

RECONCILIATION IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

**A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
Doctorate in Development Studies**

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Eugenia Zorbas

Ahabaye inkovu hadasubirana.
A wound does not heal completely.

– Rwandan proverb
(quoted in Longman and Rutagengwa, 2004)

Ton « ethnie », c'est la pauvreté.
Your “ethnicity” is poverty.

– RPF representative
(Kigali, 8 August 2005, my translation)

Abstract

Many government (and donor) policies in post-genocide Rwanda have been justified in the name of “reconciliation”. Yet, reconciliation is almost never defined – in the Rwandan context, or in the literature. This thesis unpacks this nebulous concept by analysing the discourses and expectations of different constituencies – the RPF government, a group of non-government elites, the Top Five donors to the country, and respondents from two rural communities. Despite great variance in personal circumstance, significant areas of consensus are found. For example, establishing degrees of responsibility – and punishment – for the genocide was broadly welcomed. However, one way in which this was implemented, through a government prisoner release programme that amounted to “institutionalised forgiveness”, was not widely supported. An in-depth study of the rural communities is also undertaken to unearth what factors had an impact on the reconciliation process. Based on these data, three explanatory factors are posited for patterns of reconciliation and non-reconciliation, or, as per the definition of grassroots respondents, for coexistence and non-coexistence. First, at the individual level, life stories *since* 1994 mattered more in explaining behaviours and attitudes today than experiences *during* the genocide. Second, the level, depth, breadth and type of social interactions were equally influential, reinforcing the validity of Sociology’s “Contact hypothesis”. Third, the RPF’s top-down style is associated with a negative impact, suggesting the government’s strategy is self-defeating. Indeed, the imposition of “mandatory” reconciliation behaviours contradicted one of the pillars of the RPF reconciliation strategy, i.e. the promotion of independent thinking in order to rout out an alleged Rwandan tradition of obedience. Overall, the thesis debunks several misconceptions about reconciliation and about Rwandan politics and society. For example, ethnic heritage did not have an explanatory or predictive quality; more important were class distinctions or, as respondents put it, distinctions between “high” and “low people”.

Keywords: Rwanda, reconciliation, coexistence, ethnicity, Rwandan Patriotic Front, post-genocide

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Eugenia Zorbas

**Reconciliation in Post-genocide Rwanda:
Discourse and Practice**

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Part I: Why this Study?

Within a matter of weeks in 1994, Rwanda became synonymous with tribal hatreds, carnage and genocide (USIP, 1995), “the epitome of an African Holocaust” (Lemarchand, 1994, p. 581). This emphasis on the dark, on the unfathomable violence, on neighbour killing neighbour, also meshed with some influential thinking at the time on the “Coming Anarchy” and the hopelessness and barbarity of the African continent (Kaplan, 1994). The reactions from friends and colleagues when I mentioned I was going to take a job in Rwanda in 2002, then three years later, that I was going to conduct research there for my PhD, demonstrated to me that Rwanda continued to be immediately associated with genocide, horror and hopelessness over a decade on.

Yet, “[c]ontrary to the impression conveyed [...], the history of Rwanda does not begin in 1994” (Lemarchand, 2002, p. 500). And, I would add, neither does it end there. Accordingly, part of the purpose of this thesis is to dilute the strength of the automatic and solitary association of the words “Rwanda” with “genocide” in order to see more clearly what has been going on in Rwanda *since* the genocide. This is important for at least three reasons. First, because the focus of academics and of the wider “International Community” has tended to remain on the massacres of 1994, this has overshadowed the ambitious and complex reconciliation process led by the post-1994 Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-dominated government.

Second, when reconciliation *is* talked about, it is the official government line that tends to dominate all others. This government discourse on reconciliation, or the “public transcript” to use Scott’s terminology (Scott, 1990), is analysed in the thesis and shown to be fairly ambitious, progressive and coated with optimistic language. But, as this thesis also shows, the official discourse makes use of and entrenches a victim-victimizer dichotomy. Thus for example, Rwandans are depicted as victims and the International Community, as victimizers; another version has all Tutsi as victims, and all Hutu as victimizers. The corresponding association – that victims cannot also be victimizers – is strengthened by the same token (Eltringham and Van Hoyweghen, 2000). Yet, this public transcript, used to

legitimate the government's rule, does not fully or accurately represent social reality on the ground.

A third reason why the post-1994 period merits more attention is the fact that many government (and donor) policies have been linked to, if not justified in the name of “reconciliation” – a word which, similarly to “peace”, tends to garner instinctive support. However, this thesis will show that reconciliation itself is never clearly defined. This lack of clarity is not particular to Rwanda. Indeed, the reconciliation literature itself is characterised by a lack of consistent theoretical frameworks with which to think about the concept. As an upshot, there is a lack of thorough empirical evidence on which to base any assessment of “how reconciliation is going” in Rwanda (or elsewhere) – something which has nonetheless not precluded critics and supporters of the post-1994 government alike from making assessments on progress made and prognoses for the future.

For these reasons, this thesis seeks to unpack, re-examine and assess the problematic concept of reconciliation. A review of the post-1994 period in Rwanda, as well as a discussion of methods and the state of the reconciliation literature, are provided here, in Part I. Underpinning this study is an early realisation that reconciliation is best understood not as a static concept, but as shorthand for different parties' competing agendas, perceptions and discourses. Accordingly, in Part II, I document, analyse and compare different “constituencies'” perceptions of, and discourses on reconciliation. I then explore what factors appear to promote and/or hinder reconciliation, based on an in-depth study of two rural communities in southern Rwanda, in Part III. Importantly, this permits a debunking of some of the more persistent misconceptions and what I term “sloppy thinking” on reconciliation after violent conflict, and on Rwandan politics and society, in Part IV.

Chapter 1: Rwanda since 1994

Introduction

“The limitations of any field of study are most strikingly revealed in its shared definitions of what counts as relevant.” (Scott, 1985, xv) This sentence was written about the less glamorous, indeed often invisible “everyday forms of peasant resistance”, which had been neglected in the literature on peasantry in favour of a study of the exceedingly rare, but allegedly “more relevant” instances of peasant rebellions and revolutions. The same statement can be made with equal validity in the case of Rwanda and the genocide that occurred there in 1994. In this study, I concern myself with the immediate and solitary association of “Rwanda” with “genocide”, and the neglect of the post (and pre!) 1994 period this has led to in the academic world specifically. Indeed, the post-1994 period has – albeit perhaps understandably – received remarkably less attention than the genocide itself. Yet it has been characterised by an important array of social, political, legal and economic processes, reforms, and institution-building. It has also been characterised by a return to some form of “normalcy”, often misconstrued as “peace”. This very normalcy has perhaps contributed to its “low profile” and certainly to making it inherently less sexy than the spectacular revolutions, or in this instance, genocides of the past.

My aims for the present chapter are two-fold. First, I will provide the reader with a succinct background of some of the formal developments – i.e. institutions, policies, laws, etc. – that have been set up in Rwanda since, and as response to, the 1994 genocide. In so doing, I will draw attention to the extent to which many of the seminal events of the post-1994 period – be it the military campaigns in Zaire/DRC, the “controlled democratisation” under the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) government, or more obviously, the establishment of international (ICTR) and domestic “traditional” jurisdictions to try crimes of genocide (the grassroots *gacaca* courts, pronounced *ga-cha-cha*) – have been linked to or justified in terms of a larger, overarching reconciliation process. Second, I propose a research agenda where this nebulous yet ubiquitous concept of “reconciliation” will be re-examined and unpacked. I also begin an important discussion on approaches and methods, and on the limits inherent in conducting research on a relatively underdeveloped field of study, conducting research on a sensitive topic, and conducting research in the specific context of Rwanda.

