interest. Members of the group are taught that the Other is to blame regardless of evidence to the contrary. And lastly, members become fearful of the Other in so that their support of their leadership and elites increase (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Edward W. Said’s work, Orientalism (1978), is an early work discussing the Other and colonialism. A more recent article by Papadopoulus (2002), simply states the “‘other’ is not the ‘this’”. The ‘this’ is the ‘self’, the group one belongs. The ‘self’ is the ‘me’ and ‘we’. The Other is not the ‘me,’ and not the ‘we’; the Other in not the ethnic or political groups’ ‘self’, but the opposing ‘they’. Papadopoulus also discusses two variations in the Other; the familiar, and the unfamiliar, or “exotic” Other. He adds that, with support from two other authors, Jarrett (1979) and Odgen (1967), “even opposites share something in common”. The familiar Other has a greater chance to share characteristics; however, the exotic is the least familiar, and more unlikely to share characteristics. The historical implication for Tropical Africa is that European colonizers were the ‘exotic’ Other and this ideology has remained following independence and the Cold War.

The boundaries of ethnic groups are more porous than the borders of states. Ethnic and national groups are more difficult to police because of changing and less definite
boundaries. Boundaries between ethnicity can be blurred by everyday actions or assimilation. Because of this, ethnicity may be defined as the differences that define a group from their Other rather than the cultural characteristics that define the group’s members (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Ethnic identities are not constructed from violence, but rather society links violence with “ethnic violence”. The fall of the Cold War has ended Left-Right conflicts and today conflict is labeled as “ethnic” for patron-seeking rebel leaders, ethnic elites and warlords (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

1.4 Nationalism and Patriotism

*The Dictionary of Human Geography* defines *nationalism* as;

“(1) A feeling of belonging to the nation; and,

(2) a corresponding political ideology which holds that the territorial and national unit should be allowed to co-exist.”

Like identity, *nationalism* can shift and change along political and ethnic lines. It is also believed that *nationalism* is related to “lopsided globalization”. Cases of state-building inside Tropical Africa have gone from colonial rule to independence and under Cold War influence to complete autonomy in 50 years. State-nationalism has yet to form a strong basis. Ethnic-nationalism remains stronger because of history and tradition. Conflicts of ideology ensue because the ethnic group is seen as the provider of social capital, not the sovereign state.

Dijkink (2008) writes that nationalism originated from the Industrial Revolution; populations became more urbanized and cultural differences became more apparent. Gellner
(1983) defines nationalism as “…a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (the ‘national unit’ being ethnic group/s). The implication is that states should be defined by nationalism. Three issues, however, decreases the reality of this implication: first, cultural differences are not well defined; secondly, ethnic groups are not even distributed spatially and within political boundaries; and finally, the vastness of ethnicity and ethnic groups is too great to use as a method for defining states (Dijkink, 2008).

This is reiterated by Gellner (1983); “The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all the members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners”, or other variations of “nationals” and “non-nationals.” Gellner’s definition of nationalism continues:

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation.”

Patriotism is simply devotion or a love for one’s country (merriam–webster.com, 2/9/2010). Patriotism is directly related to the sovereign state aside from ethnicity, culture and tradition. Although ethnicity, culture and tradition can help define a person’s identity and their group’s nation, it cannot define whether-or-not they are patriots. Nationalism is separate from the sovereign state. Patriotism is devotion towards one’s sovereign state whereas nationalism is devotion to one’s ethnic nation. In the world today many states contain multiple nations within its population, reducing the number of nation-states.
Nationalism is rooted in ethnic tradition and history and can be passed on through generations. Patriotism, however, is an ideology rooted in government and sovereignty. Patriotism can increase when civilians sense a need for protection, are feeling safe and secure, or are socially and economically comfortable. Nationalism cannot be defined by political boundaries, whereas patriotism can. Multiple nations and ethnicities can be patriotic towards a common state. African patriotism and nationalism are divided because of boundaries separating and creating new ethnic divisions inside sovereign states.

1.5 Regional Context of AK47/Identity Politics

Illustration 1 on page 10 is an example of the AK47’s effects on political-nationalism and patriotism. Taken into context can suggest its impact on identity too.

The regional assumption for this paper is that Tropical African countries are part of the periphery when using the Wallerstein’s World-Systems Analysis as a defining model. In the World-Systems Analysis, countries are designated as core, semi-periphery or periphery.

*Core* countries are well developed economically and socially. *Core* countries, as Wallerstein writes in 1975, are those with zones of; “concentrated high-profit, high-technology, high-wage diversified production”. Examples include the United States, Japan, and Great Britain. Hegemonic powers are key *core* countries. These countries may have mutual arrangements with *semi-periphery* countries, like trade. *Core* countries, however, exploit countries in the *periphery*, primarily through economic activities like manufacturing. *Periphery* countries often have a large and inexpensive labor force used for remedial and intensive manufacturing of consumer goods sold by the *core*’s globalized market. *Periphery* countries are those with zones of; “low-profit, low-technology, less diversified production” (Wallerstein, 1975).
Countries designated as semi-periphery participate in the world economy in the position of exploiter and exploited. The economy and production of these countries is more evenly distributed than countries in the periphery. Furthermore, semi-periphery countries have distinctive politics and social structure that the periphery does not (Wallerstein, 1975). It can be argued that South Africa and Egypt are in the semi-periphery, while other semi-periphery countries like China are closer to becoming core. These counties are, to a certain extent, exploited by the core, but these countries also exploit the periphery. Wallerstein (1975) says of the semi-periphery; “they act as a peripheral zone for the core countries and in part they act as a core country for some peripheral areas.”

The assumption for this paper is that Tropical African countries lie in the periphery. Map 1 on page 11 is a map of the Tropical African region this thesis emphasizes.

Core countries need the periphery. Periphery countries are the exploited and underdeveloped, economically and socially. This relationship has been evident since colonial rule. Following independence the situation in Tropical Africa has not improved, rather than core exploitation, it’s been market exploitation from within the core. An example of direct exploitation can be seen in the usage of cheap labor for consumer goods manufacturing, like clothing. An example of indirect exploitation can be the history of resources, like diamonds.

Africa has seen the effects of exploitation of its people and resources throughout the years. Colonial hegemony ruled with brutal control. Cold War core countries exercised their ideology that was often won for a price. Independence has been greeted by commercial and globalized economies of the core, some having greater influence than governments. This exploitation helped facilitate continued greed and grievances while creating a new generation of greed and grievance seekers.
Prior to independence and the Cold War, the gun was used for controlling the population. The gun was used to exploit the land through the control of the people. The gun, however, was also seen as the tool to escape from colonial rule. Independence in contemporary times has helped establish the gun as an effective and efficient tool to react to grievances and to achieve the sought after greed.
Illustration 1: The AK47 and identity politics; pictured over the yellow star of Mozambique’s flag are; a book, a scythe, and the AK47. This would suggest great pride in the AK47’s role in Mozambique’s independence. This current trend would point to patriotism. The images of the scythe and the AK47 share the same depth and color, suggesting the role and importance of tradition and technology in the state-building process. The three images also point to identity and nationalism. The open book suggests rules and regulations, the basis for self-governing. The scythe suggests agriculture, income, and tradition. The AK47 suggests state-sponsored security and the tool that provides social capital other than the scythe. It would appear that the three images also represent three major job categories; farming and ranching (the scythe), administration and commercial (the book), and authority and security (the AK47). (Source: www.unimaps.com/flags-africa/mozambique-print2.html)
Map 1: The AK47 “nation”. Regionally the focus is on Tropical Africa. More specifically the sub-regions of West Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes Region, and areas primarily between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer. Countries beyond the scope of this paper include South Africa, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania, and Madagascar. The volume of countries, tribes and ethnic groups throughout Tropical Africa limits the research to generalizing the effects of the AK47 on identity of Tropical African countries and peoples. (Source: http://touchalifeafrica.org/userfiles/africamap.jpg)
1.6 The Gun

The AK47 is the firearm of focus. This is because of its simplicity and proliferation, especially since the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, the AK47 is easily identified by populations as a lethal and iconic weapon. Throughout this paper, however, small arms and light weapons (SALW) will be mentioned as contributing to the problem. The AK47 is being used as a generalization of all other SALW in Africa. Illustration 2 (page 14) provides an example of this iconic and easily identifiable weapon.

In 1946 an injured Russian tank commander and weapon designer finalized his design on what would become a ubiquitous firearm. Designed for his country, to protect the ‘motherland,’ and ‘save [his] state from fascism,’ Mikhail Kalashnikov’s AK47 became the Soviet Union’s main combat rifle in 1949 (Hodges, 2007). A weapon designed for a singular purpose has become an entity in-of-itself.

It is important to note that Kalashnikov was the individual “to whom the army and the Communist Party formally attributed the weapon’s design.” Chivers (2010) adds the weapon was designed by a group of scientists in secure locations and the Kalashnikov name and attribution to Kalashnikov was done for propaganda.

Over sixty years later, the AK47 has become one of the most prolific weapons created by man. Give or take a million official and unofficial models, over 75 million AK47s have been produced (Military.Discovery, 11/19/08). If the world’s estimated population is 6.72 billion (Wiki, 11/19/08), this would mean there is an 89.6:1 ratio of people to AK47s. Because of illegal trade and counterfeit production, the true number of rifles in action is unknown. What is known though the AK47 is a cheap weapon, easy to manufacture,
withstands brutal treatment, and still delivers 600 rounds per minute of 7.62mm ammunition to the target (Military.Discovery, 11/18/08).

A conservative estimate from the UN of world-wide AK47s in use: 70 million—perhaps off by millions (Hodges, 2007). Printed in an October 2010 New York Times article, C.J. Chivers writes in his book, “The Gun,” that “serious estimates put the number of Kalashnikovs and its derivatives as high as 100 million. There could be one Kalashnikov for every 70 people alive.” Gas operated and having a mere eight moving parts, it’s made for cheap manufacturing, easy maintenance, and a frightfully simple weapon to operate (Hodges, 2007). Designation of the AK47 is as follows: A is for the type of weapon it is (avtomat), automatic; K is for the designer’s or inventor’s surname, Kalashnikov; and, the 47 is for the year it was invented, 1947 (Hodges, 2007).

There are approximately 500 million assault rifles in circulation today. Of this, about 100 million are in the Kalashnikov family of weapons. Putting this into perspective, 75 million of the 100 million are AK47s (Killicoat, 2007). The AK47 was not subject to patent when first produced, allowing for countries and companies to produce their own version. The Soviet Union distributed AK47s in vast numbers to regimes and rebels sympathetic to the Soviets. Having over 80 countries equipping their armed forces with AK47s inevitably increased the gun’s proliferation.

Kalashnikov’s rifle is now iconic and recognizable world-wide amongst military, terrorists, bandits, raiders, pirates, victims and civilians. The daily impact of the AK47 is perhaps most profound in Africa. It is not a rare for nine year old African boys to be armed with AK47s and expected to fight. Africa and many Africans have been affected by the Kalashnikov.
Illustration 2: Slung over the shoulder of this tribal member is one of the world’s most recognizable firearms. Note in illustrations that follow that the majority of child soldiers and African tribal populations carry the AK47 and not the M16 or other firearms. (Source: http://cmgonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=369&Itemid=51)
Illustration 3 on page 17 is a profile picture of the AK47. AK47 Specifications:

Type: Semi or Fully Automatic Assault Rifle; Country of Origin: Soviet Union; Caliber: 7.62 x 39 mm (.30 inch); Cartridge Capacity: 30 rounds; Muzzle Velocity: 2,329 feet per second; and, Rate of Fire: 600 rounds per minute (Military.Discovery, 11/18/08).

The AK47 arguably remains the easiest identified, and identified with, assault rifle. The author’s assumption in this paper is that Tropical Africans have experienced continual conflicts of identity in part due to for-sale alliances and patriotism to the highest bidder. Child soldiers and ethnic differences are blamed as the cause for numerous genocides. This chaos is facilitated by widespread public perception of the governments’ perceived inability to provide social capital and economic opportunity. Social capital includes welfare, security, infrastructure and other social programs citizens expect governments to provide. Economic opportunity and opportunity from here-on-in are interchangeable and represent employment, business opportunities, and overall, jobs and income.

This paper will emphasize three topics of discussion. First, it emphasizes the role of colonial rule on African identity and the extent to which European rule has played on today’s African identity. In conjunction, this discussion highlights the impacts that post-colonial rule and post-Cold War influence on the sovereignty of African states have had on today’s Africa and African leadership.

Secondly, the affects of Kalashnikovs on nomadic, agricultural, pastoral and urban peoples will be discussed. Although edged weapons still dominate the African landscape, mechanical weapons are trumping tradition and becoming ubiquitous. Evidence provides insight in to the extent to which identities are being shaped by the AK47 artifact.
Finally, is the AK47 a determining factor in who a person is and what a nation is in today’s Tropical Africa? The paper will attempt to determine if individual and state opportunism play a significant role in the relationship between identity and the AK47.
Illustration 3: Simplicity Rules! The AK47 has been copied by many countries, including China, with their Type 56. Unrestricted duplication increased this weapons proliferation and inaccurate assessments on gun totals in circulation today. (Source: www.vegastell.com)
Chapter 2

Problem and the Methods

There are identity crises in Africa. Colonial greed helped to create identity conflicts among Africans. Greed remained rampant as kleptocratic new African leaders dealt with poor infrastructure and economies following colonial rule. The AK47 is now creating new crises in identity as Africans continue to seek power, influence, wealth, social and economic opportunities, as well as leverage against grievances. African states and African people rise and fall by looking down the barrel of the Kalashnikov. Nomadic, agricultural, pastoral and urban populations have identified themselves with the tool, the one artifact, that presents opportunities to them; the gun, the AK47. In today’s globalized world people identify themselves with opportunities presented and taken. In Tropical Africa, however, development has left many with limited to no opportunities. Take the AK47 away and a new competition for identity ensues as Africans continue to seek and exploit opportunity. The result of poor development and blurred identities is the democratic AK47.

Many African nations became sovereign following the Second World War. The new African leaders were confronted by arbitrary boundaries and inherited state structures in ethnically diverse regions. Failing to realize their country’s potential, the first generation of leaders fell into self-serving, wealth and power inducing kleptocratic methods of governing.
Ethnic based grievances led to the quest for greed which boiled over into violence. Ethnic communities, political leaders, warlords and civilians soon discovered the most effective and efficient path to power and personal gain was achieved by the simplicity and lethality of small arms. Young men have few opportunities, except those related to using small arms and light weapons as tools. Governments provide no economic opportunities for the society. Individuals, groups and organizations form in order to seek wealth, security and an identity of their own. Simultaneously, governments struggle to provide for the people while seeking personal wealth, security and identity. Grievance, greed and small arms are prolific and ubiquitous throughout Tropical Africa. Small arms are the tools that help create nationalism and identity.

African males armed with an AK47 feel immortal (Hodges, 2007 and Jal, 2009). Elites, warlords, and leaders hire thugs, ex-military, militia and mercenaries to expand their power and control. With this tool opportunities present themselves, from raiding and looting, to politically-driven genocide. Having no opportunity has created identity-seeking populations. The AK47 and other small arms have become the tools for opportunity seeking populations. Without this tool opportunities are lost and populations have no strong sense of identity (Jal, 2009). That is to say, if governments within Tropical Africa would provide social and economic opportunities for their citizens, the importance and impact of the AK47 would diminish. Until such time this becomes reality, the AK47 empowers tyrants, warlords, elites, and civilians; either to project power, influence, and ideology, or to increase the likelihood of profitable opportunity (whether it’s food, resources, or money).

