

Ali Avery

B.A., International Relations and French, Eckerd College, (St. Petersburg, FL), 2013

M.S., Global Affairs (concentrating in human rights and international law), New York University, 2016)

Albert M. Tapper Fellow **Ali Avery** researches the roots and drivers of genocide, focusing on Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of Africa. Avery's dissertation project, *A Sociohistorical Analysis of the Interahamwe Militia*, uses the 'Interahamwe' militia in Rwanda as a case study to explore how militias are formed and used in genocide. Specifically, she examines the micro-dynamics that shaped the formation, organization, and evolution of the Interahamwe militia as well as the mindset of the perpetrators who participated in their murderous activities.

Through a combination of archival data and open-ended interviews with former perpetrators, as well as friends and family of former Interahamwe members, Avery's research will expand our historical understanding of the preparation and execution of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda. In addition, this study will speak to the broader problem of regional instability due to armed militias in the Great Lakes Region. Avery's findings will thus help us to rethink our understanding of group perpetrator violence in genocide studies writ large.

Employing relevant concepts from political science, anthropology, and social psychology, Avery has outlined a theoretical framework to explain the recruitment, mobilization, grooming and participation of the Interahamwe via four interrelated thematic categories: 1) political processes including democratization, and redefining nationalism as loyalty via propaganda from political elites, 2) context of civil war and instability, 3) economic factors such as resource competition and scarcity, 4) social psychological factors, including social identity theory, group formation, and power relations. To analyze the connections between these factors, her research relies on archival

document review of court case materials and first-hand testimonies of former 'Interahamwe' members and others who witnessed their recruitment and actions during the genocide. Source materials include original documents from the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda online archival database. Among the relevant documents are 180 testimonies from 91 witnesses who were former 'Interahamwe' members at the elite as well as rank-and-file levels. Additional primary resources include public speeches, songs, manifestos, newspapers, radio broadcasts, and letters and communiqués, that show the ideological and tactical motivations behind the pre-genocidal Rwandan government as they recruited to join the 'Interahamwe' and found ways for them to stay once the movement became violent. Avery will further incorporate content from 14 open-ended interviews with former Interahamwe perpetrators, conducted by Dr. Amélie Faucheux.