1.1 After the Carnage: Major Developments in the 1994-2006 Period

The New Ruling Elite

The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the armed wing of the RPF, is the force that swept through the country and stopped the genocide in July 1994 when the rest of the world largely “stood by and did nothing”.¹ Unsurprisingly, members of the RPF therefore see themselves as “liberators” and “heroes”: the civil war that began on 1 October 1990 (the date of the first – then, rebel – RPA attack on Rwandan soil) and that was still raging as the genocide began on 7 April 1994 is referred to as the “Liberation War” by the RPF, and all soldiers who died during the Liberation War (known collectively as the “Unknown Fallen Soldier”) as well as the late RPA leader Fred Rwigyema are commemorated every year on National Heroes Day (AFP, 1997; The New Times, 2006). What is more, and as will be seen below, RPF members have come to see themselves as the only people who can and should guarantee the country’s security, having developed since 1994 a “strong sense of their own moral rectitude and right to rule” (Longman and Rutagengwa, 2004, p. 162). Lastly, as a rebel group comprised mostly, though not exclusively, of Rwandan Tutsi refugees who had fled Rwanda in waves from 1959 onwards, RPF members put an emphasis on “reconciliation” from the group’s inception in 1987: “[c]onsolidating national unity and reconciliation” is the first point in the RPF’s founding document, the Eight Point Plan (see Appendix 3, and Chapter 3 more generally). As this review of the 1994-2006 period will show, the RPF’s emphasis on its own indispensability, and on the imperative of reconciliation, have been maintained. The RPF-dominated government’s policy decisions must therefore be seen in this light.

A Note on “How Many Perpetrators”

There is perhaps discomfort or hesitation on the part of some academics who have been writing on Rwanda since the genocide to acknowledge the participation, even the initiative, that came “from below” during the massacres (Mamdani, 2001). Indeed, most studies on the genocide have emphasised the role of political and social elites, various armed groups

¹ Though there is no question that the RPF/A stopped the genocide, I wish to acknowledge here the controversy over their potential responsibility for it, including by “provoking” the regime of then President Habyarimana through a military offensive on Rwanda starting in October 1990 (Kuperman, 2004), the allegations that RPA leader, and now President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame ordered the shooting down of the plane carrying President Habyarimana on 6 April 1994 (Ruzibiza, 2005), and how the RPA’s choice of military tactics betrayed an emphasis on capturing territory over saving civilian lives – despite knowledge of the genocidal massacres being carried out (Dallaire, 2003; Ruzibiza, 2005).

including the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) and the famous *Interahamwe* militia, and of hate media.² Though it is now widely accepted that this “high-level” agency was a key catalyst, focusing on the top level exclusively is one-sided. As more research on the “micro-level” agency of the genocide is published, and as the grassroots *gacaca* courts tasked with collecting information on, and trying, “génocidaires” (genocide perpetrators) progress in their work, who participated in the genocide, when, and how, may become increasingly better documented and, perhaps, better understood as well.³ Yet, it is doubtful that a consensus figure on “how many perpetrators” will ever be arrived at. This is because the number itself is highly politicised and loaded.

The RPF government has issued several estimates of the number of génocidaires over the years. In the first months of 2005 for example, government estimates topped 1 million (Asiimwe, 2005; Mail and Guardian, 2005).⁴ Based on data collected by the body created to oversee the *gacaca* courts, the Service National des Juridictions Gacaca (SNJG), this was revised, later in the year, down to “over 700,000” (Gabirol, 2005; SNJG, 2005).⁵ These figures (700,000 and 1 million) correspond roughly to between 61% and 88% of all adult (14 years or older in 1994) Hutu men: a startlingly statistic.⁶ The SNJG broke these numbers down further in a June 2005 presentation in Kigali where it stated that: (i) 11.5% of people accused in *gacaca* at the time had been put in the first category (worst crimes); (ii) 61.6% of people accused had been put in the second category; and (iii) 26.9%, in the third (SNJG, 2005).⁷ In other words, this meant that “regular” perpetrators – a turn of

² A partial list would include Chrétien, Dupaquier et al. (1995), Prunier (1995), DesForges (1999), Hintjens (1999) and Melvern (2004).

³ Research on the “micro-level” of the genocide, i.e. the motives of individual perpetrators and the local-level dynamics of the massacres, has been carried out by a small but growing number of young scholars (see Mironko, 2004a; Straus, 2004a; McDoom, 2005; Fujii, 2006). At the time of fieldwork, the Rwandan government body in charge of *gacaca* courts, the SNJG, intended to enter all the information from the grassroots courts into a central database, funded (at least in part) by the Belgians, which, if made available to researchers, would yield the richest data to date on the “micro-level” of the genocide (Belgian Technical Cooperation representative, Personal communication).

⁴ One million is already significantly lower than earlier estimates: Mamdani describes the ballooning of génocidaires estimates given to him by government authorities he interviewed in 1995 (three to four million) and 1997 (four to five million – see Mamdani, 2001, p. 266).

⁵ Strauss published an article methodically outlining the various steps in his calculations – the only study to do this that I am aware of. He comes up with an estimate of 200,000 génocidaires (Straus, 2004b).

⁶ I calculated the percentages based on a total population figure of 8,648,248, of which 50% is male, and of those, 33% were 14 years or older at the time of the genocide (demographic figures cited in Muia, Dec 2005).

⁷ See Appendix 2 for descriptions of Category 1, 2 and 3 crimes as defined by Organic law no 16/2004.

phrase used to depict those accused of Category 2 and 3 crimes, i.e. not the “big génocidaires” – are actually likely to represent the vast bulk of all génocidaires: 88.5% or 619,500 if we work from a total figure of 700,000. Regardless of accuracy, this foreshadows that the RPF leadership considers it is faced with a complicit population – though not necessarily one that will (continue to) be legally held responsible for its actions, as Chapter 3 will detail.

What is more, these various estimates detract from the arguments of those critics who tend to depict the RPF purely as power-hungry. Indeed, the figures explain (though do not justify) the RPF government’s distrust of “winner-take-all” majoritarian politics and its early and total consolidation of control over the country (outlined below). By the same token however, the génocidaires estimates foreshadow a clear tendency, which we will come back to in subsequent chapters, to allocate guilt for the genocide collectively, to all Hutu. But, inasmuch as the RPF leadership believes these estimates to be roughly accurate, they help us understand, and reinforce the necessity to acknowledge, the RPF’s belief in its own “moral rectitude”, “indispensability” and “right to rule”.

Fighting Divisionism via Controlled Democratisation

In light of the above, it is unsurprising that the RPF would wish to exercise maximum control over a population that is, according to *gacaca* figures, largely complicit in the genocide – though to differing degrees.⁸ In the name of defending security and promoting reconciliation, there has therefore been a “controlled” democratisation process since 1994 and even a “criminalisation” of any deviation from the RPF party line.⁹

There is much evidence of the degree of control exercised by the RPF: its early and continued domination of all the organs of the State is one case in point. Indeed, the first

⁸ Dorsey explains that this “concern for controlling people” has been a characteristic of the RPF since its creation; “the genocide appears as an amplifier and a crystalliser rather than the trigger for the style of governance.” (Dorsey, 2000, p. 312)

⁹ This has been extensively documented by numerous NGO and human rights monitoring groups (ICG, 2002; Rwanda Monitoring Project, 2002; HRW, 2003a; Amnesty International, 2003b; ChristianAid, 2004), donor government reports and reports commissioned by these same donor governments (Mission d'observation électorale de l'Union Européenne, 2003; Samset and Orrvar, 2003; US Department of State, 2006a), and long-term Rwanda observers (Lemarchand, 1998; Africa Confidential, 2004a; Reyntjens, 2006). The link between control and promoting reconciliation is made explicit in the title of a Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper: “Preparing for Elections: Tightening Control in the Name of Unity” (HRW, 2003a)

post-genocide government was to have been established on the basis of provisions found in the 1993 Arusha Accords and the 1991 Rwandan Constitution, allowing for power to be shared among the RPA, the MRNDD (Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement) party of former President Juvénal Habyarimana, and the handful of other parties that had emerged since 1991.¹⁰ But major modifications contained in a 17 July 1994 declaration and November 1994 multi-party protocol of understanding were undertaken by the RPF (HRW, 2003a; UK Home Office, 2004, paragraph 4.9). Some, like the exclusion of individuals and political parties associated with the masterminding and carrying out of the genocide, were not contentious. The extremist Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) and the MRNDD were excluded on these grounds. But others, such as the introduction of a strong executive presidency and the redrawing of the composition of parliament, were very contentious (ICG, 2002; Reyntjens, 2006). The resulting government, with an RPF President, Minister of Defence (and Vice President), and a strong majority of seats in Parliament “illustrated the RPF’s domination of the State institutions as well as the political importance of the armed forces”, also dominated by the RPF (Kimonyo, Twagiramungu et al., 2004, p. 6).¹¹

A series of flights into exile by prominent public figures, who were then typically branded as corrupt, or adherents to “genocide ideology” (more on this expression below), or both, has been another indicator of the degree of control exercised by the government. Among the earliest and best known cases here is that of the first post-genocide Prime Minister, Faustin Twagiramungu. As per the provisions of Arusha, Twagiramungu was from the Mouvement démocratique républicain (MDR) party. Barely one year after acceding to his post, in August 1995, he fled the country “citing the consolidation of power around the RPF, discrimination against both Hutu and Tutsi, and human rights violations.” (Frontline, 2005, p. 8)¹² As the party of the first President of Rwanda after Independence,

¹⁰ Multi-partyism was introduced to Rwanda in 1991, under heavy international pressure.