Illustration 4 (page 21) is an image of a child soldier and his AK47. Influencing and recruiting children prior to ten years old is widespread. This represents a problem with
massive implications on future identity of these children and goes beyond the scope of this paper. Emmanuel Jal, author of War Child (2009) and the subject of a chapter in Michael Hodges AK 47: A Story of a Gun (2007), said “The gun had made me a man. Or it made me feel like a man. I knew people would do what I said, because I had an AK. With an AK47 you can get food, respect, anything you want. Even when you are nine years old.”
This research draws primarily from academic articles as its sources for empirical data. Journals with an emphasis on Africa are utilized. Other published materials with an academic approach are also relied upon. Books and motion pictures are also relied upon for both contemporary and popular culture influences. I then looked for emerging themes. A content and contextual analysis of research articles and books focusing on the Tropical African region was done. I utilized material from various disciplines and identified aspects of the research that lent credibility on African identity and my thesis. Coding all material inductively I selected these themes:

1: AK47s; the gun itself. Small arms and light weapons were often coupled with the AK47. In Chivers’ *The Gun* (2010), he makes a generalization about the AK47, and I would like to follow note; the term AK47, and its variations throughout this thesis, refers to all guns and its variations that originated from the Soviet Union’s 1947 version. And finally, the numbers of AK47s, or its variations, ranges greatly, from 75 million to 100 million, give or take millions (Chivers, 2010 and Hodges, 2007).

2: Small arms and light weapons; this includes AK47s, M-16s and all personal firearms that an infantry, militia, or civilian can carry and operate individually.

3: Colonial effects; actions of colonizers during colonization and the legacy left behind by European colonizers.

4: Hutu and Tutsi; the genocides between the two ethnic groups provides an example of ethnic conflict and its roots, as well as identity, nation and state struggles.

5: Tribal examples; nomadic tribes of eastern Africa, for example, incorporate the AK47 into their daily lives. The juxtaposition of traditional and modern is profound.
6: Cold War and independence; similar to colonial effects; actions of Cold War countries in Africa and their legacy on independence.

7: Nationalism, ideology and identity; defined in Chapter One, Introduction. These are fundamentally important for my thesis as I am looking for challenges towards Tropical African identity.

After reading each article I then wrote a detailed analysis. Similarly, after viewing a motion picture I determined the picture’s relevance and included a brief review of this relevance. Once I completed my readings and all analyses written I evaluated overall contextual importance of source material. The fore-mentioned categories are chosen based on ability to provide support for the thesis. Information obtained from analyses deemed secondary and background to the argument are contained in the literature review. Information obtained that is deemed primary and in the forefront to the argument is contained in Chapter 4, Diffusion of AK47 Identity. The literature review provides necessary secondary and background information that lays a foundation for the result and conclusion. In many cases the articles provided material above and beyond the scope of this thesis. Much of this is shared in the following literature review.

Quantitative data was not used to support the problem statement. Data regarding AK47 numbers within Africa are inaccurate and not precise (Chivers, 2010 and Hodges, 2007). Small arms and light weapons, especially the AK47, have been flowing uncontrollably into Africa, creating difficult conditions for an accurate count. Furthermore, the AK47’s simplicity has facilitated the production of numerous replicas from countries like China. Rough estimates have been made by scholars, NGO’s and governments, which are discussed throughout. Material analyzed provides the basis for the argument on how
identities in Tropical Africa came about and how they are a result of small arms and light weapons, more precisely the iconic AK47.

The AK47 is an effective and efficient tool of bloodletting. In Africa it has become a tool in creating and destroying identities. In the sections that follow the argument on the AK47’s role in African identity will establish its roots from colonial rule to present day. The impact of past colonial rule and colonial greed have influenced how present-day Africans view greed and grievance. Cold War influence did not ease transition to independence due to various and confusing political alliances, social structures, and base infrastructure. Furthermore, the collapse of the Cold War saw incessant increases in arms transfers and coups. Finally, the recent trends of warlord rulers and ethnic conflicts suggest history is repeating itself; however, this time it’s from within.
Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The literature review is composed of four sections. The first section discusses the rough background, history and relation of Africa and the AK47 on more traditionally-oriented populations. The second section briefly covers weapon transfers and proliferation of small arms including the AK47 and machete. Issues of nationality, nationalism, ethnicity and identity, as well as colonial rule, Cold War influences and state-building are topics of the third section. The final section focuses on the Hutu, Tutsi, and ethnicity. The Hutu and Tutsi conflict is a prime example of confused and conflicting ethnicities.

3.2 People and Language

The people of Africa are descendants of five distinct categories of human groups. These groups are blacks, whites, Asians, African Pygmies and Khoisan (Diamond, 1999). Current distribution of Pygmies and Khoisan suggest past displacement of people in Africa. Although blacks were once limited only to Africa, Pygmies and Khoisan are only found in Africa. As far back as 1400 AD, blacks, whites and Pygmies inhabited the region now known as the Horn of Africa (Diamond, 1999).
The diversity of people in Africa becomes more complex when language is considered. Five major language families totaling 1,500 different languages exist in Africa (Diamond, 1999). As the blacks, whites, Asians, African Pygmies and Khoisan evolved, dispersed among others, migrated and immigrated, so did the languages. An example of this complexity can be seen in Ethiopia. Afro-Asiatic is one of the five language families mentioned previously. It is believed Semitic languages derived from the Afro-Asiatic family. In Ethiopia alone, 12 of 19 Semitic languages survive (Diamond, 1999).

Evans (2002), Knighton (2006), Le Billon (2001), Mkutu (2007), and Mirzeler and Young (2000) all discuss tribal populations and the effects of small arms like the AK47. Primarily, though, these papers focus on the tribe Karamojong. Other authors write about different ethnic groups in further detail, which will be mentioned later. The Karamojong tribe is of interest because of the small arms’ impact on their tradition and culture. Agriculture and pastoral tribes are common, but practices like cattle raiding have been acutely affected by guns and the AK47. Diffusion of the AK47 to tribes and remote villages occurred due to vast stockpiles, firearm simplicity, illicit weapons dealing, and simple economics; a plentiful supply quenching a thirsty demand.

3.3 Weapon Transfers and Proliferation

Weapon transfers and proliferation in Africa is the focus of numerous authors. Craft et al. (2003), Hartung (2001), Hodges (2007), Killicoat, Lefebvre (1998), and Vines (2005) add insight to weapon transfers and proliferation. The end of the Cold War is cited as a major turning point in transfers and proliferation as Craft et al., Hodges, and Lefebvre conclude. Vines adds the new trend of localized specialty producers of arms. These
producers, artisans and craftsmen are often hired to provide a niche for local strongmen, politicians and elites.

Weapons transfers often occur from areas of lagging tension to areas of increasing tension. Africa has become so flooded with SALW the price of an AK47 is cheapest here than anywhere else, at around ten dollars (Van Der Graaf, 1997). Violence begets violence. State authority is undermined and vast populations seek self-protection with illicitly acquired SALW. “Once the violence threshold is crossed most efforts for curbing proliferation of weapons cannot be realized on the spot” (Van Der Graaf, 1997).

Although more than 70 nations manufacture, or are involved in part in SALW manufacturing, sale and transfer, the majority of SALW stock in Africa and weapons transfers can be traced back to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council\(^1\). Since the end of the Second World War, Africa has seen more than 6.5 million deaths, 60 coup d’etats, and one-third of the world’s genocides (Van Der Graaf, 1997). The majority of the victims were killed by small arms and light weapons. Making SALW more dangerous is the ease of handling; civilians lacking military training can easily operate SALW (Van Der Graaf, 1997).

Not only did colonial and Cold War presence increase the need for small weapons to be in-country, but continual rule created conflicts of identity, nationalism and patriotism.

3.4 Identity Struggles

Besides the authors mentioned further in the following text, many authors argue one or multiple aspects on the issues of nationality, nationalism, ethnicity and identity. Colonial

\(^1\) Permanent Members of the UN Security Council are China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In West Africa the population was negligible three centuries ago; historical population of Africa from 1750 until 1950 went from 106 million to 221 million (UN Population Division, 2004). This illustrates the trend of recent settlement of most African countries; Africa population in 1999 was 767 million and 2050 is predicted to balloon to 1.8 billion (UN Population Division, 2004). World Bank’s 2004 estimates of Tropical African natural increase rates of population are above two percent, excluding Somalia. Many are above two and half percent with a few above three percent. Developing countries have a history of high natural increase rates in population. Advancements in medicine and decreases in infant mortality rates have caused Tropical Africa to be a region with the consistently high rates of natural increase in population. Furthermore, lower income countries, as is much of Tropical Africa, are more likely to have higher natural increase rates in population (World Bank, 2004). This natural growth in population further strains resources, infrastructure, and politics. Populations also move and migrate. Ethnic groups have developed a mythology surrounding their migrating ancestors. Migration gave men opportunities to pursue economic advancement while avoiding the stigma of accepting work in one’s own village (Azam, 2001).

Weak states in Africa are defined by ‘irresponsible government, illegitimate resource appropriation, transnational corporate greed, and weapons’ (Musah, 2002). African culture
and society has seen years of military and authoritarian rule. Society has developed and maintained a militarized mindset in which self-protection and violence are the daily means for settling, protecting and acquiring countering limited opportunities, and in large part through the abundance in natural resources (Musah, 2002).

Semi-democracies in Africa struggle to cope with daily challenges brought by balancing politics with domestic resources. Corruption, discrimination and underdeveloped political infrastructure are prominent within semi-democracies. The result is a population with little confidence in the government’s ability to provide resources equitably and effectively. Civil unrest and violence tend to be the outcome with the possible counter result of political repression, genocide, ‘policide,’ or ‘democide’² (Craft et al, 2003). Many of these semi-democracies are resource-rich and yet war stricken. There is potential for economic growth, however, ethno-political groups need to ease competition and increase cooperation (Craft et al, 2003). In these states money spent on weapons transfers may be used to reinforce the position of competing ethnic groups or offered as buy-outs, effectively reducing economic potential (Craft et al, 2003).

Prior to the end of the Cold War, internal conflicts were suppressed by the presence of Cold War countries in Africa and their priorities. Following the Cold War collapse, internal conflicts proliferated, intensified and threatened state sovereignty. Private military and security entities and their mercenaries began to plunder local resources. This time, however, their actions are hidden behind corporate concerns. Mercenaries and their mining

² Coined by R.J. Rummel, 1996. Taken from article and footnote 11: “Rummel identifies genocide as the killing of people by a government because of their indelible group membership (race, ethnicity, religion, language); policide as the murder of any person or people by a government because of their politics or for political purposes; and democide as the murder of any person or people by a government, including genocide, policide and mass murder” (Craft et al, 2003).
and corporate partners have made Africa a successful market and the underlying demand is for political instability (Musah, 2002).

Rulers find themselves befallen to external demands and seek out lucrative deals with private entities. The state’s natural resources and raw materials become loot for corrupt private enterprises while the state becomes privatized and the regime ‘relinquishes any remaining responsibility for development and provision of social services’ (Musah, 2002).

Prior to the collapse of the Cold War, the cedi, Ghana’s currency, was exchanging at a rate of one US dollar for 2.75 Ghanaian cedi in 1982. In 2000, following the end of the Cold War, $1 US was exchanging for C6000. During the same time, Ghana’s national debt grew nine times to $9 billion US (Musah, 2002).

Poor economic conditions increase banditry and other forms of poverty related criminality. Uniformed forces can go months without pay. They tend to join the growing population engaging in criminal activities, like selling weapons on the black market and extortion activities like toll-collection on major roads and highways (Van Der Graaf, 1997).

In the 1960’s, Kenya’s GDP was greater than South Korea’s (Zak-Williams, 2009). Today, however, Kenya, like many Tropical African countries have failed to engaged globalization. Therefore, South Korean GDP has steadily grown and has long passed Kenya’s of the 1960’s. Kenya has fallen from the ladder of development. African states and Africans have been baited by democracy, but they are fully aware their votes are worthless against the will of the corrupt and incumbents who run unopposed. African countries found support from Western democracies only when Western interests were in need of protection. This, however, came more often in the form of bolstering dictators, like French support of Congo’s Joseph Mobutu Sese Sekou.
King Leopold II of Belgium used the Congo, his personal African property, to extract as much wealth from the country, primarily with rubber. Leopold’s employees turned Congolese into slaves, and those who did not bring in enough rubber were subject to floggings, amputations and murder. It is estimated that 10 million Congolese died during Leopold’s period of ownership from the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Howard-Hassmann, 2005).

Rubber and its sudden boom helped Leopold avoid the danger of going into debt from other Congo investments. Rifles were shipped to the Congo in the same vessels that shipped the rubber to Europe. Following the success of rubber exports, Leopold began issuing bonds, some in 99 year terms. The Congo, however, saw little revenue from bond sales used for development. “The Congo in Leopold’s mind was not the one of starving porters, raped hostages, emaciated rubber slaves, and severed hands. It was the empire of his dreams, with gigantic trees, exotic animals, and inhabitants grateful for his wise rule” (Hochschild, 1999). Leopold even had native Congolese (267 men, women, and children) shipped up for the 1897 World’s Fair and housed in small villages as displays. The villagers were split into three villages, river, forest and a ‘civilized’ village. European men became disappointed not seeing the famous ‘bare breasts of Africa’ because the women wore gowns. Local press observed the addition of clothing as ‘the first sign of civilization’ (Hochschild, 1999). Also on display was the gun praised by Henry Morton Stanley as a ‘great instrument of civilization’, the Maxim gun. Illicit trade into Africa was rampant during colonial exploitation; firearms and ammunition was shipped in large quantities to Africa, a supply far greater than the demand.
Congo gained independence from Belgium in 1960 and soon found itself under the rule of Colonel Joseph Mobutu, following the 1965 coup. Mobutu changed the name to Zaire and his country became an anti-communist, pro-West haven in central Africa. Military support from Western powers helped Mobutu control the ethnically divided country during uprisings in 1964 and 1977. Mobutu was a kleptocratic ruler whose country, under his leadership, suffered from poor growth and growing debts (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

Corruption can be defined as the misuse of public authority for personal (political and wealth) gain (Willett, 2009). Corruption is ‘a major obstacle to development in that it reduces domestic investment, discourages foreign direct investment, inflates government expenditures and distorts public spending by shifting resources from education, health and infrastructural investment into sectors more malleable to corruption, such as the security sector’ (Willett, 2009).

Natural resource pillage is a common, corrupt practice of post-colonial leadership and has been well documented that resources such as diamonds, copper, coltan, oil, and timber have been used to procure arms and increase the personal wealth of warlords and generals. “Many conflicts in Africa are purposely prolonged by the military and rebel groups, because the conditions of instability enable warlords and generals to rob their nations of resources and funds” (Willett, 2009).

In the past resource-linked conflict had its base in extraction namely in the form of “mercantilism, colonial capitalism, and state kleptocracy” (Le Billon, 2001). The resource’s presence in nature did not predicate conflict. Availability and greed, however, defined a resource’s politically economic importance. Politics, availability, and greed for a resource can result in violent competition.
In Africa, for example, resource scarcity is common and causes migration, creating more opportunities for violent clashes between ethnic groups. Borders and land rights have changed, shifted and been contested over since colonial rule ended and independent nations faced inherited arbitrary boundaries (Tache, 2009).

Humans have transformed resources into commodities. Without demand, politics, and the conditions and means for production, the human desire to attain resources, like diamonds, would not have become so dominant. Diamonds, besides some cutting and abrasive uses, are largely useless. Diamonds, however, have become highly priced and sought after following marketing and their world-wide scarcity and local abundance.

“Economically, if it is scarcity that creates value, it is abundance that creates wealth” (Le Billon, 2001). Scarcity and abundance are hypothetical resulting from social constructs. Commercial success through advertising (love, purity, and eternity) has elevated diamonds socially and economically. No longer just a ‘girl’s best friend’, but the diamonds of Africa have become the “‘best friends’ of belligerents bringing ruin to countries such as Angola, D.R. Congo, or Sierra Leone” (Le Billon, 2001).