¹¹ The government in 1994 featured the RPF’s Pasteur Bizimungu as President; the post of Vice-president was created and awarded to the RPF’s main military tactician and “homme fort” (Prunier, 1993, p. 134), Paul Kagame, who also became Defence Minister (and later President); and the Army (dominated by the RPA) was allotted six seats in Parliament. For details of the composition of the Transitional National Assembly, see ICG, 2002, especially Annex E.

¹² Several other public figures fled in 1995, including another two prominent Hutu transitional government members: Interior Minister Seth Sedashonga (a Hutu RPF member, assassinated in Nairobi in 1997) and

the MDR was the only serious potential counterweight to the RPF after the genocide.¹³ It also represented a challenge to one of the central tenets of the RPF reading of Rwandan history: namely, that the ethnic categories of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are pure constructs (cf. Chapter 3). Indeed, MDR members saw themselves as inheritors of the “social revolution” of 1959, which led to the emancipation of the Hutu majority from the Tutsi minority, and to Independence – “conventional” numbers for the ethnic breakdown of the country place the Hutu at 85%, the Tutsi at 14% and the Twa at 1%. Not only did this reading of history undermine the “minority Tutsi” RPF’s legitimacy as a ruling party, it also glorified a period which RPF ideologues see as “a long genocide from 1960 to 1994 and even beyond” (Sebasoni, undated [2004?]).

The introduction of a law in 2001 banning “divisionism” – at times also referred to as “genocide ideology” or “sectarianism” – cemented the link between dissent and criminal intent, and between dissent and adherence to a genocide project (Republic of Rwanda, 2001b). Though Chapter 3 will show that the RPF’s initial strict imposition of “ethnic amnesia” in public discourse has since (at least on occasion) been softened, for several years the mere mention of the words Hutu or Tutsi had for this reason become taboo, and potentially dangerous. Indeed, it was charges of “divisionism” levelled against the MDR party that led to its *de facto* dissolution in April 2003, a few months before Presidential and legislative elections were held, respectively in August and September of that year.¹⁴ This led the EU to ask for clarification of the term in 2004 (Frontline, 2005), in response to which the Rwandan Foreign Ministry issued a statement stating that the term was perfectly

Justice Minister Alphonse Nkubito. Moreover, during the “crisis of 2000”, the year in which President Bizimungu resigned, Twagiramungu’s successor, Célestin Rwigema (also from the MDR) fled the country (HRW, 2003a), and the party was dissolved three years later (see below). According to an ICG report published in 2002, “[i]n total, since 1995 no fewer than forty Rwandan political leaders have taken the path of exile.” (ICG, 2002, p. 12) This number excludes flights during 2003 – an important election year – and 2004 – the year in which a special parliamentary report on genocide ideology was published (Frontline, 2005).

¹³ The MDR’s Grégoire Kayibanda served as Rwanda’s first President from Independence in 1962, until he was toppled in a 1973 coup by Habyarimana and his associates.

¹⁴ Charges of “divisionism” were levelled against several MDR members by a special Parliamentary commission (Frontline, 2005, p. 13). The following year, in 2004, another special Parliamentary commission report again accused individuals and organisations, this time including international organisations Care and Trocaire, and broadcasters BBC and VOA, of divisionism (République Rwandaise, 2004a, see also this thesis’ Chapter 4).

clear in Kinyarwanda, the language in which national laws are debated and drafted (The New Times, 2004).¹⁵

Though public figures continued to flee every year over the 1994-2006 period, many stayed in-country. Of these, no doubt most were left un-harassed; many may have flourished in their careers and personal ambitions. Nonetheless, there were also cases of documented demotions, defamations, detentions, harassment, and “disappearances” too numerous to ignore. The most high-profile example here is that of Pasteur Bizimungu. Once one of a handful of prominent Hutu RPF members, he was inaugurated as President of Rwanda in 1994. Citing his role as a “hired Hutu” serving “surrounded by Kagame’s insiders”, he resigned in March of 2000 (Rémy and Smith, 2002, my translation).¹⁶ After a lengthy period of house arrest and detention (2002-2004), Bizimungu was eventually tried in 2004 in what has been described as a severely flawed process, and sentenced to fifteen years in prison for treason, illegal possession of a firearm and embezzlement of public funds (HRW, 2004a; US Department of State, 2005).¹⁷

Against this backdrop, several elections were organized, in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2006. Local elections in 1999 were for cell (“Responsables”) and sector (“Conseillers”)-level officials and committees. In 2001, district officials (Mayors) and committees were elected.¹⁸ In 2002, a second round of local elections was held. In 2003 – a major election year representing the end of the transitional period (postponed from 1999) – a Constitutional referendum (May), Presidential (August) and legislative (September) elections were organised. In 2006, local elections were held once again, this time as a result

¹⁵ As we will see in Chapter 3 in the context of the two communities I studied in southern Rwanda, I also find evidence that charges of divisionism and genocide ideology are too easily resorted to, sometimes apparently arbitrarily.

¹⁶ According to Transparency International, a corruption monitoring NGO, his exit “came amid a purge of top officials accused of personal corruption, profiteering and abuse of office that provided political cover for a consolidation of Tutsi elite power around post-genocide strongman Paul Kagame.” (Warigi, G., 2001, p. 71)

¹⁷ He had earlier been charged with “making divisive statements” but those charges were dropped. On 6 April 2007, Bizimungu was released as a result of a presidential pardon. A spokesman for Kagame denied there was any significance to the timing; the following day marked the beginning of the 13th annual commemoration of the genocide (AFP, 2007).

¹⁸ Rwanda’s four main administrative levels are: the *intara* (provinces, headed by Governors or *Préfets*), the *utere* (districts, headed by Mayors), the *imirenge* (sectors, headed by *Conseillers*), and the *utugari* (cells, headed by *Responsables*).

of an administrative reform that impacted the number and borders of provinces, districts, secteurs and cells. One recurring criticism of the local-level (district and below) elections was the absence of secret ballots, which “permit[ted] strong political control” (Kimonyo, Twagiramungu et al., 2004, p. 15).¹⁹ As a result, in many places (Human Rights Watch estimates 45% of all constituencies for the 2001 district elections), the candidate known to have been preferred by the RPF ran unopposed, while incumbent Mayors (named at earlier dates by the RPF government) were re-elected in 80% of localities (HRW, 2002). The pre-2003 elections also took place with no international observers and no independent electoral commission to monitor them (Kimonyo, Twagiramungu et al., 2004). The 2003 Presidential elections, which have also been criticised – most prominently by an EU Electoral Observer Mission (Mission d'observation électorale de l'Union Européenne, 2003) – returned Kagame to the Presidency with a resounding 95.05% of votes cast.²⁰

National Security and the Duty to Prevent Genocide: Military Campaigns in Zaire/DRC

The “controlled democratisation” described above occurred as the RPF government was involved in major military operations in neighbouring Zaire/DRC. Many officials from the genocidal regime, the former government armed forces (ex-FAR), and militia had retreated to Zaire in 1994, along with approximately 1.5 million Rwandan civilians. Some reports estimate that between 1 and 1.2 million refugees crossed the Rwanda-Zaire border within four days, forming a veritable human carpet (Halvorsen, 1999; Erlichman, 2004, p. 65).²¹ The refugee camps set up in eastern Zaire to cater to the needs of this “New Caseload” (NCL) of Rwandan (Hutu) refugees were used by armed elements to regroup, restock and launch attacks on Rwandan soil, with the support of then Zairian President Mobutu Sese

¹⁹ “The queuing system” where voters line up behind the candidate of their choice, was used instead (Uvin, 2001b, p. 180).

²⁰ There were four Presidential candidates in 2003: (1) Paul Kagame of the RPF, (2) Alivera Mukabaramba of the Parti pour le progrès et la concorde (PPC), (3) Jean-Népomuscène Nayinzira (independent), and (4) Faustin Twagiramungu (independent). The PPC withdrew its candidate on the eve of the elections and asked its supporters to vote for Kagame. Twagiramungu and Nayinzira received 3.62% and 1.33% respectively (Samset and Orrvar, 2003, p. 40). The other main political parties, the PL and PSD, supported the RPF candidate and the election complaints commission rejected every case that was brought to it (Samset and Orrvar, 2003, p. 43).

²¹ Frequently cited overall displacement figures for this period are over 2 million refugees and 1 million internally displaced. Refugee camps were also set up in Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi.

Seko.²² This prompted the new Rwandan government, allied with the Ugandans, to support the Congolese rebels led by Laurent Kabila (Lemarchand, 2001). Kabila ousted Mobutu and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in May 1997. Forced, mass repatriations of Rwandan refugees in eastern DRC began even before Kabila took Kinshasa, in November 1996, when between 500,000 and 600,000 refugees returned to Rwanda within one week.²³ The Rwandan army reportedly launched direct attacks on some of the refugee camps. As a result, an unknown number, in the tens of thousands of NCL refugees, were killed, either caught in the crossfire or deliberately targeted (Amnesty International, 2004c). These killings were later found by a UN Investigative Panel to amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity (UN Security Council, 1998). Moreover, hundreds of thousands of NCL refugees are thought to have fled deeper into Zaire during this period. Nonetheless, the ex-FAR and other Rwandan armed groups, at that stage known as the Armée de libération du Rwanda (ALiR), continued to operate on DRC soil, even stepping up their insurgency operations in north-western Rwanda in what came to be referred to as the war against the “infiltrators” (African Rights, 1998).²⁴ In August 1998, after a falling out with their former ally Kabila, Rwandan and Ugandan forces entered the DRC once again, this time in support of a new Congolese rebel movement.²⁵

²² Poorly understanding the politics at play in the camps (or inside Rwanda), the International Community, which had failed to respond to the genocide, at first quickly rushed in to assist the NCL refugees, prompting scathing criticisms by the new government in Kigali that the UN Agencies and NGOs were now “feeding the killers” (Watson, 1994). Even after the arrival of at least 200 humanitarian agencies however, a study commissioned to assess “The International Response to Conflict and Genocide” estimated that “approximately 80,000 people died in the refugee and IDP camps in Zaire, Tanzania and inside Rwanda during 1994, principally from cholera and dysentery. This figure would probably exceed 100,000 among Rwandese refugees in Burundi and Rwandese outside the IDP camps if data were available for these populations.” (JEEAR, 1996, Synthesis Report, Chapter 3) Eventually some agencies, like MSF and IRC, withdrew from the camps, citing the “ethical disaster” this relief operation represented (Chaulia, April 2002). However, the tendency had by now already swung to the other extreme, whereby all “the refugees’ [were branded] as perpetrators of the genocide, and ‘the people inside Rwanda’, [...] as good people, righteous, without blood on their hands.” (Pottier, 1996, p. 405)

²³ Seeing the lack of international response, mass forced repatriations were also carried out by the Tanzanian authorities (Murison, 2003, p. 7).

²⁴ The uprising in north-western Rwanda was crushed in mid-1998, but not before thousands of Rwandan civilians had been killed by the insurgents and, to an unknown degree, by the RPA in its counter-insurgency efforts (African Rights, 1998; Amnesty International, 1997).

²⁵ The war that ensued lasted until 2003, when a power-sharing Transitional Government was set up in Kinshasa. At its height, it drew in the national armies of six African states, including Rwanda and Uganda, who formally withdrew their troops in 2002.

Though the security threat posed by the Rwandan “negative forces” in eastern DRC and north-western Rwanda, as well as their ability to destabilize Rwanda was certainly real during this period (1994-1999), the RPF government began using language that went significantly beyond the duty to defend the national territory.²⁶ Indeed, top Kigali officials including President Kagame made statements that indicated Rwanda’s intention to intervene to stop genocide wherever it might occur. Rwanda’s sending of a small (some 150 soldiers) contingent to serve under the African Union forces in Darfur, Sudan, in 2004 was justified with such language (Beswick, 2007, p. 20-23). The English pro-government *The New Times* newspaper for example, explained that for the RDF (the State Army was renamed the “Rwandan Defence Forces” in 2002), the road to Darfur has been one “long walk” from Kagitumba – the site from which the RPA launched its “Liberation War” in 1990 (The New Times, 2005). However, a much more serious repercussion of this self-ascribed role came in the wake of the August 2004 massacre of ca. 160 Banyamulenge refugees in Gatumba, Burundi.²⁷ Indeed, Rwanda’s interior minister declared at the funeral for the slaughtered refugees that “from now on Rwanda will intervene at any time anywhere to stop genocide.” (Africa Research Bulletin, 2004b, p. 15864) Several more senior government officials, including the President, echoed these words. This was a particularly explosive statement given the implied threat of an imminent re-invasion of the DRC; the Banyamulenge had been repeatedly described by Rwanda and its Congolese proxies as facing “genocidal violence”.²⁸

Justice After Genocide: Courts, Laws and Policies to deal with Génocidaires

Along with establishing security throughout the country (including by pursuing enemies onto Congolese soil), banning and rooting out “genocide ideology”, and carrying out a process of “controlled democratisation”, several important institutions and reforms to deal with the presumed génocidaires were established from the early days of the new government.

²⁶ Rwandan armed elements in the DRC are sometimes collectively referred to by Rwandan authorities as “negative forces”; they themselves have named and renamed their shifting alliances, going since May 2000 by the name Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR – see IRIN, 2005b).

²⁷ Banyamulenge are Congolese ethnic Tutsi from South Kivu.

²⁸ This hints at the “uncritical use of the term genocide to describe just about any kind of ethnic violence” in Rwanda and Burundi (Lemarchand, 1998). I argue that the same can be said of the uncritical use of the terms genocide ideology and divisionism to describe just about any kind of dissent or open disagreement with the RPF party line.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was created by United Nations Security Council Resolution 955 in November 1994, i.e. four months after the end of the genocide (UN Security Council, 1994). Interestingly, in the text of the Resolution, the Security Council noted its conviction that prosecutions would “contribute to the process of national reconciliation and to the restoration and maintenance of peace” (UN Security Council, 1994, Preamble).²⁹ Initially in favour of the court, Rwanda “cast the only vote [...] *opposing* the creation of ICTR” (Cobban, 2002). The new government disagreed with several key points in the Resolution, including the Court’s seat in Tanzania, its sharing of a Chief Prosecutor with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), its rejection of the death penalty, the Court’s mandate excluding pre-1994 events (during which other instances of anti-Tutsi genocidal violence had occurred), and its primacy over Rwandan national courts (ICG, 2001b, p. 19). Bad relations with the government in Kigali, and with major survivors associations such as *Ibuka* (which means “remember” in Kinyarwanda), significantly hampered the functioning of the Court, which was also afflicted with staggering bureaucratic inefficiencies, the alleged hiring of suspected génocidaires as staff, corruption allegations, and scandals involving poor treatment of witnesses (IRIN, 2002; Kaliisa, 2002; ICG, 2003).³⁰ Eventually, relations with the RPF government improved and stabilized with, among other things, cooperation between a new Prosecutor and the government on the handover of whatever files will be remaining after the Court closes.³¹

Whereas the ICTR was intended to try the “high ranking” génocidaires, there remained in Rwanda thousands of prisoners in jail on genocide related charges – as well as

²⁹ At least one signatory country (the Czech Republic) apparently disagreed, explaining that the ICTR “is hardly designed as a vehicle for reconciliation [...] Reconciliation is a much more complicated process” (Maogoto, 2006, p. 1). See in particular Chapter 5, and Tables 20a and 20b (p. 162), for more discussion on this point.