The political economy of resources has become linked to the political economy of social groups, as well as territory, ethnicity, class, and religion. Fighting has also become part of the identity and resource articulation among social or ethnic groups. For example, Mursi pastoralists reaffirm their identity through the economically rewarding activity of cattle raiding (Le Billon, 2001). Extracted resources, rather than produced ones, are more linked to violent conflict. Low coffee prices are cited as being one of many contributors to the decline of social cohesion of Rwanda. The decline in prices started in 1986 and coffee sales went from 14 to five billion Rwandan francs in one year (Hintjens, 1999). Rwanda’s
dependence on coffee exports and prices became the greatest “structural factor in the weakening of the state and the radicalization of exclusionary politics into mass murder” (Le Billon, 2001).

Regions with valuable resources further from centers of control are more likely to see prolonged conflicts (Le Billon, 2001). “People can, for example, be better off when protected by local warlords dealing in narcotics—not to mention their own economic gains from drug production or trafficking—than when subject to a corrupt and oppressive regime dealing ‘legally’ in petroleum” (Le Billon, 2001).

3.5 Ethnicity and Genocide

Tache and Oba (2009) provide three different views of ethnicity; primordialist, instructionalist, and constructionivist. The primordialist view of ethnicity regards it as given and undeniable. The instructionalist perception of ethnicity is that it’s a manipulative tool used by political elite to further their own agenda. Finally, the constructionivist perception is that ethnicity is a social construct created from socio-political and historical events. Conflict is then attributed to greed and ethnicity as a tool to more effectively recruit members into the conflict’s cause.


In the 1990’s Ugandan supported Tutsi rebels (RPA) invaded Rwanda to begin that country’s civil war. In 1994 the plane carrying Hutu president Habyarimana and the Burundian president was shot down with no clear party responsible. Extremist Hutu groups, however, came to their own conclusion and began the systematic extermination of civilian Tutsi population inside Rwanda. Estimates of the genocide have put the numbers killed as high as 800,000 in a few months (Olsson and Fors, 2004). Machetes and the AK47 were the favorite tools of the attackers.

The Rwandan genocide did not occur as the boiling-over point in ethnic tension. It came about as a premeditated attempt of the ruling parties to maintain control and power. The majority of Tutsi killed were rural populations no different than their rural Hutu neighbor. Hutu and Tutsi have been speaking the same language, earning the same wages, birthing similar number of children, getting the same education, and possessing the same religious beliefs since the 1950’s. Anthropological and historical accounts of the differences between the Hutu and Tutsi are vague and inaccurate. Following independence, however, Tutsi were subject to quotas in education and public employment. Tutsi were never segregated but allowed to live amongst the Hutu. Tutsi women felt obligated to marry Hutu men to allow their children more opportunities. The Hutu made the Tutsi feel disadvantaged though historically the Tutsi believed they were the dominant ruling class and ethnically superior (Hintjens, 1999).

“Neither the RPF invasion in 1990, nor the onset of severe economic crisis in the early 1990’s, had provoked spontaneous inter-communal violence between Bahutu and
Batutsi in Rwanda”. The suggestion this implies is the deliberate and constructed build-up towards genocide, but not as a result of ethnic division and conflict. Machete ownership was known to be great by Hutu elites and leaders, but the AK47 helped facilitate massacres and eliminate greater threats with increased ease. “Genocide may well exploit such latent antagonisms, and may create new ones, but it cannot be caused by such divisions” (Hintjens, 1999). The organizers of the 1994 Rwandan genocide managed to create two larger issues that will linger: first, destruction of Rwandan social cohesion; and, a sudden racialization of ‘political discourse’ in Africa’s Great Lakes Region (Hintjens, 1999).

Not only did the Belgians introduce the identity card in 1933, but also introduced Christianity. Identity cards were to be carried at all times, similar to today’s driver’s license or passport. The cards soon included a picture along with text identifying individual as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. Ethnic markers on identity cards and Christianity’s attempt to tidy up social groups began the process that disrupted social cohesion and challenged the ruling party’s ideology. This inevitably created ‘a monolithic division between Hutu and Tutsi identities’ (Hintjens, 1999). Following the Second World War Belgian officials began to post more Belgian Flemish to Rwanda, rather than Belgian Walloon. The Flemish administrators in Rwanda related more to the Hutu than the Tutsi, equating the Tutsi to the ‘snobbish and effete’ Walloon elite (Hintjens, 1999). As independence grew closer, the Hutu saw the Flemish Belgians as their allies against the then ruling Tutsi. At independence the shift of control occurred from the minority ‘big man’, to the majority weak, ‘little man’ (Hintjens, 1999).

During the build-up towards genocide, a quota was placed on Tutsis in public office. Tutsis, were allowed to do business in the private sector, many as traders, merchants and
intellectuals. The Hutu political elite were jealous of the Tutsi economic elite. Therefore, it was simple for the Hutu to blame the economic crisis on the Tutsi. Things got worse in 1990 when the World Bank/IMF devalued the Rwandan franc by two-thirds. Furthermore, famine, malaria, and Burundi refugees together created a worsening effect on Rwandans’ quality of life (Hintjens, 1999). Between 1993 and 1994 the genocide began prior to planting season and almost all Rwandan cattle were killed. Inevitably the harvest of 1994 was less than half the 1993 levels (Hintjens, 1999).

Those carrying out the genocide also associated the killings as ‘big work’ or special work. Bush clearing was ‘chopping up men’ and pulling the roots of bad weeds was the killing of women and children (Hintjens, 1999). The goal was simple for the Rwandan body politic; “the rapid elimination of all Batutsi, part-Tutsi and all those who supported them” (Hintjens, 1999).

Social cohesion was then shattered as there was no longer social trust. Ordinary citizens were to assist in the elimination of Tutsi. Husbands killed their wives, teachers killed their students, and neighbors killed their neighbors, even the youngest were helping to point out the enemy. Citizens feared a quick death themselves if they refused to kill the state’s enemy, and supposedly their own enemy as well (Hintjens, 1999).

“During the genocide itself, physical features such as ‘a long nose, long fingers or height (were) considered a sufficient basis for a sentence of death’” (Hintjens, 1999). The physical distinction between the Hutu and Tutsi is minimal and blurry at best. Identity cards were used at check-points positioned throughout Rwanda during the genocide. Often, however, arbitrary killings were continually carried out: Hutu men who married Tutsi women were killed for marrying the enemy; Hutu-Tutsi mixed babies and young children were killed
to prevent revenge of their parents’ death once older; Hutu with the poor luck of looking Tutsi were often killed; and some Tutsi looked Hutu, but forged identity cards and escaped death. The sixty year-old Belgian identity cards play a role in the genocide, increasing the ease of identifying Tutsi even when similarities made sight identification difficult. Although identity cards helped facilitate the genocide, memories and public records would have replaced cards in facilitating genocide (Hintjens, 1999).

Once violence broke out, the genocide was explained as a civil war with the aid of the French. The invasion into Rwanda by the RPF helped the civil war claim because of its ‘threat’ to Rwandan sovereignty (Hintjens, 1999). The world and media were blinded by propaganda and Hutu intellects presented ‘superficially plausible proof’ that the genocide was a civil war based on inter-ethnic conflict and tribal killings. “The Batutsi were even said to be committing collective suicide” (Hintjens, 1999).

Conflict in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, namely in and around the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is believed to have caused three million people to lose their lives. Most conflicts can be tied to greed or social and ethnic grievances. The DRC is endowed with substantial natural resource wealth, namely coltan\(^3\), gold and diamonds (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda resulted in the outflow of some 1.72 to 2.1 million Hutu refugees. Large shifts of populations such as Hutu refugees increased the likelihood of AK47 proliferation across borders and within ethnic groups. The Congo hosted a large percentage of refugees, around 1.1 to 1.25 million (Emizet, 2000). Among the Rwandan refugee population inside Congo were 20,000 to 25,000 ex-FAR (Forces Armées

\(^3\) Coltan is a black metallic ore. Coltan is short for Columbite-tantalite. Comprised of Niobium and Tantalum, coltan is used in the manufacturing of cell phones. (Source: http://www.cellular-news.com/coltan/)
Rwandaises) and 30,000 to 40,000 Hutu militiamen (Emizet, 2000). These two groups of actors participated in the Rwandan genocide and themselves likely to have been armed with small arms, like AK47’s. Although these groups only account for a small percentage of the overall refugee population, they affected Congolese politics in two ways.

First, the ex-FAR started a campaign of attacks into Rwanda from the refugee camps on the Congo-Rwandan border. The reason behind the attacks was to cause unrest and uncertainty of the government. Secondly, the population of Rwandan-born Congolese had increased in North and South Kivu, Congo. The Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge are Congolese of Rwandan origin who had lived there for generations and saw the demographic balance shift following the refugee inflow. The Banyamulenge are Congolese of Rwandan Tutsi origin. When colonial powers redrew the boundaries of the Great Lakes Region, the Banyamulenge became separated from Rwanda. The Banyawanda are native to North Kivu, but also include refugees from colonial Rwanda and Tutsi refugees; the Banyawanda often intermarried and ‘expressed solidarity on land rights against other ethnic groups’ (Emizet, 2000). In the 1970’s, however, President Mobutu (Congo) appointment of a Banyawanda to his staff created a conflict of ideology. Locals of North Kivu became xenophobic of Banyawandans, creating a renewed sense of nationalism and resentment. Banyawandans were given Congolese citizenship, especially those from Rwanda and Burundi (Emizet, 2000).

Mobutu shifted sides in the 1980’s following the death of his Banyawanda chief of staff. Banyawandans’ citizenship was revoked and any Congolese of Rwandan origin was forbidden from public office. Mobutu had shifted from an anti-Banyamulenge ideology to encourage anti-Banyawanda sentiment (Emizet, 2000). The inflow of refugees created
further division and hatred of Banyamulenge and increased nationalism between North and South Kivu.

Mobutu used the flow of Hutu into Zaire to commence hostilities against a population of Tutsi origin, the Banyamulenge. Although the Banyamulenge have lived in eastern Congo for generations, they were ordered to leave their homes and the Congo parliament decided they would no longer have citizenship. These people then fled into Rwanda and sought out help from Rwandan Tutsis. Hutu rebels and militia used Hutu refugee camps in Zaire to attack targets inside Rwanda. The Rwandan government’s list of grievances kept mounting. Tutsi rebels and the RPA joined the Banyamulenge people and attacked these Hutu refugee villages within Zaire. Soon following these attacks, they were joined by various anti-Mobutu groups and continued to attack Hutu targets on Congolese soil (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

In 1995 both groups, the Banyawanda and the Banyamulenge, had their Congo nationality stripped from them. Ex-FAR and Hutu militiaman who were refugees began their attacks on these two groups in North Kivu in an attempt to establish a Hutuland and attack Rwanda from here (Emizet, 2000). During the same time the Banyamulenge of the Mulenge area of South Kivu were asked to leave or face death. The Banyamulenge refused and sought assistance from Rwanda (Emizet, 2000). In 1996 the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and Banyamulenge attack Mobutu’s forces and ex-FAR in South Kivu, resulting in a return of 500,000 to 700,000 refugees to Rwanda. The RPA continued attacks on refugee camps inside the Congo. The Rwandan government assisted Laurent Kabila in becoming the spokesman for the rebellion movement that came to be known as the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) (Emizet, 2000). The ADFL entered Kinshasa on May 17, 1997 and toppled Mobutu, making Kabila the third Congolese
president. The UN, human rights groups and the media accused the RPA and ADFL troops of massacring 200,000 refugees as they fled east to west to avoid the conflict (Emizet, 2000).

The Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (or ADFL) and Tutsi allies easily swept Mobutu’s weak and unpaid army aside. Although Zaire was receiving aid from Western powers, the US and Belgium ceased support of Mobutu, but France remained supportive of Mobutu until his regimes end. As the ADFL entered Zaire and pushed to Kinshasa, mines were looted and an estimated 200,000 Hutu refugees were killed (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

Laurent Kabila is the founder of the ADFL and soon enough became the president of the DRC through his alliances with Rwanda and Uganda. Hopes for democracy and economic development were quickly shadowed by corruption and a lack of accountability. Kabila’s government contained members of Tutsi and Banyamulenge ethnicity who were seen as foreign occupiers by many Congolese. Kabila’s popularity as president struggled under these conditions and he began to marginalize Tutsi and Banyamulenge people (Olsson and Fors, 2004). In July of 1998 Kabila dismissed a Rwandan Tutsi military officer who was acting chief of staff for the Congolese armed forces. Seen as a preemptive move to avoid a coup, the commander and his comrades returned to Rwanda later the same month. Kabila’s move to remove these men was determined to be a direct cause to rebellions in Goma and Kinshasa. Rwandan and Ugandan troops were deployed soon after these rebellions failed, with the two governments stating security as the reasoning for their actions (Olsson and Fors, 2004). Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad and Sudan entered the fray in support of Kabila, though Chad and Sudan withdrew early. Kabila was keen on keeping Congo’s wealth for himself. Zimbabwe’s role in the conflict was seen purely as economic, defending
investments made by the Congolese government and Zimbabwean business. Overall, however, economic gain proved to be a powerful agent in escalating this conflict (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

Loot-able resources, ethnic elites rising to power, militias, and a society void of opportunity helped create an AK47 paradox: a destructive tool came to be seen as a tool of opportunity, security, power and wealth.

The actors involved in the wars within Zaire and Congo have helped developed a strong transportation network inside the DRC. Rwandan and Ugandan armies soon began to exploit resources and seek commercial and personal enterprise and wealth. Soldiers were now paid, financing the war and enriching the involved governments were eased with the looting of stockpiles and the extraction and exportation of resources, all made more efficient by the transportation network previously established (Olsson and Fors, 2004). Surges in gold and coltan production by Rwanda and Uganda jumped sharply beginning in 1997. Natural resource production, extraction and exportation fueled the war in the DRC. Rwanda and the Rwandan military gained the most, perhaps by as much as $20 million a month of coltan sales from 1999-2000 (Olsson and Fors, 2004). Rwandan military forces were in position to protect interests that provided coltan and attacked rebels to loot their supply of coltan. Ugandan government, however, was not directly involved in mineral and natural resource extraction and did not take action against those who did (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

The actions of the ADFL and the RPA were premeditated and were vengeful, and like the Rwandan genocide, not ethnically rooted. The Hutu refugees were victims of not only massacre and other violence, but were not allowed basic human rights, such as the right to return home and the right to return to one’s family (Emizet, 2000). Likewise, part of the
1949 Geneva Convention “stipulates that persons not taking active part in internal conflicts shall in ‘all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or many other similar criteria’” (Emizet, 2000).

Ethnicity has been the ‘tool for power of the elite’ while exploiting the mythology from pre-colonial and Bazungu rule (Uvin, 1997). Leading up to the 1994 genocide the political elite managed to organize extremist political parties openly in favor of violence and hatred. Mass murder was not explicitly supported but lists of Tutsi-to-be-killed were published. Tutsis became targets of hateful propaganda. “…through actions and words, they [Hutu] contributed to the dehumanization of the Tutsi, and authorized and routinized the use of violence against them” (Uvin, 1997). Hutu prejudice of Tutsi people was merely a construct of Hutu psyche, not based on Tutsi behavior. “…the designation of inferior groups comes from those on top—an expression of their right to rule—as well as from frustrated persons often near the bottom, as an expression of their need for security” (Uvin, 1997).

3.6 Summary

Diverse populations and languages can create equally diverse ethnic divisions and identities. Vast stockpiles and illicit transfers of AK47’s contributed to diffusion and proliferation. It happened sooner rather than later, populations discovering the efficiency and effectiveness of small arms, like the AK47. Elites used the AK’s power and prestige to manipulate and exploit causing continued struggles of identity. Genocide became a horrific

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*“Authorization, which absolves the individual of the responsibility to make moral choices; routinization, when the action becomes so organized that there is no opportunity for raising moral questions and dehumanization, when the actors’ attitudes toward the target and toward themselves become so structured that it is neither necessary nor possible for them to view the relationship in moral terms” (Uvin, 1997).*
reality for power-mongering leaders. An artifact, a piece of 60 year-old technology is the common characteristic.