³⁰ When Carla Del Ponte began investigating alleged RPA war crimes soon after becoming Prosecutor in 1999, relations hit a new low, with the RPF government accusing the Court of putting the RPF on the same level as the génocidaires. Del Ponte was *defacto* removed in 2003 when the Prosecutor’s office was (belatedly) split in two (with one Prosecutor for the ICTR and another for the ICTY, see UN Security Council, 2003; Edwards, 2003).

³¹ The “ICTR Completion Strategy” requires the Court to complete its investigations by the end of 2004, complete all trial activities by the end of 2008, and all of its work (including appeals) in 2010 (UN Security Council, 2003).

an unknown (and highly controversial, as we have seen) number of génocidaires in exile or in-country and who had yet to be accused. A genocide law was therefore ratified in 1996; it divided genocide-related offences into four categories (Republic of Rwanda, 1996a) later revised down to three as a result of the experiences gleaned from pilot *gacaca* courts (République Rwandaise, 2004b). As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, this categorisation was a first recognition by the RPF of varying degrees of legal responsibility for the genocide. People accused of Category 1 (worst) crimes were liable to the death penalty, and in April 1998, 22 such executions were carried out publicly in Kigali and other locations, drawing large crowds (Minow, 1998) and widespread international condemnation (BBC, 1998). These were the first and last official executions; the government moved to get rid of the death penalty in early 2007 (The New Times, 2007).³²

Incentives for confessions and guilty pleas, intended to decongest the penal and legal systems, incapable of coping with the volume of accused, were built into the 1996 genocide law, as well as into the subsequent *gacaca* laws (Schabas, 2005). For example, the law made defendants who gave complete confessions – i.e. a description of all their offences, the names of all their accomplices, and importantly, an apology and request for forgiveness³³ – eligible for major sentence reductions, and if Category 1 offenders confessed before they were accused of Category 1 crimes, they were placed in Category 2 instead (Amnesty International, 2002a, p. 18). Despite these efforts, by January 2001, “only” 5,300 trials had been concluded by the Rwandan classical courts, and nine by the ICTR (Betts, 2005, p. 738). It was estimated at the time that the formal justice sector would need over one hundred years to process genocide-related cases (Uvin, 2001b, p. 182).

Faced with this backlog, the government passed a law establishing *gacaca* courts (Republic of Rwanda, 2001a). I used the weekly *gacaca* meetings in the two communities I studied as “windows” or opportunities to observe local dynamics and triangulate data; the

³² Principally in order to facilitate extradition of suspected genocide perpetrators and to allow the transfer of genocide suspects in custody at the ICTR facilities in Arusha (Twahirwa, 2006). Even before Rwanda made moves towards giving up the death penalty, a US diplomat in Kigali confirmed that the government was no longer considering mass executions, such as the ones carried out in 1998, because of the destabilising effects that were anticipated (Personal communication, 20 July 2005).

³³ This “codification” or “institutionalisation” of forgiveness is a theme we will return to, in Chapter 7.

courts themselves were not the subject of my study (see Section 1.2). However, as Chapters 5 through 7 will show, the *gacaca* courts, named after a traditional Rwandan custom of elders mediating disputes between parties sitting “on the grass”, are an uneasy mix of retributive and restorative justice (Betts, 2005; Waldorf, 2006b), and even institutionalized forgiveness.

The courts began operating in 12 “pilot” jurisdictions in June 2002; 260,000 *inyangamugayo* (Kinyarwanda for “persons of integrity”) had been elected by their local communities to sit as judges in October 2001 (African Rights, 2003, p. 2). The courts were progressively expanded until they were implemented nation-wide in March 2005. The cell-level *gacaca* courts had to go through a series of steps in the pre-trial period consisting of fairly tedious and time consuming list making (the “gathering of information” phase) and then cross-checking of these lists (the “validation” phase). The lack of provisions for the defence of alleged perpetrators, the poor training of judges, the failure to respect the principle of “double jeopardy”, and the fact that only crimes of genocide (i.e. “Hutu crimes”) are allowed to be discussed are among the main sources of concern for *gacaca* observers (Amnesty International, 2002a, p. 39; Corey and Joireman, 2004, p. 86; PRI, 2005, p. 44; Wolters, 2005, p. 13; Waldorf, 2006a, p. 59). As the programme was expanded from the original pilot jurisdictions, a number of adjustments, contained in successive *gacaca* laws, were made by government along the way.³⁴ For example, the law was amended to allow people accused of Category 1 crimes to be tried by *gacaca* as well; it had been at first intended that they be tried by the Rwandan formal courts. The first *gacaca* trials began – in the pilot jurisdictions – in 2005 and trials began nation-wide in July 2006. The government had hoped that the work of the *gacaca* courts could be wrapped up before the end of 2007 (Avocats Sans Frontières, Danish Centre for Human Rights et al., 2005; Waldorf, 2006a, p. 54), though some observers found this timeframe unrealistic (DesForges, 2007).

³⁴ The 2004 genocide law (Law n° 16/2004 of 19/06/2004) revises the original, 2001 law on *gacaca* (Law n° 40/2000 of 26/01/2001), which itself was modified and completed by Law n°33/2001 of 22/06/2001.

Building on the genocide and *gacaca* laws' guilty plea procedure, as well as various ad hoc efforts to review the detention of the elderly, ill, "1994 minors" (individuals who were under 18 at the time they allegedly committed their offences), or those with "empty" detainee files (known as the *sans dossiers*, see Amnesty International, 2004a, p. 4), a 1 January 2003 Presidential decree formalized a mass provisional release programme.³⁵ As a result, in exchange for confessions, and after undergoing an *ingando*, also known as "civic re-education" or "solidarity" camps, pre-trial detainees were released provisionally (pending trials in *gacaca*) back into their communities.³⁶ At the time of writing, several waves of mass provisional releases had been carried out, in January 2003 (approx. 22,000 prisoners released), in August 2005 (approx. 20,330), and in February 2007 (approx. 8,000).³⁷ A programme of community work as an alternative to a prison sentence was also put into practice. Known under its French acronym, TIG (for Travaux d'Intérêt Général), a first shift, with approximately 800 former prisoners, was organised in September 2005 – the project involved breaking stones in a quarry in the province of Gitarama, to serve for the construction of a road in Kigali (Hirondelle, 2005b). It is expected that many convicted by the *gacaca* courts will be sent to the community service camps in lieu of serving out the rest of their sentence behind bars. In other words, within the next few months or years – perhaps as early as 2008 – the government expects that the backlog of genocide cases will have been cleared, meaning that all genocide-related cases would have been heard and "most" convicted génocidaires (defined above) would have served their sentences.³⁸

³⁵ These ad hoc decongestion efforts are sometimes informally referred to as "pre-gacaca". Pre-gacaca involved specifically bringing the detainees back to their communities in order to ask their friends, families and neighbours, congregated for the occasion, to divulge whatever information they may have (exculpatory or incriminating). There was from the outset resistance to pre-gacaca from some within the government in Kigali, and it was ultimately stopped in 2003 (US Department of State, 2004).

³⁶ See Appendix 4 for text of the January 2003 Presidential decree.

³⁷ Approximately 4,200 prisoners were released in April 2004, but these releases apparently concerned exclusively people accused of non-genocide related crimes – I therefore do not count them as part of the "mass provisional release programme" mandated by the January 2003 Presidential decree.