“Technological change expresses a panoply of human motives, not the least of which is the desire of some to have dominion over others, even though it may require an occasional sacrifice of cost-cutting and some violence to the norm of getting more from less” (Winner, 1980).

The four topical areas in the literature review discussed provide the analytical synergy for my critical synthesis centering on AK47 identity carried out in the following chapter.
4.1 Introduction and Proliferation

Upon independence, less than 10 percent of African people had regular income. Colonial rule left African states in economic isolation. That it is to say, infrastructure favored state to European countries, not local. “Ethnic groups became the basis of protest movements against colonial rule” (Meredith, 2005). Resource wealth became the prize for African politics. It was thought industrialization would enable African countries an escape from colonial economic patterns. Despite socialism versus democracy debates, African states want to be wealthy, too. “Whatever formula they chose, most socialist-minded governments placed high value on the role of the private sector and on foreign investment. What they wanted essentially was to avoid both the evils of capitalism and the pitfalls of doctrinaire socialism. Almost all remained wary of the idea of nationalization” (Meredith, 2005). Some also believed Africa was in need for ‘revolutionary violence’ to break from its colonial past. Violence, some thought, also unified people, is nation-building, and helps increase self-respect. Colonialism’s lasting legacy also brought to the African continent new technology; the Gatling gun in the 1870s on Africa’s Gold Coast and the Maxim gun, the gun Henry Morton Stanley called a ‘great instrument of civilization’ (Chivers, 2011, Hochschild, 1999).
Small arms and light weapons are common, but the AK47 is widely recognizable and available. Edged weapons still outnumber mechanical weapons, but the AK47 is an icon.

Because of porous borders and continuing conflict throughout the continent, prices for the AK47 in Africa are the lowest world-wide (Killicoat, 2007). Continuing conflict keeps demand high while the density of international and porous borders eases transportation and reduces supply friction.

In many sub-region countries small “cottage industries” have the capacity and ability to produce sophisticated and imitation assault rifles. Although originally meant to meet the demands of hunters, these industries have gained vast expertise and an increase in demand due to lack of security in the region. These industries have expanded into networks to aid in detection prevention. Cells of the network produce specific components later to be assembled at a secret location.

Artisan production allows for arms to be produced by blacksmiths once fabricating agricultural tools. Patrons of these blacksmiths and artisans can typically be politicians seeking ‘tough looking weapons’ that encourage the voting population to make the ‘right choice’ (Vines, 2005). These artisans and blacksmiths have become sophisticated in their manufacturing. Being able to produce pistols, shotguns, rifles and possibly imitation AK47s, artisans and blacksmiths are able to manufacture in response to supply of ammunition and demand of firearm type (Vines, 2005).

At the Government Technical College in Bukuru, Plateau State, Nigeria, the proliferation of SALW and artisans/blacksmith shops within African universities and colleges is dramatically illustrated. Eight final-year mechanical engineering students were arrested following a test firing accident that exposed their operation. The students received
guns which they dismantled, produced technical drawings and assessments for the manufacturing of replicas. This lasted a couple of years and sometimes with the assistance from professors and lecturers. The students would complete the drawings and assessments, production would commence and the molds smuggle off-campus during the night (Vines, 2005).

Politicians would also travel to universities and colleges to recruit young males to support their political campaigns and agenda. The young men would be handed a weapon, often being a newly-made rifle. Wielding these weapons and being paid to roam the streets, they would tell voters they are being watched and what the direction of their vote is to be (Vines, 2005).

Elections in African countries as seen in Nigeria for example, are stimulants for SALW proliferation. This is also true for other regions in Africa. During the Nigerian elections of 2003 it was apparent the tools of political violence have made the shift from non-mechanical weapons (machetes, knives and clubs) to mechanical weapons (SALW like the AK47) (Vines, 2005). Once again gangs and other criminal bodies are primarily composed of unemployed youth. Politicians used these gangs for purposes of offense and defense. In the Cross River State of Nigeria, police seized 54 guns in 2002, eight of which from politically motivated murders and another 16 from politicians. In another Nigeria state, Bayelsa, 11 killed when a shootout broke out between politicians contesting councillorship elections. In 2003 the son of a senator was arrested under suspension he was importing SALW for armed robbers and feuding ethnic groups. Police again find themselves in situations of conflicting interests. In 2003 police are involved in more ‘gunpowder politics’ when “a governor encouraged the production of pistols by a gang for his political campaign.
When a police unit uncovered the factory and the individuals told the police about their patron, the detainees are ordered to be executed. The officers responsible for this then are arrested and then committed to trial for murder in a case that is constantly being postponed” (Vines, 2005).

Prior to the collapse of the Cold War there were 10 manufactures of small arms and light weapons in 1966 Soviet Union. By 1999 this number had grown to 65 in the ex-Soviet states, a growth rate of 5.1 manufacturers per year. Globally the numbers for 1966 are 99, and the numbers for 1999 are 385; a growth of 8.5 manufacturers a year (Musah, 2002). Estimates of Cold War arms sales are in the $3 billion range, while arms sales post-Cold War ballooned in excess of $25 billion in 1996. Between 1992 and 1998 the Ukraine reported an estimated $32 billion worth of small arms and light weapons stolen from state armories (Musah, 2002). Today state and non-state actors can sell, buy or trade SALW efficiently, speedy and indiscriminately. Electronic financial transactions have increased the ability of non-state actors and extend the reach of resources and arms brokering to and from remote areas of earth. “Africa has become the favorite port of call for this deadly merchandise, as rogue merchants, mercenaries, and foreign extracting companies team up with the corrupt elite in Africa to pacify violent resource enclaves for illegitimate exploitation of resources. This in turn, exacerbates violence and accelerates state decay” (Musah, 2002). SALW have become the core currency in Africa’s political instable market place and are responsible for the populations’ general sense of insecurity.

At more localized levels, families have begun to arm themselves while communities establish armed vigilantes, armed neighborhood watches, and ethnic militias. Civil defense forces formed to protect communities from lawlessness due to the state’s inability to counter
the violence. Not unlike the leaders themselves, these civil defense forces, militias, neighborhood watches, and other localized regimes became obliged to local strongmen, warlords, and political interests (Musah, 2002).

Increasingly, governments and states are failing to provide political, physical and economic security. The supply of illicit weapons increases robbery and armed criminal activities while law and other public functions collapse. The every-day citizen then feels obligated to acquire illicit weapons for themselves to provide security for their family and property; a security the state should be providing. “…in a number of countries, a prevalent culture exists of carrying so-called ‘traditional weapons’ that are increasingly replaced by very sophisticated weaponry…” (Van Der Graaf, 1997).

Snow-balling illicit trade is the Kalashnikov style of weapons, namely the AK47. So simple to manufacture and operate Africa has become saturated with the AK47. The monopoly of the Kalashnikov has ensured the ease of all actors to exchange interoperable parts and ammunition. It has come to be that African civilians are armed with the same SALW as are the armed forces or militia of that state or neighboring state. China has become one of the major suppliers of arms to countries in Eastern Africa. Although the trade is legitimate, following the transfer to state agencies, these arms almost immediately find themselves in illicit trading. Many conflicts and rebellions originate from groups small in size and armed with few weapons. If these groups and their flow of arms are not impeded and continue to go unchecked, they become the groups seeking large-scale trade resulting in larger-scale conflict.
4.2 Southwest Africa

Map 2 (on page 52) shows a colonization map of Africa. Much of 20th Century Africa was colonized by one of seven European nations.

Colonial genocide has occurred in African colonies, including and not limited to Congo and South-West Africa (Namibia) (Howard-Hassmann, 2005). South-West Africa during the early 1900’s was under German colonial control. Between 1904 and 1908 the Germans exterminated an estimated 65,000 Herero people, almost 82% of the Herero population (Howard-Hassmann, 2005). Although the Herero made efforts to spare German women and children, German commanders gave orders to exterminate all Herero men, women and children. The cause of the genocide began with German interests in Herero lands, which was not to be given up by the Herero. Herero rebelled in the beginning of 1904 (Howard-Hassmann, 2005). Toward the end of First World War, in 1915, Britain used reports to publish propaganda of German atrocities not to defend the Herero, but to push Britain’s own agenda towards claiming German colonies (Howard-Hassmann, 2005). German methods of extermination ranged from execution, deportation to the desert causing fatal dehydration, and confinement including forced labor, sex slavery and starvation while in camps. When Germany conquered South-West Africa, settlement of German immigrants was encouraged. Mistreatment of the Herero was almost immediate, from stealing to rape (Howard-Hassmann, 2005).

Not only did colonial rulers inflict their will and in some cases encourage violence to achieve power, wealth and influence, but Africans began to do much the same toward one-
another. More recently West African conflicts of the 1990’s are good examples of inter-
African violence.
Map 2: European occupation of Africa during the earlier part of the 20th Century. Current political boundaries are in outlined in black. (Sources: http://www.mamaafrika.com/Articles/colonization_map.png and Free Printable Maps at http://printable-maps.blogspot.com/2008/08/printable-africa-map.html)
4.3 West Africa

The Mano River (Sierra Leone and Liberia) region in West Africa has become flooded with small arms and light weapons. The culture of violence, banditry and hostage taking has increased with small arms recycling and proliferation. Food-for-sex rackets and horrific mutilations are common amongst the populations of women refugees, internally displaced persons and children and youth. “Among rebels and local militias active in the Sierra Leone conflict, the Kalashnikov rifle became the symbol of mob justice. For example, ‘AK-47’ is interpreted as ‘out of every 7 captives, murder 4’, and AK-58 as ‘out of every 8 women, rape 5’” (Musah, 2002). Diffusion of SALW in the Mano River and Great Lakes (Rwanda, Congo, and Uganda) regions has followed similar patterns as resource exploitation such as diamonds, gold, timber, and rubber.

Americo-Liberians (Meredith, 2005) helped construct the newly independent Liberia. These former slaves of the US Deep South returned to Liberia and constructed colonial rule in similar fashion as did the Europeans. Subjugation and exploitation of the indigenous, and inferior, black Liberian was the norm. Liberia was an oligarchy; one percent of the population controlled the wealth, privilege, and the remaining population of some two million.

Prior to Charles Taylor, Samuel Doe resided over Liberia and extended privilege to his tribe, the Krahn. During Doe’s presidency, Liberia saw an increase in American aid, from $10 to $80 million per year. Christmas Eve of 1989, Charles Taylor and his Libyan trained National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), crossed into Liberia from Côte d’Ivoire. Doe’s violent attacks on villages provided Taylor with teenagers and boys ‘bent on revenge’ (Meredith, 2005). As Taylor’s forces arrived, Taylor himself recalled, “we didn’t even have
to act. People came to us and said, ‘Give me a gun. How can I kill the man who killed my mother?’ Orphans were organized into combatant units. The older members of the NPFL would provide the youth and boys cheap liquor and drugs. The boys soon evolved into ‘psychopathic killers’. The boys bolstered by liquor, drugs, food, and respect, became addicted to the ‘Kalashnikov lifestyle’ (Meredith, 2005).

Britain paid Taylor’s Liberia $10 million a month for rights to stockpiled iron ore. France became Liberia’s leading timber importer. President Siaka Stevens of 1970’s Sierra Leone used diamonds to amass a personal fortune of an estimated $500 million. Diamond trade was estimated at almost $300 million a year, though much was smuggled. Sierra Leone was left bankrupt, decrepit, and left with minimal income. The education system in Sierra Leone collapsed after the government ceased payment of teachers’ salaries. Unemployed and illiterate youths of Sierra Leone became the next willing combatants to join the Taylor financed Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which crossed into country on March 23, 1991. “Weapon training pays quicker dividends than school ever did; soon the AK47 brings food, money, a warm bath and instant adult respect. The combat group substitutes for lost family and friends”’ (Meredith, 2005).

Child soldiers played a significant role in Liberia’s civil wars. Children were plentiful, orphaned, abandoned, homeless and desperate for food. Children sought companionship and protection. Children are then used as living shields for the higher valued older soldier. Wood (1994) claims that Liberia saw the second highest rate of forced migration in the world: by the end of Liberia’s second civil war, some 770,000 refugees flooded nearby countries by 2004 (Woodward, 2009). Many of these refugees are former child soldiers.
Child soldiers have been seen to have difficulty to reintegrate. Spatial and social barriers cause geographical and psychological stresses. Individuals face obstacles to repatriation and are prone to posttraumatic stress, causing further isolation and segregation. They have lived without employment and social programs, including medical care. Many child soldiers become emotionally stunted. Desperate and hopeless many return to soldiering and become recruited as mercenaries, helping to perpetuate cycles of conflicts (Woodward, 2009).

Charles Taylor is one of the first to ‘discover’ these new forms of warfare; small numbers of under trained, irregular soldiers with AK47s can exert tremendous force. The result for Taylor was seizure of mineral and timber resources that continuously fueled his war machine. Suddenly it became known that a funding patron, like the USSR or USA, of the Cold War era was obsolete (Hartung, 2001). Not surprisingly the USA and Russia are two of the top suppliers to African nations. Others include the three other permanent members of the UN Security Council; France, China and the UK. Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Germany, Israel, Italy, and South Africa fill in as niche suppliers (Hartung, 2001).

“…stress the curse of mineral wealth, but they neglect the fact that one does not kill a human being with a gallon of oil or a sparkling diamond. Without weapons, a conflict between groups, countries or factions among the population would not reach the toll on human lives that we have seen in the recent bloody conflicts in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo or Sudan, to name a few” (Verwimp, 2006).
4.4 Great Lakes Region/Central Africa

“The group draws the mental representation of a traumatic event into its very identity. It passes the mental representation of the event—along with associated shared feelings of hurt and shame, and defense against the perceived shared conflicts they initiate—from generation to generation” (Uvin, 1997).

Prior to colonization, there existed small Hutu kingdoms in what is now northern Rwanda. These kingdoms were fighting aggression from central Rwandan Tutsi kingdoms. German colonization incorporated the northern Hutu kingdoms into present-day Rwanda. Approximately at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century a new ethnic group entered Rwanda, the Bazungu, or white. Once again, however, this distinction has more to do with socio-economic status than race (Uvin, 1997).

During colonial times the Tutsi were convinced by the Bazungu that they were more intelligent, reliable and hard working. Colonial rule also brought rigid ‘scientific’ methods of identification; nose and skull-size measurements. Bazungu also brought language (French), control and benefits that only were given to Tutsi. Tutsi are considerably closer in relation to Hutu than Bazungu. Bazungu control and governance from their Belgian colonizer, however, produced prejudice, racism and ethnic conflict that exists today between Tutsi and Hutu. De-colonization by the Bazungu and the simultaneous overthrow of Tutsi oligarchy by Catholic-school educated Hutu laid the foundation for the small number of Hutu elite atop the political structure and the cycle of violence (Uvin, 1997). Prior to colonial rule, many believe Rwanda was a Tutsi-ruled monarchy. The Tutsi arrived in Rwanda from the north seeking fertile grounds to graze cattle. Hutu people had arrived centuries earlier to farm the same lands. The Tutsi were able to organize systems that oppressed and exploited
the Hutu. Hutu effectively see the Tutsi as invaders (Uvin, 1997). Differences between Tutsi and Hutu are less that of ethnicity, but rather a socio-economic class; cattle-rearing and agriculture. Furthermore, ethnic conflict between the Tutsi and Hutu did not have the frequency or intensity like the 1994 genocide until the combination of colonial withdraw, the collapse of Cold War politics, and AK47 proliferation

“Myths of racial and ethnic origins can come to be acted upon as if they were true; this does not make such myths any less mythical, but it does give them the power to fashion people’s behavior” (Hintjens, 1999).

Prior to colonial rule the definition of Hutu and Tutsi was primarily that of class and not of ethnicity. The boundary between the two groups was also porous. The class separation of the Hutu and Tutsi was altered during colonial rule and became an ethnic label. European rule was racialist and Tutsi elites and political entrepreneurs took advantage of colonial ideology. Following the end of colonial rule the in-place colonial ideology remained until the outbreak of ethnic violence (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Pre- and during colonial rule the Tutsi people were seen as superior, a race meant to rule, a race from the North. Although obvious distinctions were few, colonial rulers encouraged the distinction and Tutsis were claimed to be ‘natural rulers over the good-natured but inferior Hutus’ (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Colonial rule thus painted the Tutsi as evil invaders and rulers of the Hutu and Hutu lands. Beginning in the late 1950’s, political revolution inverted colonial ideology, though not rejecting. Tutsi were still seen as invaders and for the Hutu meant they were not truly Rwandan citizens. The Hutu were and are the demographic majority of Rwanda. With this the Hutu elites rationalized a democracy ruled by Hutus in a ‘democratic’ Rwanda (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Extremists within ethnic
groups seek to spin the cycle of violence out-of-control. Actions of extremists are often to purify their culture through the provoking of violence or their moderate leadership. Extremist ethnic groups or members within an ethnic group set out to sharpen identity boundaries that interaction and political moderates ‘threaten to blur’ (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

The Belgians established ethnic labeling as a practice of tracing identities of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. This method was introduced in 1933 and helped facilitate the 1994 genocide as the practice continued. The single-ethnic labels contradicted the complexity and how traditional social identities were constructed. Traditionally the terms Hutu and Tutsi were used to relate one another. Prior to colonialism, clans of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa covered Rwanda. Hutu men could lose their Hutu-ness and rarely Hutu and Twa were given lordships. Colonial rule changed the boundaries and hardened the social categories. Defining Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa became less flexible and more rigidly ethnic and racial (Hintjens, 1999).

The radical transformation of identity and social category in Rwanda is a result of colonial rule, colonial influences and the ‘invention of tradition’ (Hintjens, 1999). Identity cannot be the root cause of conflict. Ideologies that exploit ethnicity and identities as the cause of conflict do so when their power (or they perceive a threat to their power) is threatened. This threat to their power can be ideological, political or economic. Without resources to loot there is no income and a decline in their ability to project their ideologies, resulting in a decline in power and influence. Hutu elites and leaders recognized the need to flex influence and power with weapons, like the ubiquitous machete and AK47. Without machetes, everyday Hutu couldn’t exercise the will of their elites and leaders. Without
AK47s and other small arms, elites and leaders would have failed in continual financing of their bloodletting.

“The ideology of the ‘social revolution’ can be summarized as the notion that Rwanda belongs to the Hutu, its original inhabitants, who had been brutally subjugated for centuries by the foreign masters, the Tutsi; in 1959, the Hutu had wrested power away from their former masters and installed a true democracy, representing the vast majority of people. This notion that the government is the legitimate representative of the majority Hutu, and the sole defense against the Tutsi’s evil attempts to enslave the people again, constituted the powerful core of the legitimization of the ruling clique’s hold on power” (Uvin, 1997).

Using ethnicity was crucial to Rwanda’s elites’ strategy of national disunity and ideological legitimization. Quota systems where installed to limit access to higher education and state jobs. Ethnic cards, established by the Belgians, where kept in place served to maintain ethnic divisions (Uvin, 1997).

By the 1990’s an estimated 80 percent of the Rwandan population was born after independence. The vast majority of living Hutu have not been alive long enough to recall life while under Tutsi rule. Although Tutsi inter-marry with Hutu, attend the same churches, live in similar housing and make similar wages, they were discriminated against (Uvin, 1997).

Extreme economic stresses can cause groups to become fractionalized. Rwanda’s coffee cash-crop saw dramatic drops in price during the mid-1980’s. Impact on the political and economic health of Rwanda was great and resulting political extremism lead to ‘scapegoating and physical extermination’ (Hintjens, 1999). Hutu elites began to seek a redefinition of nationalism that ultimately led to genocide. Rwandans have been seen as
‘particularly vulnerable to colonial and neo-colonial manipulation’ (Hintjens, 1999). Connecting genocide to social issues suggests that Rwandans were responding mechanically to domestic stresses while organizing and carrying out their actions (Hintjens, 1999). Rwanda’s failure not only came with declining coffee prices, but an inability to recognize, provide and protect the entire populous. The hegemonic elite of the ethnic majority recognized, provided and protected only those it chose.

Most victims of the 1994 genocide were killed by machetes or other traditional weapons. A sample of 25,719 deaths shows that only 20.2% are killed using firearms. The majority of victims are hacked to death by machetes or clubbed to death (Verwimp, 2006). Firearms, like the AK47, however, were commonly used in mass murder and massacres of the population seen as those with a greater potential towards revengeful actions.

Gathered evidence shows that children and elderly males were rarely killed by firearms. Evidence also shows that almost 44% of Tutsi killed were massacred. “A massacre is defined as an event where at least 100 people were killed in one specific location in less than three days” (Verwimp, 2006). This would suggest more than 31,000 Tutsis killed during the genocide were in massacres. This would further suggest over 300 massacres occurred during the 1994 genocide (Verwimp, 2006). Refugees became so common, so frequent the African continent is a ‘continent of refugees’ (Emizet, 2000). The African refugee is becoming an identity, a nationality. Refugee issues are and should be trans-sovereign.

Evidence also shows that the majority killed to be Tutsi farmers. In Rwanda prior to 1994, the majority of Hutu and Tutsi farmed. Less than 10% of both populations worked outside farming and there no longer existed a clear ethnical separation. “Depending on
wealth, Hutu as well as Tutsi owned cattle and grew crops” (Verwimp, 2006). Non-farmers, however, were more likely to be killed by firearms.

Those killed by firearms increased with age, but then decreased at older ages. Firearms are used more during the beginning of the genocide and less frequent towards the end. Those murdered during large-scale massacres had a 30% greater likelihood of being killed by firearms. Evidence suggests those killed with firearms presented an increased chance of resisting. Therefore, ammunition was saved to deal with the population more likely to resist; young adults, urban adults, and educated adults (Verwimp, 2006).

“Ethnic conflict is usually presumed to be possible only when there is some popular support for separate identities among the majority of the populations concerned. This was not obvious in Rwanda, where ethnic conflict had to be engineered. Logically, carefully planned and well-organized plans to exterminate a group of people identified solely on the basis of their supposed ethnic, or racial, identity cannot be the same as ‘ethnic conflict’; the cause is political and not social” (Hintjens, 1999).

New forms of conflict within Africa have created new forms of individual, militant and religious nationalisms, identities and ideologies. Politics in today’s globalized world is a greater factor than culture (Kaldor, 2004). Therefore, the underdeveloped world will struggle to compete and find a nationalistic ideology or identity without the inclusion of ethnicity and/or religion. In Africa today the AK47 is an identity and an identity producing tool.

The availability of AK47s and their efficiency and effectiveness have opened up opportunities for rulers and those ruled. Resources are abundant but social capital is limited to null. Rulers and the ruled then enter cycles of violence as a result of seeking personal gain, security, and opportunity. The AK47 has become the optimum tool.
The Tutsi genocide in Rwanda and the flow of refugees spilled over the Rwandan borders and soon after violence spilled over into neighboring countries and people.

Although many African states are ethnically divided, only a minority have seen serious ethnic conflict (Azam, 2001). “State formation in Africa is a transition process starting from an institutional endowment of ethnic division” (Azam, 2001). Society demands states to provide services and security for the population, or to provide social capital. Ethnic capital similarly is the idea that the ethnic group provides services for its members (Azam, 2001). A lack of spending on health care and enrollment in primary education has shown to have negative impacts on the occurrence of violent political events (Azam, 2001). Both states and ethnic groups operate under some form of constitutional rule. Members of an ethnic group, however, can not leave the ethnic group they were born in.

Cattle raiding and pastoral conflicts are not a new trend in Africa. It is now, however, affected by the AK47, too. Raiding is customary as a cultural tendency and economic factor. Prior to small arms and light weapons raiders used spears, arrows, bows and edged weapons. SALW proliferation and criminal networks transformed raiding into a component in the black market and even the free market economy. Well organized and coordinated actors created a big business ran by external racketeers and businessmen. Ultimately local communities saw livestock populations drop dramatically (Mkutu, 2007).

“Pastoralist communities now provide the largest market for small arms from local circulation and from areas in the region undergoing civil wars such as Somalia, Sudan, Northern Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The predicament of conflict in the Horn of Africa is that one country’s conflict invariably overflows to another because of same ethnic groups.
straddling the porous borders on both sides and the reality is the pastoralist will cross from one border to another with arms” (Mkutu, 2007).

Cold War policy and conflict sponsorship within the Horn is primary cause of arms proliferation to pastoralists in the Horn. During the 1979 defeat of Idi Amin, pastoralist clan Karimojong stormed barracks containing an estimated 60,000 arms which diffused amongst Ugandan and Kenyan pastoralists (Mkutu, 2007). A related issue is the arming of informal security forces or para-military groups, who are poorly regulated and poorly paid/not paid, such that many use military skills to teach others. The cycle continues as escalating raiding and violence drives populations to acquire arms for security (Mkutu, 2007).

Introduction of the AK47 to pastoral tribes resulted in vulnerable neighbors. (Mirzeler and Young, 2000). The Karamoja region of northeast Uganda, like most of Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa, has a tradition of cattle rustling and raiding. One estimate in the Karamoja region claims pastoral tribes have between 30,000-40,000 AK47s (Mirzeler and Young, 2000). Affects on personal and social identity can be traced to changes in bartering. The AK47 is now seen as a social and economic tool. Trades and exchanges for cattle can be made with the AK47. Bride-wealth payment can also be made with AK47 (Mirzeler and Young, 2000). Owning an AK47 has become vital.

Pastoral tribes and people in the Horn have same history and tradition of cattle rustling and raiding, like the Karamojong. From bows and spears to the AK47, not unlike the Karamojong, herders in the Horn have come to realize the economic investment of AK47 ownership. Owning an AK47 aids in asset protection against raiders and competing herders while also allowing for the herder to forcibly increase their own assets (Evans, 2002). Coming into the Horn of Africa are containers and crates of guns, while hospitals are
drugless and schools are bookless. During the Somalia civil war, one out of four men was armed (Evans, 2002).

The Karamojong people have a long tradition of herding, and of rustling. Taking spears and receiving AK47s has clouded this tradition and identity. To remove the AK47s forcibly could cause new crises in identity and culture (Knighton, 2006). Much of the region has only recently gained independence, though many civil wars and domestic strife continues since. Unstable states, porous borders and past colonial violence spilling over into the neo-colonial era, identities and cultures are continually tested, influenced and changed. An example of this disparity can be seen in different views from members of the Karamojong people. When a man dies by a spear, his spirit returns to the soil, returns with the ancestral spirits (Knighton, 2006). The spear is connected to the soil through the wood it’s constructed. If a man dies by AK47, his spirit goes to “unknown places” (Knighton, 2006). Another traditional viewpoint is more direct; “The soulless AK47 is eating away at the soul” (Knighton, 2006). On the other side, some include the bullet of the AK47 in their prayers and believe a man is only a man with a gun in his arms (Knighton, 2006).

4.5 Regional Comparison: Tropical Africa and Southeast Asia

This section’s purpose is to provide comparison with another tropical region with a similar history. General histories are discussed that mirror the histories discussed throughout this thesis. Tables with demographic, geographic, economic, firearm and violence data are also used to aid in comparison. The data collected exposes contrasts in the two regions that I will explain with geography.
Illustration 5: Always in the foreground. One of these Karo tribal members is armed with an AK47. The contrast between the traditional and the contemporary is stark. This image suggests the ease of which the AK47 has been welcomed into traditional communities; not hidden, but displayed, and is thus a “prestige” item as well as a tool of survival. (Source: www.ad.jyu.fi/~jej/photos/travel/africa/ethiopia/Mago/Mago-DSC_1455-nelikko-small.jpg)
Many Southeast Asian countries have coastline or navigable rivers. Having coastline and navigable rivers implies the potential to engage in shipping and increase commerce. This is implied by water’s ability to increase accessibility. Southeast Asia’s location between the Far East, Europe and India, increases the likelihood of international commerce due to over-water routes. Tropical Africa, on the other hand, sits in a no-man’s land between Europe, the Cape of Good Hope, archipelagos such as the Azores and the Canary Islands, and the Suez Canal. Using today’s market terminology, Southeast Asia is a mega-store, whereas Tropical Africa is a destination/specialty store—one goes there for a specific, specialized item—and this affects trade, commerce, and development. Physical geography (site and situation) is to Southeast Asia as the AK47 is to Tropical Africa.

Burma, Malaysia and Singapore were British colonies prior to the outbreak of World War II. Burma was integrated into British India during the 19th Century. Prior to WWII, Burma separated from British India, although Burmese government could only act with approval from an empowered British governor. During 1942 to 1945 the Japanese occupied Burma. The Burmese declared formal independence in 1943 during Japanese occupation. Two years later the British recaptured Burma, only to agree to Burmese independence another two years later, in 1947. Official independence from Britain begins in 1948 (Schendel, 2008).

The change in name from Burma to Myanmar came in 1989 to further separate from colonial influences. Myanmar has been a military-governed state since 1962 following the formation of the State Peace and Development Council. Myanmar perhaps is the only Southeast Asian country that compares closely to Tropical African countries in this thesis. This is discussed further with the aid of tables to follow (Tables 1-4 pages 72-73, 77-78).
Prior to WWII Malaysia was a British colony, known as British Malaya. Like Burma, Malaysia was occupied by Japanese forces during WWII, from 1941 to 1945. A year later Singapore becomes a separate British colony. In the same year, 1946, the ruling population established a political entity called the Malayan Union. Malays, however, protest and establish an opposing political entity called the United Malays National Organization. The establishment of these political entities is the first in a series of political parties, including the Federation of Malaya, Malayan Communist Party, People’s Action Party, and the Alliance Party. In 1948 the Malayan Communist Party instigates armed insurrection. They, however, were not successful. In 1957 Britain grants Malaya independence following a political victory by the Alliance Party. Two years later Singapore is given the right for self-government following a political victory by the People’s Action Party. Singapore leaves Malaysia in 1965. Although large-scale ethnic conflict broke out in Malaysia in 1969 the far-reaching effects were well contained. Two years following the violence and state-of-emergency, Malaya Parliament is restored and approval of the New Economic Policy ushers in a new era of commerce and development for Malaysia (Lau, 2008).

From the late 1950’s Malaysian independence “ushered in a new era of vitality and change” (Ryan, 1976); Ryan continues: “…developed a new spirit, a new pride in the country, a feeling of confidence and a desire among the younger generation to introduce measures of social change and reform.” This attitude toward state-building is not evident in the Tropical African nations discussed in my thesis. Once again, Tables 1-4 (pages 72-73, 77-78) will help in providing an explanation to why this may be.

The Spanish first settled in the Philippines in the mid-16th Century. Over three hundred years later the Philippine Revolution started in 1896. Two years later the
Philippines gained her independence from Spain. There was little fanfare as the country was soon to be occupied by another Western power. In 1899 the United States annexed the Philippines. Besides brief Japanese occupation during WWII, Philippines remained a US possession for nearly 50 years. Philippine Independence begins, July 4, 1946. Independence, once again, was met with little fanfare: the Philippine Revolution and the peaceful handover of power were not invigorating. Yet, the United States saw democratic potential for the Philippines in the newly dawned Cold War era (Doran, 2008).