³⁸ It is important to depict these as early government expectations - a result of calculations done as *gacaca* was first being rolled out nation-wide in 2006. Indeed, by late 2006, it was already clear that *gacaca* would not only fail in its task of decongesting prisons, but would in fact generate more prisoners. In a presentation given in March 2007, Alison DesForges of Human Rights Watch reported that there were 90,000 prisoners in jail at that time, and that the mass provisional releases could "not keep up" with the *gacaca* courts. Overall, the courts were handing down many sentences, and frequently for the maximum period allowed, i.e. 30 years. In other words, if one excludes the people being detained in "cachots" (holding cells usually adjacent to district offices across the country and for which statistics are difficult to obtain), the prisoner population in Rwanda at that time was at its highest level since the genocide – the exact opposite result the government had hoped for (DesForges, 2007).

“It is time for Rwandans to realize their worth”: Development for Empowerment

Added to this mix has been an ambitious government-led programme for macro-economic reform, development and poverty reduction, which began in earnest around 1999.³⁹ Even though it was considered a “good performer” in the early 1980s, Rwanda was a poor country in the throws of an economic crisis when the genocide decimated the economy and household incomes in 1994 (Uvin, 1998). Unsurprisingly perhaps, Rwanda’s economy had still not reached its performance levels of the early 1980s by 2006 (Ansoms, 2007, p. 372). The country was ranked number 158 in the human development index (out of 177 countries ranked, UNDP, 2006), approximately 90% of the population continued to be engaged in (mainly subsistence) agriculture and 56.9% of Rwandans lived on less than 250 Rwf (Rwandan Francs) per day, i.e. approximately \$0.45 (Ansoms, 2007, p. 373).⁴⁰ Rwanda is famous for being the most densely populated country in Africa; however it is also landlocked, has few natural resources, and minimal industry. Its population growth rate remains high however, at an average of 3.5% per year over the 2000-2006 period.⁴¹

Given this backdrop, the bold objectives of halving poverty rates and achieving universal primary education, in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – and among the stated aims of the RPF government at least as early as 1998 – were even bolder.⁴² What is more, at the time of writing, universal free education was on track for being achieved by 2015, as per the MDG deadline, though results regarding poverty reduction were mixed if not disappointing as will be discussed below. The government had also made the first three years of post-primary education free, a significant achievement even if “non-fee barriers” such as the cost of school uniforms and learning materials,

³⁹ From 1994 to 1998-99, Rwanda was in an “emergency aid” period, where spending priorities were geared towards short-term humanitarian assistance and essential infrastructure (re-)construction (Republic of Rwanda, 2006b; World Bank, 2004). Rwanda entered the World Bank and IMF’s “Poverty Reduction and Strategy Paper” (PRSP) process in 2000 (Ansoms, 2007, p. 371).

⁴⁰ At the time of writing, figures for the more traditional poverty line of \$1 per head per day (at Purchasing Power Parity, or PPP) were not yet available for 2006.

⁴¹ This means that even though the incidence of poverty measured in overall percentage points has decreased since 2000 (when the PRSP process began), in absolute numbers, there are more people living under the poverty line today: the number has increased from 4.8 to 5.4 million over the 2001-2006 period (Republic of Rwanda, 2006a, p. 3).

⁴² An earlier version of the Vision 2020 document (first published in 2000) dates to 1998. Vision 2020 is a document that came as a result of consultations held by the Office of the President beginning in 1998. It is the government’s framework for development, a statement about “what kind of Nation we [Rwandans] want to be in the future.” (Republic of Rwanda, 2000b, para. 1)

remained.⁴³ However, the government's ambitions went significantly further: another aim was to achieve middle-income status for Rwanda by 2020, a path charted out in its Vision 2020 document.⁴⁴ Cornerstones of this strategy included the modernization of agriculture, regional economic integration, the diversification of Rwanda's economy towards knowledge-based industries (with a heavy emphasis on Information and Communication Technology, or ICT), and the fostering of a vibrant private sector and entrepreneurial spirit.⁴⁵

A major component of this long-term development vision is a concomitant decentralization process. Decentralization is first and foremost an economic development strategy in the eyes of the central government. However, it is also a tool to empower Rwandans at "lower" levels of society by involving them in the decisions that affect their communities and everyday lives.⁴⁶ Contained in this logic is a reference to an alleged Rwandan penchant for passivity and obedience, which apparently contributed directly to the genocide (a claim we will revisit in Chapter 7).⁴⁷ The decentralization programme has gone hand-in-hand with successive waves of administrative reforms, where the number and responsibilities of provinces are gradually reduced and the new focus for decision-making and economic development activities become the districts, which are "closer to the population". Accordingly, in a 2001 administrative reform, even more "local authorities"

⁴³ See Ministry of Education website, under "Strategic Priorities", "Fee-free education", <http://www.mineduc.gov.rw/>, last accessed on 1 July 2007.

⁴⁴ Bringing poverty rates (defined as living on less than \$1 per head per day) from 64% in 2000, to 30% in 2020 (Republic of Rwanda, 2002b, Table 2, p. 9).

⁴⁵ Rwanda's government before 1994 has been described as socialist, and its economy was largely state-owned (World Bank, 2004, v and para. 1.3).

⁴⁶ "Lower" level Rwandans are sometimes also referred to as "le bas peuple", an expression I will introduce in Chapter 5. The decentralization process concretely invites local residents, through district-level Community Development Committees (CDCs), which regroup district authorities and elected local representatives, to map out, prioritise, plan and implement their communities' development activities (Republic of Rwanda, 2001c).

⁴⁷ According to the National Decentralization Policy (May 2001 version) for example, "[p]assivity, lack of initiative and dependency syndrome on the part of the majority of the population" still characterised Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda, 2001c, p. 4). The PRSP similarly states that "[o]pen debate with collective responsibility for development needs to replace the culture of passive obedience" (Republic of Rwanda, 2002b, para. 10). "[B]ringing the population to participate in the policy and decision making process" is one of the main tasks of the Ministry of Local Government, which oversees the decentralisation and community development efforts (see MINALOC website, <http://www.minaloc.gov.rw/>, last accessed on 14 February 2007).

and “representative bodies” were created.⁴⁸ One upshot of such reforms is that there are now so many local authorities, that it can be argued that a sharp distinction between “the population” and “local authorities” is arbitrary.⁴⁹ Another aim of these administrative reforms is the removal of names associated with “bad history”, “bad governance” and the genocide, as well as with “regional” identities (north versus south in particular). For example, in January 2006, Rwanda’s 12 provinces, including some with loaded names such as Ruhengeri (Habyarimana’s home region – a Hutu region in the north) and Butare (the former intellectual capital, a southern Tutsi region) were replaced with four large provinces named North, East, South (which includes Butare, and my two research sites) and West, along with the municipality of Kigali.⁵⁰

On the whole, the RPF government’s record in the domains of economic and social development, unlike its record on justice, human rights and foreign policy (toward the DRC in particular – see above) has received very positive reviews from the donor community, and in particular the International Financial Institutions (the IFIs), namely the World Bank and IMF.⁵¹ According to one report, this is because the RPF government and the IFIs share the same economic development aspirations, as well as operating assumptions on how to best achieve these (namely “a strong technocratic and liberal economic policy outlook”, see Baaré, A., D. Shearer, et al., 1999, para. 140). The IMF also highlighted Rwanda’s “effective anti-crime and, more specifically, anti-corruption strategies” (IMF, 2005, para. 90). The IFIs further largely praised the PRSP document itself and, in their annual “joint staffs assessments”, the RPF government’s Annual Progress Reports (IMF and IDA, 2005;

⁴⁸ For example, the reform established *ndjanama*, which groups the Coordinateurs (formerly and still commonly referred to as Conseillers, or *Konseye*) of each sector in a given district. What is more, seven to nine people are elected by the *ndjanama* to sit on the *nyobozi*, including a representative for women, youth, a chargé of information and of security. The *nyobozi* represents the population at district-level. Finally, these *ndjanama* and *nyobozi* also exist at sector-level, involving another set of individuals.