The Philippines, not unlike Myanmar, has seen its share of dictatorship and military rule. Most notably, Ferdinand Marcos, Philippine President from 1965 to 1986, instituted Martial Law in 1972. Martial Law remained in affect, officially, for nine years. Martial Law-like control and rule continued as Marcos continually extended his presidency. Marcos was forcefully removed from power. Political and military presence of the United States continued to play a role in Philippine politics and sovereignty (Doran, 2008).

Although the Philippines is not thriving like Malaysia or Singapore, it is important not to underestimate the importance of continual interest from the international community. The Philippines was seen as a strategic asset by the United States; even the British were wary during the earlier years of US colonization (Christie, 1996). Following WWII the Philippines strategic location made the US’s presence in Southeast Asia viable and a key political and military component. The US involvement increases the Philippines accessibility and exposure, a luxury many Tropical African countries did not have and are certainly without still.

The Southeast Asian countries listed here are supplied largely by European or US manufactures, if not producing their own version of licensed rifles, none of which being the
AK47 or its variations. Some of the countries, however, do have unspecified quantities of AK47s obtained from past conflicts. The Tropical African countries listed here are, in part, supplied by countries known to manufacture the AK47 and its variations (China and Russia being the primaries).

Similarities between the Tropical African countries in this thesis and the sample of Southeast Asian countries are fairly straightforward: Early colonization by European, or Western, hegemonic powers; and, independence just prior or just following WWII. Similarities now begin to weaken. Cold War influence in the Philippines, for example, brought US military facilities with it. Britain continued their investments in Malaysia (perhaps because of Britain’s lease of Hong Kong through 1999). The Tropical African nations within this thesis have not received this level of vested international interested, past or present. I believe this can be explained, in part, by site and situation.

Site can be described as the physical location. Although both regions are tropical and contain abundant resources, Southeast Asia is located in a more economically diverse site. Southeast Asia’s site lies between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, north of Australia and south of South Asia. The countries of Southeast Asia are easily accessible by water; the friction of land is reduced. Japan, China, South Korea, India, and Australia are in the geographic neighborhood; this in effect creates a super-highway of commerce. Without this strategic location the history of Southeast Asia would be altered, potentially severe.

Tropical Africa, on the other hand, is a vast land mass. The friction of land is greater and has the potential to negatively affect a region when infrastructure, like Tropical Africa’s, can’t overcome land’s friction. It is therefore difficult for many countries in Tropical Africa to overcome their location to improve economic opportunity.
Situation can be described as the location’s relationship with its surroundings. Southeast Asia has dealt effectively with the region and shipping potentials. Along with this, the people have adapted, reflected in the percentage of the population urbanized, literate, and employed outside agriculture. Southeast Asia’s relationship with its location can be seen in the region’s role during WWII, strategic role during the Cold War, and current role in the globalized market. Interest and investment from aboard, as well as higher GDP’s further lend evidence to Southeast Asia’s relationship with the region: high-tech, heavy industry, manufacturing, and services are abundant as the resources, the infrastructure, and labor force are in place.

Tropical Africa, once again, has failed to realize coexistence. Kleptocratic leaders rob the people and land (Olsson and Fors, 2004). Poor government and infrastructure limit the potential and interest from aboard. Labor force tends to be uneducated while the majority practicing agriculture. It then comes as no big surprise the AK47 has become a tool of great use for the people of Tropical Africa who struggle to achieve and advance their family, community, people, and country.

Tables 1 and 2 (pages 72, 73) have various geographic data; area, demographic, and economic. Six countries from each region were selected as samples. For Tropical Africa the sample countries are Congo (The Democratic Republic), Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan. For Southeast Asia the sample countries are Myanmar (Burma), Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The purpose of these tables is to illustrate the differences that can be linked to economic and social development, such as literacy and gross domestic product (GDP), which refers to the market value of all final goods and services a country produces (higher GDP often implies a higher standard of
living). Of the six Tropical African countries selected as my sample, Rwanda has the highest literacy rate at 70%, Sudan has the highest GDP/capita at $2,200, and only Sudan has a positive trade deficit. Furthermore, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Somalia all have trade deficits that are at least twice the value of their exports (i.e. Rwanda’s export value is estimated at $226 million, whereas the import value is estimated at $1.05 billion, a difference of -724 million dollars).

Once international concerns left Tropical Africa following colonialism or the Cold War they seem to have no interest in returning. This is apparent in the sample data. Lower rates of literacy imply uneducated labor force, reinforced by the percentage of the labor force in agriculture. Heavy emphasis on agriculture does not produce foreign investments in industry, manufacturing, or services.

Malaysia’s urbanized population, for example, is 72%, perhaps further explaining why only 13% of the labor force is in agriculture. The literacy rate is at 89%, implying an educated population. The sample of Tropical African countries have urbanized populations below 50%, and as low as 19%. It should not come as a surprise the percentage of the labor force involved in agriculture sky-rockets, not one below 71%. Literacy rates are also considerably lower, with Rwanda’s 70% the highest. Myanmar’s data is the outlier in the sample of Southeast Asian countries. Myanmar’s urbanized population, percentage in agriculture, and per capita GDP, are within the range of the Tropical African sample countries’.

The Philippines and Thailand have urbanized populations more similar to Tropical Africa, but literacy and per capita GDP are significantly higher. Urbanized population average for the sample of Tropical African countries is 36.17%; urbanized
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Congo (DRC)</th>
<th>Liberia</th>
<th>Rwanda</th>
<th>Sierra Leone</th>
<th>Somalia</th>
<th>Sudan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area sq km</td>
<td>2,344,858</td>
<td>111,369</td>
<td>26,338</td>
<td>71,740</td>
<td>637,657</td>
<td>2,505,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population^</td>
<td>72m*</td>
<td>3.8m</td>
<td>11.4m</td>
<td>5.4m</td>
<td>9.9m</td>
<td>45.05m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Density#</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>432.8</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Urban</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy %</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>$23b*</td>
<td>$1.8b</td>
<td>$12b</td>
<td>$4.8b</td>
<td>$5.9b</td>
<td>$98.8b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP/Capita</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force</td>
<td>24m</td>
<td>1.4m</td>
<td>4.5m</td>
<td>2.21m</td>
<td>3.45m</td>
<td>11.9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in Agri</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in Industry</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in Services</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>$3.8b</td>
<td>$1.2b</td>
<td>$226m</td>
<td>$216m</td>
<td>$300m</td>
<td>$9.78b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>$5.2b</td>
<td>$7.1b</td>
<td>$1.05b</td>
<td>$560m</td>
<td>$798m</td>
<td>$8.48b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Diff.</td>
<td>($1.4b)*</td>
<td>($5.9b)</td>
<td>($724m)</td>
<td>($334m)</td>
<td>($498m)</td>
<td>$1.30b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from the CIA Factbook (http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html)
^Population is 2010 estimate  #Pop. Density is based on Population Estimate/Area in square kilometers
**also known as Myanmar
*m (million) *b (billion)
ND-No Data
### Table 2. Sample of Southeast Asia Geographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Burma**</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area sq km</strong></td>
<td>676,578</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>329,847</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>513,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>54m*</td>
<td>7.1m</td>
<td>29m</td>
<td>102m</td>
<td>5m</td>
<td>66.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pop. Density</strong></td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>6,431.20</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>7,173.60</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Urban</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy %</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP</strong></td>
<td>$60b*</td>
<td>$327b</td>
<td>$417b</td>
<td>$353b</td>
<td>$293b</td>
<td>$580.3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP/Capita</strong></td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$45,600</td>
<td>$14,700</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>$57,200</td>
<td>$8,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labor Force</strong></td>
<td>32m</td>
<td>3.7m</td>
<td>12m</td>
<td>39m</td>
<td>3.1m</td>
<td>38.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% in Agri</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0`</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% in Industry</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.2`</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% in Services</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>70.7`</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exports</strong></td>
<td>$7.8b</td>
<td>$389b</td>
<td>$210b</td>
<td>$51b</td>
<td>$351b</td>
<td>$191.3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imports</strong></td>
<td>$4.5b</td>
<td>$431.4b</td>
<td>$174b</td>
<td>$60b</td>
<td>$310b</td>
<td>$156.9b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trade Diff.</strong></td>
<td>$3.3b</td>
<td>($42.4b)*</td>
<td>$36b</td>
<td>($9b)</td>
<td>$41b</td>
<td>$34.4b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from the CIA Factbook (http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html)

*Population is 2010 estimate  
#Pop. Density is based on Population Estimate/Area in square kilometers

**Myanmar

*m (million)  *b (billion)

` data excludes public sector
population average for the sample of Southeast Asian countries is 64.83%. Literacy percentage average for Tropical African countries is 54.82; literacy percentage average for Southeast Asian countries is 92. The average per capita GDP for my sample of Tropical African countries is $933.33; whereas, the average per capita GDP for my sample of Southeast Asian countries is $21,800. Data for the UK and US, as comparison, are as follows: Population Urbanized is 80% or above; 99% literate for both; and, GDP/capita is $35,100 and $47,400.⁵

Tables 3 and 4 (pages 77, 78) focus on the same six countries from both regions. These tables contain data obtained by the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development from the Small Arms Survey. The data of focus in Tables 3 and 4 are: estimated numbers of known Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) per 100 people; intentional homicide rates per 100,000 people; direct conflict deaths and direct conflicts deaths per 100,000; and, potential gain in male and female life expectancy (expressed as decimal percentage). As discussed throughout this thesis, exact numbers of AK47’s and other firearms in Africa is unknown, due to illicit trade and reproductions (Chivers, 2011 and Hodges, 2007).

(Maps 3 and 4 on page 76 are visual representation of two data sets described above. Tropical African countries having data for SALW per 100 and Potential Gains in Male Life Expectancy are included in these two maps.)

(The Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers has a database with transfer data, like country of origin, country of destination, amount in US dollars, and year. The data here contains known transfers, whether approved or refused. Not all countries are provided in the drop-downs. Likewise, weapon types are not specific, quantities are not listed, but dollar

value of transfer is given. Website for this database is
http://balder.prio.no:8080/PublicQuery_SQL.aspx.)

The SALW per 100 rates does not provide a precise indicator into the amount of firearms in any given area. Therefore, other factors provide further evidence in support of Southeast Asia’s relation with geography and Tropical Africa’s relation with the AK47 (discussed throughout thesis).

Potential gains in life expectancy are significant for both males and females in Tropical Africa, as compared with the Southeast Asia sample. It is important to note these gains are in years free of conflict. The most significant gains are in Somalia, where male life expectancy gains jump by 92%, and female gains jump by 52%. All male life expectancy gains for Tropical Africa are above 37%, implying significant trends in armed conflict. It is also interesting to note that the majority of the sample African countries’ SALW per 100 rates are below two. Only Somalia and Sudan are above two (9.1 and 5.5 respectively), perhaps reflected in more recent conflict. Intentional homicide rates for the African samples are high, except for Somalia. High estimates range from 16.8 to 35.2. Low estimates range from 2.1 to 35.2. Liberia, for example has a SALW per 100 rate at 1.6, with an intentional homicide rate at 16.8, and gains in male life expectancy at 66%. Malaysia has a SALW per 100 rate at 1.5, with an intentional homicide rate at 8.9 (high estimate), and gains in male life expectancy at 3%. Besides Myanmar and Thailand, the Southeast Asia sample countries have much lower gains in male life expectancy rates. The implication when looking at higher GDP per capita and lower gains in male life expectancy would suggest higher levels of satisfaction in economic opportunity. This implication is reinforced by unemployment
Maps 3 and 4: I love the smell of ink stains in the morning. Map 2 (top) is displaying the estimated Small Arms and Light Weapons per 100 people in the Tropical African region. Using Map 3 (bottom), the Potential Gains in Male Life Expectancy, a clearer picture begins to unveil itself. Known firearms are not the issue, it’s the illicit firearm that cannot be accounted for. Large gains in male life expectancy suggest abundant methods and tools to take life.

Data from Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (map.genevadeclaration.org)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.</th>
<th>Tropical Africa Violence and SALW Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congo (DRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALW* per 100</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intentional Homicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>per 100,000 (h)</th>
<th>35.20</th>
<th>16.80</th>
<th>26.60</th>
<th>34.00</th>
<th>3.30</th>
<th>28.60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Intentional Homicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>per 100,000 (l)</th>
<th>35.20</th>
<th>16.80</th>
<th>4.10</th>
<th>2.10</th>
<th>3.30</th>
<th>28.60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Direct Conflict Deaths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1,351</th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>65,000</th>
<th>1,734</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Direct Conflict Deaths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.21</th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>0.07</th>
<th>74.15</th>
<th>4.59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Potential Gains in Male

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Expectancy^</th>
<th>0.38</th>
<th>0.66</th>
<th>0.37</th>
<th>0.60</th>
<th>0.92</th>
<th>0.76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Potential Gains in Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Expectancy^</th>
<th>0.22</th>
<th>0.38</th>
<th>0.19</th>
<th>0.38</th>
<th>0.52</th>
<th>0.43</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Data from Geneva Declaration on Small Arms and Development (map.genevadeclaration.org)
*SALW-Small Arms Light Weapons
^in years free of non-conflict armed violence
per #-population
(h)-high estimate
(l)-low estimate
ND-No Data
**Southeast Asia Violence and SALW Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Burma**</th>
<th>Hg Kg</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em><em>SALW</em> per 100</em>*</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>15.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intentional Homicide</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per 100,000 (h)</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per 100,000 (l)</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Conflict Deaths</strong></td>
<td>268</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Gains in Male</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy^</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Gains in Female</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy^</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Geneva Declaration on Small Arms and Development (map.genevadeclaration.org)
*SALW—Small Arms Light Weapons
^in years free of non-conflict armed violence per #-population
(h)-high estimate
(l)-low estimate
ND-No Data
**Myanmar
rates (not listed in Tables 1 and 2). Much of the sample Tropical African countries data is not listed. Liberia and Sudan, however, have 2010 estimated unemployment rates above 18%. Whereas, all of the Southeast Asian sample countries have unemployment rates below the world average of 8.8% (CIA Factbook, 3/29/2011 and World Bank, 3/29/2011).

Comparison data for the UK and US are as follows: SALW per 100 for UK is 10.7 and the US is 88.8; intentional homicide rate (high estimate) for the UK is 2.2, the US is 5.6; and, gains in male life expectancy for UK is 2% and the US is 16%.

Although Tropical Africa and the sample of Southeast Asian countries had similar histories of colonialism, independence, and post-independence, the comparison and data presented in this chapter highlight the contrast of geography, lending creditability to the role of the AK47 in Tropical African identity.

The site and situation of Southeast Asia has helped in state-building and economic opportunity for the population here. This in turn has kept foreign investment and interest in Southeast Asia. The friction of vast land mass is reduced throughout Southeast Asia, increasing accessibility and ease of commerce. Southeast Asia’s rate of literacy, population urbanized, GDP per capita, and gains in male life expectancy suggest the population is educated and generally satisfied; reducing the likelihood the population or government will resort to violence or armed conflict to institute change or increase opportunity.

Tropical Africa’s site and situation has left it barren as governments and people seek investment and opportunity. The vastness of Tropical Africa increases land’s friction, and although the region is abundant in resources, only highly specialized products are sought after. This specialization in agricultural or extracted minerals affects the need for an urbanized or educated labor force. In turn the international community in today’s highly
globalized economy is slow to invest in Tropical African countries. People then look to alternative methods and means to seek opportunity when the government removes it or fails to provide. And in Tropical Africa the AK47 is the difference.

4.6 Guns, Greed, and Grievance

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are easily handled and maintained. Their proliferation has caused violence in African states to become more wanton. Campaigns of terror are frequent. The laws of war are ignored and civilians become fair-game targets. Places like Liberia and Sierra Leone have seen the devastating effects of SALW armed ten-to fourteen-year-old child-soldiers opening fire on civil populations.