⁴⁹ The Mayor of the district in which my two research sites were located acknowledged this when he said: “[t]here is a tendency to say ‘the population is not telling the truth (in *gacaca*)’. But who is ‘the population’? When we take the *nyumbakumi* [head of traditionally ten or so households on one hill], the *inyangamugayo* [*gacaca* judges] etc. who is left in the population? We should say ‘we are not telling the truth.’” (Meeting for all *gacaca* judges from Maraba District, Gihindamuyaga, Maraba, 28 September 2005)

⁵⁰ Butare was once Rwanda’s second city and still houses the historically important Université Nationale du Rwanda.

⁵¹ This foreshadows the distinction made, by both donors and the RPF government, between “technical” (economic and social development) and “political” (security, domestic political space) areas. As this review shows, cooperation in matters falling under the former category can be very good while at the same time, those falling in latter category are deemed off-limits.

IMF and IDA, 2006). According to the UK Department for International Development (DFID) figures, “[e]conomic growth [in Rwanda] averaged over 10% per annum between 1994 and 2004, the second highest in Africa, while GDP per capita growth, at 5.3%, was the third highest in Africa over the same period.” (DFID Country Profiles) As we will see in more detail in Chapter 4, Rwanda’s development and poverty reduction efforts have contributed to encouraging major donors such as the UK to deliver two-thirds of its total aid (£46 million in 2005/06 and again in 2006/07) as direct budget support (DBS) – considered a more “mature” form of aid.

However, a study of the broader (academic) literature leaves the reader with a decidedly more mixed, if not negative verdict on the RPF’s economic development and poverty reduction record. According to one review of the Rwandan PRSP, economic growth over the 2001-2006 period (the period covered by the first PRSP) has been neither self-reliant nor sustainable. Indeed Rwanda’s growth was apparently fueled by aid flows that are substantial and that “largely exceed the sub-Saharan average”, whereas the GDP growth rate averages are misleading because they incorporate “exceptional growth figures in the first [post-war] years” (Ansoms, 2007, p. 372).⁵² Furthermore, growth was only extremely modestly “pro-poor” (Ansoms and Marysse, 2004)⁵³ and inequalities, particularly intra-rural inequalities, had increased in all provinces (Justino and Verwimp, 2006, Ansoms, 2007).⁵⁴ This last point on inequality matters a lot in terms of certain

⁵² For example, using IMF data, Ansoms cites an average annual growth rate for the 2001-2006 period of 4.6%, which represents 2.7% in per capita terms (p. 372). These figures do not contradict DFID’s 10% and 5.3% figures for the 1994-2004 period; rather, they speak potently to the importance of looking carefully at figures when averages are involved.

⁵³ Using data from two household surveys conducted in 1984-85 and 1999-2001, supplemented by government and World Bank data for some of the intervening years, Ansoms and Marysse conclude that “[i]n the actual [post-war] context [...], the Rwandese poor only slightly benefit from growth, while a mostly small and often urban elite enjoys the advantageous effect of increasing economic activity.” (Ansoms and Marysse, 2004)

⁵⁴ Justino and Verwimp compare pre and post-genocide data to show that, overall, poverty in the rural areas remains more or less the same, that poverty dynamics vary strongly across provinces, and that inequality has increased in all provinces (Personal communication with Verwimp, 11 April 2006, Justino and Verwimp, 2006). Ansoms reports a decrease in rural-urban and intra-urban disparities, and an increase in intra-rural disparities. She explains the first by referencing policies, such as forcible removals of street children and the formalised land and housing policies in urban areas, which force poor groups out of cities. In terms of urban-rural inequalities, she cites high-level civil servants moving to local centres in the country-side as a result of the decentralisation process, as well as the Rwandan land and agriculture policies which benefit larger-scale farmers. Lastly, to explain increasing intra-rural inequalities, she argues that the benefits of agricultural

groups' perceptions and attitudes towards reconciliation, as we will see in Chapter 4, in the section on Rwandan non-government elites in particular.

However, despite a substantial body of literature arguing that acute poverty (compounded by demographic pressure and land degradation), inequality, and exclusion were among the factors that contributed to making the 1994 genocide possible (Longman, 1995; André and Platteau, 1998; DesForges, 1999; Verwimp, 2003a), the RPF government did not stress poverty reduction, or growth, or decreased inequality as in and of themselves paths to reconciliation. Indeed, as Chapter 3 details and as a review of key planning documents such as the PRSP, the Vision 2020, and the Decentralization Policy shows, reconciliation is seen as about improving minds and mindsets first and foremost, and about improving life conditions as a distant second (indeed, ninth according to Table 6, cf. p. 82). Reconciliation – defined as the “right mindset” – is at times even considered a precursor to poverty-reduction and economic development. The Vision 2020 explains for example that “[t]hey [most Rwandans] sincerely think that [...] national reconciliation and unity [...] constitute a precondition for the harmonious development of the country.” (Republic of Rwanda, 2002a, para. 69) For the RPF government, reconciliation therefore appears to be of a more ideational or psychological, rather than material, nature – foreshadowing the societal transformation project more fully described in Chapter 3.

Harnessing Rwandan Tradition to Foster Reconciliation

Gacaca courts, provisional releases, the TIG, economic development and decentralization programmes are but some of a host of interlocking policies that have been rolled out at a dizzying rate by the RPF government since 1994. A National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), which had been called for in the 1993 Arusha Accords, was set up in 1999 and tasked with organising summits and broad-ranging “popular consultations” on reconciliation with Rwandans from all walks of life (NURC, April 2004, p. 2). The above-mentioned *ingando* (the “re-education”, or “solidarity” camps) were revived and institutionalised; indeed, “traditionally”, when “Rwandans faced big problems, like famine or drought in the land for example, they looked for the causes and the solutions together [at

growth accrue mostly to the already better-off, concluding that “the pro-poor character of agricultural growth is extremely limited.” (Ansoms, 2007, p. 375)

these ‘retreats’] and all the citizens were engaged in problem-solving.” (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 2) In the 2003 Constitution, a new institution called *abunzi* or “conciliators” was introduced. Committees of conciliators – one per sector – mediate small disputes primarily surrounding land and family issues (no genocide-related disputes may be heard, see Republic of Rwanda, 2003, art. 159). In my two research sites in southern Rwanda, these Committees began operating in late 2004.

All of these institutions and practices seek a return to “genuine” Rwandan values and customs. This is part of a broader rejection of “Western ways” and the West’s moral authority – the International Community, and several key big powers who sit as permanent members on the UN Security Council, are regularly chastised by the post-1994 government for their inaction during the genocide (if not complicity, particularly in the case of France – see Melvern, 2000). This recurring RPF call for Rwandan, and pan-African, emancipation – to solve their own problems and meet their own needs – will be returned to in Chapter 3.

Hints of “Hidden Transcripts”: Buried Tensions in Rwandan Society

I have outlined here some of the main policies, institutions and laws that have been implemented since, and often explicitly associated with the drive to promote “reconciliation” after 1994. As already mentioned, there has to date been no systematic evidence gathered with which to evaluate the impact of these various initiatives on reconciliation – a weakness this thesis as a whole seeks to address. It is nonetheless important to point out from this early stage that several events during the 1994-2006 period have been suggestive of buried tensions “on the hills” (referring to the countryside, and to the country’s topography) – on top of the tensions already described between different political elites in Kigali. What is also important to point out is the way the government has formulated and spread its own interpretation of these events, recalling Pottier’s description of the RPF as astute, subtle, and persuasive “knowledge producers”, “information managers”, and “argument guiders” (Pottier, 2002).

The outflux between March 2005, i.e. the start of the trial phase (in the pilot *gacaca* courts), and March 2006 of some 18,000 peasant farmers towards Burundi can be seen to

illustrate this point (Majtenyi, 2006).⁵⁵ Access to the sites hosting the Rwandans in Burundi was immediately heavily restricted by both governments and concurrently, the RPF began making announcements on the motives, numbers and demographics of this group. First, the Minister of Local Government announced that the “fugitives” were being recruited into rebel factions (presumably the Rwandan Hutu FDLR rebels): “we have got concrete information of these people who are [sic] mobilizing” (Xinhua News Agency, 2005). Then, the government issued a press release stating that: “[f]ollowing the nationwide launch of Gacaca on January 15, 2005 and the beginning of Gacaca trials on March 10, 2005, some people suspected of being involved in the 1994 genocide realized that there was nowhere they could hide from their crimes. [...] They are simple fugitives from justice and not refugees.” (Republic of Rwanda, 2005b) Finally, and in the face of international condemnation, a first forced repatriation was conducted in June 2005.⁵⁶ An unknown number of the refugees, in the thousands, returned to Burundi a few weeks later, prompting Burundi to label all Rwandans in-country “illegal migrants” and threaten to expel them once more.