Sources of small arms and light weapons are bottomless. The result is great capacity for many people and diverse interests to violently project their beliefs. Transitions from colonial to dictatorial and ultimately to autocratic rule have faltered because of violent conflicts, human right violations, and the “instrumentalizing the war economy.” At the root of this “veritable time-bomb” are small arms and light weapons (Musah, 2002).

In the mid-60’s the AK 47 began to flow uninterrupted into Africa. The old USSR, North Korea and China have sent millions of Kalashnikovs into Africa. To quince an increase in demand, China and North Korea also established AK ammunition plants in Uganda (Hodges, 2007).

Weapons originate from left-over reservoirs of Soviet-supplied arms during wars of liberation. Similarly, movement of arms receives government blessing from countries like Libya and countries involved in the Great Lakes conflict\(^6\) into the Mano River Union,

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\(^6\) Great Lakes conflict included the countries of Eastern Zaire (present day DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Tanzania.
Burkina Faso, and Nigeria. From zones of conflict into zones of tension, peacekeeping efforts also have an effect on proliferation. Weapons used in Nigerian civilian violence have been traced back to peacekeepers returning from duty in areas like Libya and Sierra Leone (Musah, 2002). Poorly secure state armories have weapons not sold illicitly dumped here. Along with porous borders and a deficiency at these borders in detection capacity, pilfering armories and selling weapons has poised a great threat to human life and has become a “booming business” (Musah, 2002).

During the Cold War, African countries were the recipients of ‘unrelenting’ weapons transfers from the East and West (Craft et al., 2003). Weapons transfers into Africa are typically small arms and light weapons (Craft et al., 2003).

This level of trade is a result of the vast Cold War stockpiles that accumulated over the years. With the Cold War West and East feeding African conflicts with military aid and weaponry, the countries became militarized and saturated. Today the trade continues to bloom because of an increase in artisan and state-ran manufacturing of small arms. New and old arms circulate and proliferate amongst criminals and post-conflict societies. Communities are then forced to provide protection against the criminal or other unforeseen threats initiated by predatory conflicts based on grievance and greed. Furthermore, countering the organized criminal, ethnic rivalry, advancing nomadic populations, kleptocratic leaders distributed arms and created militias. State sponsored militia or troops are often the link between legal and the illicit arms trade.

Prior to independence and the end of the Cold War, available weapons were sufficiently controlled by proper state organizations. Therefore the proliferation of SALW into Africa began in earnest following independence and repeated coup d’états and the rise of
junior officers into the political arena. Weapons were seen as the most efficient and effective way to obtain power and personal enrichment. Junior officer lead coups increased the proliferation of weapons and ushered in a new era of civilian possession of small arms and light weapons. Initially the civilian population of ‘radical students, workers’ leaders and marginalized sections of the urban population’ was armed and civilian gun-related deaths increased. These factors set the foundation for the rise of civilian warlords and poorly trained combatants (Musah, 2002).

During the 1990’s conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa resulted in over 930,000 casualties of military and civilians. This number is one estimate but clearly illustrates the devastating effects of weapons in Sub-Saharan Africa and the region’s dependence on arms and weapons trade (Craft et al., 2003). Some argue that weapon imports into countries with little to no domestic manufacturing gives these countries an opportunity to “practice the political strategy of deterrence” (Craft et al., 2003). Weapons should help states maintain domestic stability in the face of instability and disagreements of which side is stronger. Stable states without disagreements tend to be violence free. Stability therefore provides opportunities for economic growth and development. It has been found that weapons transfers coincide with gains in military and political conflicts. Furthermore, lags in weapons transfers coincide with similar lags in military and political conflict, suggesting cooperation (Craft et al., 2003).

Governments in Africa will lose weapons to their opponents from corruption, diversion and equipment abandonment. Possible conflict onset and perception of security level tends to result in weapons transfers. Leaders may also seek transfers to solidify their power over the state and their opponents (Craft et al., 2003). Elections are not free or fair resulting in state’s power not being invested in elected winner. These states have booming
populations and limited economic opportunities. African males then find themselves with little to lose when joining the military cause of rebellious groups. Many African states lack the ability to provide social programs, welfare, education, and opportunities for economic development, leaving few alternatives (Craft et al., 2003).

In countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), warring has become a way of life for many. Having limited to no economic opportunities otherwise, waging war has given young African men chances to generate income and exert their political agendas. Many young African men, including children, find this way of life to be a form of employment in an environment dry of education and steady work opportunities (Hartung, 2001).

Self-governing seeking countries of Tropical Africa struggle to maintain their structure because of ethnic and religious animosity. The diffusion and proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuels the violence. In a country like Nigeria, with an estimated illegal weapons count of one million, destroying over 1,500 rifles is a small step. This step, however, is continuously over-shadowed by continuing violence and “demonstrates the complexity of the small arms and light weapons trade” (Musah, 2002). In the sub-region of West Africa estimates of small arms and light weapons is at seven million, the majority of which in the Mano River Union.

Countries and their leaders have begun to barter their land in exchange for weapons. The opposition and resistance in the countries employ similar tactics in acquiring weapons. Warlords would capture enclaves rich in resources, such has diamonds or agriculture. They would then barter these resources for weapons to engage the regimes they were looking to

7 The Mano River Union is an international association between Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. The association’s aim is for sub-region economic integration, security and confidence building. (Source: www.manoriverunion.org)
overthrow. Leaders of these regimes, under a cloak of legitimacy, would barter their own country and resources; greed seeking and grievance causing.

Predatory conflict within equatorial Africa can be the result from grievance or greed. The actors involved in grievance based conflict are those who deliberately install differences between formal and informal production, property rights, rule of law and abstract differences like ethnicity and history. Greed based conflict is a bit more simplistic on a grass-roots level; the ordinary population looking to acquire the natural resources and natural resource wealth from the ruling class. The case of recent conflicts in Congo can be traced back to grievance, namely between the Tutsi and Hutu. The continuation and escalation of these conflicts, however, can be attributed to greed. Conflicts of a predatory nature didn’t occur in the DRC immediately following its independence. Contributing factors in and around the Congo lead to the outbreak of conflict in 1996: first, a dramatic decrease in the government’s military effectiveness; secondly, an increase in grievance following 1994’s Hutu refugee invasion; and finally the great abundance of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

Reasoning for Rwanda’s and Uganda’s efforts in the Congo is again based on grievance and greed. It is seen that Uganda’s interest on the conflict may be grievance based; however, the wealth found from acquiring natural resources helps to counter the expenses to support such efforts. Uganda’s interest in keeping face politically in the region and protecting the Tutsi ruling class in Rwanda may have fuelled interest in the war (Olsson and Fors, 2004). Once again, although grievances arising from institutional differences may be the key determining factor, kleptocratic rulers in Africa and their degree of kleptomania
fuel the fires and explain the continuation, escalation and intensity of conflicts (Olsson and Fors, 2004).

In colonial Africa the purpose of rule was to secure resources and raw materials. Colonial states either were secondary in providing this or played a greater role of pacification and exploitation. In exploitation and extraction colonies, the colonial ruling body used African soldiers against Africans in coercive security practices (Musah, 2002).

Within Africa the gun was seen as a necessary tool to remove colonial rulers from the continent (Killicoat, 2007). When African countries began to gain independence and colonial power became absent, the legacy left behind was not a positive one.

4.7 State of People

“The focus on the history or pre-history of the nation often obscures the everyday experiences and concerns of present generations, why, for example, people who have lived together for centuries as is the case in many less modernized and therefore culturally rich societies, should come into conflict with each other” (Kaldor, 2004).

National identity or nationality can be linked to language and macro-history. For many, national identity is realized with language. Life chances and ability to communicate in ‘the first language’ are often linked. Some, however, believe national identity is a recent, modern trend resulting from local political, economic, and psychological social changes (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). See Illustration 6 (on page 87) which shows a Russian coin with an image of a shotgun over an AK47.

Nationalism is tied to globalization and the government’s ability to adjust to changes globalization brings. The electronic era has changed how information and ideas are shared.
Television and radio now reach vast populations. Countries that struggle with these changes struggle to reach a consensus ideology of nationalism. War, many believe, constructs nationalism. In Africa, however, conflicts in Tropical Africa are not nation-building or identity seeking wars. Recent conflicts had one goal; extermination (Kaldor, 2004).

“All were founded on a contradiction between traditional values and grafted inherited institutions. All were vulnerable to the vagaries of external political and financial systems; and, within all of them, the security sector was singled out as a priority area for consolidation. Thus, African states as a group shared arbitrary boundaries, extractionist/rentier production relations, and repressive security apparatuses” (Musah, 2002).

Governing is having the capacity to create and provide goods and services for the public as well as the responsible management of threats towards public welfare within and extending beyond borders, including weapons. The key flaw following independence has been the inability to overcome the arbitrary colonial borders. African leaders failed to transform these boundaries and structures to meet the needs and demands for peaceful transitions and security. Structure and institutions were embedded onto and grew apart from traditional structures and institutions creating a failure in the integrity of the new state’s architecture. “The state building project was effectively replaced by rent-seeking arrangements based on personal loyalty and the denial of security to the majority” (Musah, 2002). Leaders then found themselves at the mercy of those who held power. Many of these relationships were formed based on personal loyalty or ethnicity. These security arrangements effectively turned the post-colonial state into a ‘security racket’ (Musah, 2002).
Illustration 6: Commemorating the links between arms manufacturing and economic and political stability and security, this Russian coin includes an image of an AK47; an iconic piece of its history. This is another example how the AK47 brand affects and bonds the mentality of individuals and states and shapes a united identity. (Source: www.forum.xcitefun.net)
The rulers who formed these arrangements, however, often found themselves being replaced by those hired to perform such services

A common component in the states like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia is a failure of the first generation of leadership to overcome the contradictions of colonial rule and transform the infrastructure to meet the demands, needs and security for the civil population. The inherited structures and new state structures were grafted onto one another, thus failing to assimilate, resulting with state institutions growing apart. This failure created fault lines in the new state’s architecture and the population had no share in the state-building process (Musah, 2002). The early generation of leaders failed to gain confidence and a generation later the new leaders forged ahead and created one-party governments. Formation of the one-party government came as a result of fearfulness of African leaders and the smothering of ideas, thoughts, development and a system of check and balances. These states were in essence a ‘shell from independence’ and ‘became the harbingers of institutional violence’ (Musah, 2002).

African nations tend to lack ‘traditions of statehood’ that other post-colonial states have. Likewise these African states also lack a ‘majority settler ethnic origins and culture.’ Post-colonial countries then lay heavy emphasis on representations of ‘statehood.’ Ideological ideas influence nation-building and nationhood, like socialism, nationalism, Islam or Christianity. These states cannot find unifying resources of culture, genealogy and history. Contemporary projects and actions, like architecture and warfare, are looked for to provide national symbols. Often ideologies break down and one ethnic group becomes dominate. Dominate ethnic groups soon organize and ‘assert a more organic national identity
based on their own genealogy, leading many times to violent conflict and war (Kaufmann, 2008).

“…identity groups are constructed and therefore are fluid geographically and culturally” (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Ethnic groups invest in their elite. These elites are given preferential consideration for education. Via the education system, ethnic elites gain participation in the political and urban elite. The maintenance of civil peace, however, is fundamental for African state-building (Azam, 2001). Ethnically dominate countries of Africa have failed to maintain civil peace, social and ethnic capital. Many of these countries experienced long periods of civil war and ethnic violence. “Civil wars, and other forms of political violence, are thus integral parts of the political economy of Africa” (Azam, 2001). This statement would imply the AK47 is an ‘integral part of the political economy’.

“The ethnic group is the natural component of a rebellion against the state” (Azam, 2001). Blaming ethnicity for civil conflict in Africa is simple and lazily underestimates the failed role of the state to maintain peace. Contributing to the problem are the artificial borders put into place by Europeans that cut through the lands of ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are then forced to engage in cross-border economic and political activities; divide-and-rule form of governance becomes more problematic (Azam, 2001).

The thug and availability of armed young males are important to the outbreak and escalation of violence. Thugs are young men with little economic opportunities, poorly educated and faced with few job choices. Ethnic and political elites who let their thugs loose to pursue agendas besides the groups are forced to follow their path. Thugs also police
dissent from within and practice eye-for-an-eye violence. These actions cause other groups increased fear and construct greater antagonistic group identities (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Insurgency and rebellion groups are typically headed by the more educated amongst the ethnic group. Furthermore, political violence tends to erupt when these ethnic elite feel excluded from the state’s bounty. During the Cold War many educated ethnic elites found funding easily and looting was not necessary. Following the Cold War, however, elites and warlords found it necessary to loot as to sustain their insurgencies or rebellions (Azam, 2001). The AK47 and resource-for-gun transfers increased the legitimacy of looting.

Africa has become the ‘most conflict ridden region in the World’ (Azam, 2002). Not surprisingly, as mentioned before, the price for an AK47 is lowest in Africa. Ethnicity’s role is seen as a key political component in a continent not seeing conflicts in decline. Many conclude the probability of ethnic conflict increases with an increase in ethnic groups. Many African countries are ethnically divided. The degree of ethnic fractionalization contributes more significantly than divided ethnic groups alone. Language and ‘ethno-linguistic’ fractionalization allows ethnic groups to organize based on preexisting ethnic prejudices.

Not surprisingly, if the degree of fractionalization and the number of ethnic groups alone decrease, outbreak of violent conflict declines (Azam, 2002). Regardless of ethnic or religious fractionalization, higher levels of interaction between groups decrease the likelihood of civil conflict. “…even a highly polarized country, with a small number of ethnic or religious groups facing one another, could maintain peace by adopting appropriate political institutions…. International borders in Africa (and elsewhere) often cut through the land of some ethnoregional groups, the ethnic factor lies at the heart of some foreign interventions in internal conflicts…” (Azam, 2002). Ethnoregional groups often operate
with a preexisting internal organization. Ethnoregional groups, however, frequently have anarchic external relations. Resulting trans-ethnic interactions is met with violence and ethnic conflict. African conflicts are victims of a vicious cycle of violence; increases in violence are met by increases in violence (Azam, 2002). This cycle may be explained by grievance—another cycle of increasing grievance—and the greed for power and violence to proactively stop retaliation. Ethnic conflict and the weak state are prominent features of armed African conflicts (Azam, 2002).

Many cases of large-scale ethnic conflicts are the result of political power gaining, maintaining, and increasing actions of elites. Internal strife amongst extremists and moderates of an ethnic group provoke members to engage in violent activity with members of an ethnic Other. “Violence has the effect, intended by the elites, of constructing group identities in more antagonistic and rigid ways” (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Elites then use these newly constructed and re-constructed identities to escalate or continue the violence. In most cases, all people, not just elites, ‘strategically construct ethnic boundaries’ (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). These ordinary people use violence to express an unhappiness with assimilation or to gain status with other members of the group ‘whose membership is not in doubt’ (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).
Chapter 5

Summary

Colonial rule has left false histories, or encouraged false history through European ideology. For example, Hutu and Tutsi fractionalization was largely created by European ideology. This created false histories. False identities were produced by the false identification of each group’s Other. Upon departure, African nations and the people were left with foreign infrastructure. Some African leaders struggled to provide social capital and feared civil unrest. Cold War influence helped ease some tension, only to become more evident and violent following the Cold War.

The Cold War left stockpiles. Proliferation is a paramount issue and government control is poor. Furthermore, government provided security is equally as poor in many circumstances. Not only has SALW become necessary, but has become commerce. State-building in Africa is uninspired; little contribution from the population. Leaders and politico-elites exploit their own country’s wealth in resources. Coups and rebellions strangle the country and force civilians to arm themselves. Conflicting ethnic and political groups test loyalties and individual identities.

The AK47 has become a political tool for politicians and an economical tool for thugs and elites. People and communities feel helpless and feel necessarily to arm. The AK47 then becomes a tool for the everyday person, used for protection and seeking out economic
opportunity. Tribes, like the Karo have welcomed the AK47 in part as a necessary tool for protection and authority, but the weapon has become a part of their wardrobe, their culture and their new identity. It has ushered in competing views of thought and ultimately new ways of thinking and identifying.

African identities and the AK47 are linked. This linkage, however, didn’t occur overnight. Like many other regions around the world, Tropical Africa is ethnically diverse. What makes the nations of Tropical Africa unique is the development over time of state-building and identity. Africa and Africans have been subjugated and exploited for many years. Another uniquely defining factor for the people of Africa is the lack of security and social capital sovereignty provided. Instead, rulers and the ruled sought other means to provide themselves with opportunities; this in turn created a new identity.

Examples of colonial rule show the impact of European ideology. Arbitrary methods of categorizing of established inhabitants caused ethnic fractionalization. The Germans and Belgians ideology of racial favoritism in Rwanda forever laid influenced over ethnic bias. The difference between the Hutu and Tutsi was not night-and-day. Discrimination was shrewd and done with a discerning eye. Africans, like the Tutsi, who had migrated into Tropical Africa, were seen as superior by their European administrators. This ideology soon became the ideology of the Tutsi themselves. This effect of colonial rule further confused and clouded traditional culture and identity of Tropical African nations and its people.

Up until the 1990s conflicts inside Tropical Africa were much less frequent. The Cold War left a lasting scar on Tropical Africa and the people. African nations became pawns in the West’s and Eastern Bloc’s chess match of Cold War power mongering. This influence brought security to the region in the form of large weapon shipments and funding.
African leaders remained loyal and their loyalty was rewarded with greater control. Control was established through a greater presumed military capability, which diminished following the end of the Cold War. Left behind were stockpiles of weapons and ammunition (Illustration 7 on page 97 shows how many variations are possible with the AK47) and African leaders with declining influence and control. Opportunities dried and the vast availability of weapons offered hope. Again Africans faced conflicting and confused ideologies and identities, and with no assistance from their nation or state. From one extreme to another in a historical heartbeat, African people were forced once again to seek an identity.

Cases of colonial genocide may have stoked ethnic grievances but ethnicity was not the root cause. More recent massacres and genocide continue to stoke grievance, but the root cause is political. Modern Hutu and Tutsi are more similar than dissimilar. False histories of a population can be passed on to new generations. Grievances of a false history can create ethnic fractionalization. Grievances and ethnic fractionalization stigmatize an ethnic group’s Other. Grievances can clear the lines between ethnic groups and their identity. However, the extermination of one ethnic group is not salvation for the competing ethnic group. Politics, power and money create greed. Genocide is caused by greed. Greed can be caused by and can cause grievance. Greed has become an identity producing factor inside Tropical Africa.

European methods and colonial infrastructure was largely alien to the much of native Africa and upon sovereignty, these methods and infrastructure were largely ignored, causing greater confusion. New African leaders were left to manage systems and architecture unfamiliar to them and their populations. The people and their leaders were given their country, rather than ‘earning’ their country. Populations and leaders alike were left to state-build with the European leftovers. Statehood came without much state-building participation.
from the people. The people were at the mercy of their leaders who feared social unrest and formed one-party governments. These leaders also became kleptocratic and pilfered the riches of their country. Having little to no sense of nationality affects identity. Having little to no sense of economic and life opportunities affects identity. Guns, like the notorious AK47, highlighted in this thesis, provide Africans with nationalistic ideologies and individual identities.

Tropical Africa might have been spared this history if colonial rule did not center on resource extraction and exploitation. The ruled realized the gun was the easiest and most effective method to rid them of the colonizer. During the Cold War, however, populations held higher expectations of their country’s military capability. This alone prevented or shortened conflicts. Exiting Cold War countries might have helped lessen weapon proliferation by reducing stockpiles, but they did not. Furthermore, colonial and post-Cold War countries might have invested more prior, during and following their exit, but they did not. Greater local investments might have shaped a different history for Africans. Instead these investments were not made and chaos ensued.

Many countries across the globe are ethnically divided and yet are governed peacefully, effectively and efficiently. Tropical Africa is struggling in today’s globalized world because of the core’s unwillingness, in the past and present, to invest time and money there. This problem, however, seems to exist only in the Tropical region of continental Africa. Sovereignty there has not been a blessing for development, nationalism or identity. Abundant resources were and are extracted, exploited, and exported. Economic development is oddly absent in regions of abundant resources. Instead Tropical Africa remains exploited by the market and globalization. This problem will persist if fundamental changes in foreign
investment are not implemented. These changes, however, have to come from the core, countries driving the market and globalization.

One of the first steps for a positive change in ideology and identity would be the reduction of AK47s. A sweeping movement aimed at small arms reduction in Tropical Africa would allow new leadership and administration there to conduct business without fear of continued chaos and violence. The next step would be the introduction of employment and economic opportunities. Following this could be the encouragement of public participation in politics. Let the local population work, build and be a voice within the boundaries that surround them. Soon these people could establish a post-AK47 identity for themselves and thereafter, perhaps, a peace-loving national consciousness. The AK47’s harsh effectiveness and efficiency in supporting the status quo is too powerful for those armed with them to abandon without incentives to do so. The AK47’s influence in shaping identity is the biggest hurdle facing fundamental changes in Tropical Africa.

For starters, it would of great benefit for researchers and governments to know more precisely the numbers of SALW in Tropical Africa. This step is essential to initiate the systematic management and control of weapon proliferation. Having accurate numbers can increase the likelihood of recognizing manufacturers, illicit traders and stockpiles. Once these steps have taken place and SALW are declining in numbers, development and opportunity has a chance to take root.
Illustration 7: Choose your poison! Just an example of some variations the AK47 comes in. They are: A, is a newer version with a forward vertical grip used to increase accuracy; B, is a more traditional version with a collapsible stock and bayonet; C, is commonly referred to as an AK47 pistol and designed for one-handed operation; D, is similar to A, however, equipped with a collapsible stock; E, is a traditional style AK47 with a redesigned stock used for greater accuracy; F, is a traditional style AK 47 with a wood stock; and G, the AK47 pistol and bayonet. (Source: http://www.looptvandfilm.com/blog/ak47shopping.jpg)
Conclusion

The effectiveness and efficiency of the AK47 is powerful, immediate, and less personal than edged weapons. Tribal people of Tropical Africa have the means to operate such an easy and lethal weapon. Tradition is still practiced, but with a contemporary tool. Ideology and identity cannot help but be confused. Examples of the Ethiopian Karo people in Illustrations 8, 9, and 10 show the juxtaposition of tradition and contemporary.

Illustration 10 (page 102) shows how beholden the Karo remain to tradition and culture. The AK47 has become an everyday tool. Not illustrated is the reason, whether its purposes are offensively or defensively orientated, or both. The juxtaposition does suggest the Karo are comfortable with the AK47’s introduction and assimilation into their culture. Illustration 9 (page 101) further suggests the pride this tribal member feels in his tool.

Illustrations 10 and 11 add validity to this argument. In Illustration 11 (page 103), however, the tribal member is also holding what appears to be an iPod, with headphones coiled up in the palm holding the device. In the right hand an AK47 is slung over the individuals shoulder. Once again the juxtaposition offers support to the argument that the AK47 has become integral to African ethnic identity. The AK47 is offering these people an opportunity to partake in the luxuries of globalization. Luxuries can also be burdens as technology changes how a person lives and changes their identity. Lastly, the image of the Karo and other tribal groups wielding the AK47 becomes embedded in the memories of the
West which furthers the identity creating potential of the AK47 on those in possession of and those witnessing.

Colonial rule and the Cold War played roles in what today could be called the Kalashnikov Generation in Tropical Africa. European ideology installed physical and social infrastructure that became a burden on new African states. Ethnic bias by the colonizing Europeans created false histories which carried through ethnic group mythology. False histories and mythologies pass on from generation to generation, leaving an inevitable mark on social ideology and individual identity. Furthermore, populations following the collapse of colonial rule were not privileged to participate in nationhood, neglecting opportunities for nationalism and identity. Likewise, Cold War influence provided greater control for those in control. Weapons arrived in continent in mass. As with the end of colonization, the end of the Cold War brought about a great scramble. Leaders and the populations both sought out means to acquire and provide. The abundant AK47 became the favorite tool of military, militia, thugs, mercenaries and individuals alike.

Along with the end of the Cold War came globalization. Basic international diplomacy changed and economic opportunities began to evaporate. The AK47 became the tool for the masses of African males faced with no opportunities. Some were hired by local politicians, elites or warlords. Some ex-military became mercenaries seeking higher wages. Some became thugs accepting bids and offering their loyalty to the highest bidder. The AK47 is the common factor. Without the AK47 these males would continue to face empty opportunities. Without the AK47 they would be left without a reason, without an ideology, and left without an identity.
Illustration 8: Pride of progress and possession. Karo people of Ethiopia are shown here in traditional dress and the member on left is holding a traditional tool. The AK47, however, becomes the focal point, has its held in the foreground. (Source: http://fiveprime.org/hivemind/Tags/omoriver)
Illustration 9: I’ll show you mine… Karo displaying his AK47 in a proud manner as if posing with a family member. (Source: http://fiveprime.org/hivemind/Tags/omoriver)
Illustration 10: The new tool of trade… and terror. Another Karo member with his AK47 slung over his left shoulder as if it were a hoe or spear. The contrast between his dress, facial and body painting is strong, as is the contrast between the warm colors in his clothing and the steel of the AK47. (Source: www.charlesfred.blogspot.com/2006_10_01_archive.html)
Illustration 11: Cold steel and cowries. This member of the Karo tribe is clearly at ease with modern tools as he is with traditional face paint, mouth plates and ornament. (Source: http://cmgonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=369&Itemid=51)
Although the AK47’s impact on identity is daily in Tropical Africa, the rifle is widely recognizable and identified with. Illustrations 12 and 13 (pages 108 and 109) demonstrate this point. Illustration 12 is that of a gold-plated AK47. This would suggest the importance of this weapon to its owner. It would further suggest the weapon has become an icon, an ornament. The AK47’s status becomes iconic and ornamental, similar to piercings, tattoos, and lip plates; an inseparable part of the wardrobe. Like the Karo, the wardrobe is an important part of the culture and of their identity.

Illustration 13 shows an AK47 decorated with ‘Hello Kitty’. As with self-decorating (piercings, tattoos, and lip plates), decoration of one’s tool suggests an identifying relationship between the user and their tool. More than likely the weapon in Image 7 is not of African origin, but demonstrates the iconic nature of this weapon. Today there are 16 US manufactures that can fabricate an imitation AK47 and the number of unregistered and illicit manufactures and customizes world-wide is unknown (http://www.ak-47.us/AK47_Manufacturers.php, 11/28/2008).

Popular culture has also taken advantage of this new African identity. Motion pictures like Blood Diamond (2006) and Lord of War (2005) depict two underlying themes in contemporary African identity; the AK47 and resource exploitation. In Blood Diamond tactics of the RUF are displayed in stunning realism and is echoed in Lord of War. Villages are raided and the youth are kidnapped while unfit slave labor have their hands severed. In Blood Diamond it attributes the severing of body parts to King Leopold, suggesting it hadn’t occurred prior to colonization, as if Leopold and the Belgians taught Africans this method. Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, as Hochschild (1999) claims, is an accurate portrait of “Leopold’s rape of the Congo”, or better known as, “The horror! The horror!” Jeremy Wade
of Animal Planet’s River Monsters recently stated during his trip up the Congo River, “...the rules out here are different... ...unparalleled brutality.” He added, “Congo is one of the most violent places on earth... ...over 100 years of violence and bloodletting” (Wade, ‘Congo Killers’, 2010). What makes Blood Diamond more surreal are the scenes of child soldiers performing as if they’d been brainwashed, firing their AK47s at mannequins with reckless and joyful abandon. Blood Diamond is centered on the illicit diamond trade, better known as blood or conflict diamonds. Lord of War, however, is less about illicit diamond trade, though comes into play later in the picture, but is more about AK47s.

Lord of War is centered on the arms trade and the market Africa provided for arms trade. The picture leads to the collapse of the Cold War as a major turning point in arms trade, especially into Africa. The AK47 becomes the dominate figure as it is recognizable by American audiences. Conrad’s Heart of Darkness has been the influence for a few motion pictures; however, Apocalypse Now is the most familiar to American audiences. Apocalypse Now is set during the Vietnam War, which is perhaps the defining moment in the AK47s history; it became iconic, feared and recognized as highly effective and efficient even when operated by untrained militia. Lord of War reiterates the large scale of AK47 shipments into Africa. One scene in particular demonstrates the difficulty in producing accurate numbers: crates of AK47s are given haphazardly to who ever can carry one. The picture also shows the diamonds-for-guns trade, similar to that in Blood Diamond.

Both motion pictures suggest the ignorance or hypocrisy of the West. Blood Diamond does so through the popularity of a diamond and although scenes are brutal, the diamond in the end rescues the family. A Hollywood ending that diminishes the true value of the picture. Lord of War suggests government participation continues in the illicit arms
trades into Africa. The former Soviet Union left millions of weapons in stockpile, unused and left to loot by corrupt and recently unemployed soldiers. The United States leaving weapons behind in conflict zones as it is cheaper to purchase new weapons than to ship back. Both motion pictures convey status quo to the viewer, as if these conflicts are allowed to run their course and Africans to remain searching for an identity. *Blood Diamond* ends with a caption stating “There are still 200,000 child soldiers in Africa today”. At the beginning of *Lord of War*, the viewer is told there are enough weapons in circulation today, that 1 in 12 would be armed; an astonishing number reaching into the half-a-billion.

With estimates running in the millions, Africa is saturated with AK47s. Populations have endured subjugation and exploitation for decades under various regimes, both foreign and domestic. Colonial authorities created ethnic fractionalization through their European ideologies. Upon exiting, colonial authorities offered little assistance for new African states to cope with statehood. Populations were left to fend for themselves under governments unable to provide appropriate social capital. The end of the Cold War furthered this issue and bought about a greater presence of one-party and kleptocratic governments. Decades of disinterest and under-investment from the developed world has left many Tropical Africans without opportunities. The quest for greed and reciprocity of grievances has been fueled by false histories and mythologies.

Colonial Others, the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic Other, the klepto-government Other, and all of Tropical Africa’s Others have created a population void of consistent opportunity and relative security. Africa has been exploited from the inside and from the outside by a long series of Others, the not *me’s* or *we’s*. Exploitation only benefits those exploiting Africa. As Emmanuel Jal writes in his 2009 book, *War Child*, “It seems as if good things are signed on
papers but the world turns its back when it comes to Africa.” African people are left to provide for themselves and guns offer a solution.

There is no singular event that caused this dramatic shift in African identity. A series of events following the Second World War have helped create a new generation of African state and person. Traditional edged weapons are still common, but their effectiveness is overshadowed by the AK47’s. Edged weapons still kill hundreds. Edge weapons, however, are not identity changing. Edge weapons are traditional. The AK47 represents globalization. Globalization has bought a change in world ideology and a pandemic of identity change.

Generation Kalashnikov defines the population of Tropical Africa whose identity is the AK47. The AK47 provides opportunities, and the opportunities presented, passed and taken help define and identify a person. The AK47 takes life and protects. The AK47 is an icon, an ornament, a part of the wardrobe, and is the artifact. The AK47 remains constant and ambiguous. The AK47 is always a threat and always an option. The Generation Kalashnikov are Tropical Africans whose identity is the AK47.
Illustration 12: Would you like 12, 14, or 18 karat? This individual is holding a gold-plated AK47, suggesting pride of ownership and a connection that can be mental and emotional. (Source: www.forum.xcitefun.net)
Illustration 13: Hello kitty! This AK47’s decoration is inspired by the popular children’s toy line, ‘Hello Kitty.’ At www.glamguns.com, this working AK47 can be purchased for $1072.95; while supplies last. The website claims a limited production of 500. (Source: www.forum.xcitefun.net)
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