However, the limited investigations that were allowed to be carried out in the camps painted quite a different picture. According to Human Rights Watch, whose reports on the incident have been published, “most [of the people who had fled] were women and children”, with about half of the total number being children (HRW, 2005a). Though some may have fled out of fear of facing sentences for their crimes, the women and children who fled cited that they had been threatened by local officials and genocide survivors, and were worried about receiving unfair treatment in *gacaca* (HRW, 2005b). A UNHCR staff member who had had the opportunity to tour the temporary camps confirmed to me privately the demographics of the group and their self-reported motives for fleeing (UNHCR Rwanda representative, Personal communication). The demographics in particular suggest that many of the people who fled to Burundi did so out of fear for their personal safety, and not because of complicity in crimes of genocide. This at the very least

⁵⁵ A smaller number, in the low thousands, fled to Uganda and Tanzania during the same period (HRW, 2005a).

⁵⁶ Significantly, the forced repatriation had no concrete impact on aid flows or diplomatic relations, attesting to the latitude Rwanda is given by its major donors and the broader International Community on all issues related to the genocide. This is expanded on in Chapter 4.

casts doubt over the validity of the RPF's version of events and the state of social relations in these communities. It also shows once again the RPF use of an implied victim-victimiser dichotomy: here, dissent or non-compliance to government directives (i.e. to repatriate) automatically disqualifies one's "victim" status, placing one firmly in the camp of the victimiser.

Not intended as a comprehensive history, the aim of Section 1.1 has been to underscore the centrality of the concept of reconciliation during the post-1994 period – one that has tended to be overshadowed and under-analysed. Several important omissions have been made for space purposes. The survivor's fund, FARG (the French acronym for the Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors, established by Organic Law n° 02/98 of 22/01/1998) was not mentioned. Equally not discussed were the land law (Organic Law No. 08/2005 of 14/7/2005) and housing or villagisation policy known as *imidugudu* (adopted by the Rwandan Cabinet in December 1996) – both intended to manage Rwanda's growing land shortage while improving services to citizens – and the intimidation and cooptation of civil society and the media in Rwanda over this same (1994-2006) period. However, the fact that there is no consensus on what reconciliation means – a claim Chapter 2 will substantiate – combined with the fact that in post-genocide Rwanda, the word is nonetheless used to justify an authoritarian style of governance, a series of military campaigns, and a host of domestic policies, *inter alia*, reinforces the salience of the thesis. Several decisions on methods and approaches were taken in the course of designing this study, and we turn to a discussion of these, and their limitations, now.

1.2 On Research Design, Methods and Limitations

The basic premise of this thesis is that reconciliation can mean different things to different people at different times. In other words, as Wilson (2001), van der Merwe (1999) and Borer (2004) have separately argued with respect to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a reconciliation process embodies competing agendas, perceptions, discourses and expectations. Accordingly, and as Chapter 2 will show, in order to answer the question "is the reconciliation process succeeding in Rwanda" – by far the

most frequent question I received from my various audiences and interlocutors – I had to first determine “succeeding according to whom?”

Thesis Structure

After introducing the topic and the literature in Part I (i.e. in Chapters 1 and 2), I explore what reconciliation means to different “constituencies” in the Rwandan context; this is the remit of Part II of the thesis. Accordingly, Chapter 3 documents and analyses how the word reconciliation has been used by the RPF government, and specifically by President Kagame. This “public transcript”, whose emphases, nuances and evolution over time have to my knowledge never been systemically examined, is important to understand given the RPF’s self-ascribed central role in the reconciliation process. Such an analysis also provides insights into the RPF’s understanding of Rwandan history and society – and how these understandings have evolved as well since the RPF rose to power. Alternative “elite” discourses are the remit of Chapter 4, where the interpretations and expectations of a small sample of non-government Rwandan elites in two urban or semi-urban centres (Kigali and Butare respectively) on the one hand, and those of the top five donors to the country on the other, are presented. Finally, Chapter 5 documents the interpretations and expectations of some of the residents of two rural communities, Sovu and Bunzazi (in the southern district of Maraba) vis-à-vis reconciliation.

In Part III, and using these two rural communities as case studies, I then tackle the important question of “what seems to work?”, or in other words, what factors appear to have promoted (or hindered) the reconciliation process in these two specific localities. Chapter 6 is devoted to “micro” or individual, and “meso” or community-level factors; Chapter 7 covers the “macro-level” or the interaction between the local and the national, revisiting the contentious received image of the Rwandan peasant as passive and obedient.

Finally, I return to the question “Is reconciliation succeeding?” in Chapter 8 (Part IV). In doing so, what is of value is not the “assessment” or “status report” itself, but the lessons the Rwandan experience to date may hold for the country in future, as well as for other post-conflict settings. As a corollary and equally as importantly, this assessment also provides an opportunity to debunk some of the more persistent misconceptions on post-

genocide Rwanda’s politics and society and what I term “sloppy thinking” in the literature on reconciliation. In fact, the research findings even point to the limits of the concept of reconciliation itself, particularly its utility (or lack thereof) as a policy tool. Indeed, in the concluding section of Chapter 8, I defend the position of avoiding the term altogether in post-conflict contexts, perhaps in favour of a less ambitious, and less ambiguous term such as coexistence.

Table 1: Research Questions Guiding the Study

Q	Research Question	Thesis Structure
1	What does reconciliation mean to different constituencies in the Rwandan context?	Part II
2	Which factors appear to promote, and which factors appear to impede the reconciliation process? (A case study of two communities in Maraba.)	Part III
3	Is the Rwandan reconciliation project “succeeding”? What are the policy implications? The theory implications/for the literature?	Part IV

National-level Research

To answer my research questions (see Table 1: Research Questions Guiding the Study), I conducted fieldwork research in Rwanda from June to December 2005. I spent the first half of this six-month period based in Kigali, where I interviewed several RPF government and donor representatives. Using a snow-balling technique and relying on my personal network of friendships and word of mouth, I also conducted in-depth interviews with 18 Rwandan opinion leaders, which I refer to as “non-government elites”, in Kigali and in Butare.

This was a preparatory period during which I recruited a research assistant (a university-educated Hutu man in his forties) and selected the two communities in which I would conduct an in-depth study. I describe the selection process in more detail in Chapter 3, but the main idea was for central (Kigali) and/or provincial authorities (it was often the same people, I quickly found, that moved between these posts) to select these research sites for me, by giving suggestions of “good” communities where reconciliation was going well, and “bad” communities where reconciliation was going badly. I purposively left “good” and “bad” undefined in order to see how my government interlocutors themselves would define the terms. I chose in the end to work with the suggestions that came out of Butare

province: the sectors of Sovu and Bunzazi were respectively chosen to represent “bad” and “good” reconciliation processes.

Finally, during this first half of the fieldwork period I spent a significant amount of time obtaining various research permissions. I had to obtain permission from the Ministry of the Interior for myself and my research assistant to conduct interviews in prisons. I also required permission from the SNJG to sit-in on *gacaca* sessions, and permission from the NURC to attend the *ingando* sessions for released prisoners that were occurring just as my fieldwork period in Maraba was beginning (end of August 2005). I also had to obtain general research permission from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Local Government (MINALOC). Every researcher in Rwanda needs to obtain this permission if s/he intends to conduct research outside Kigali, “on the hills”. A research proposal is required as is an audience with a senior MINALOC official, in my case the Minister himself. I then had to get this research authorisation stamped by the Préfet, the provincial authority, and subsequently introduce myself and present said authorisation to the district Mayor. The requirement of some sort of authorisation, even for a small-scale PhD project, is not that remarkable in itself. But I was struck by the fact that this particular research permission was required not as a visa formality before one enters the country, but once in-country and only, in essence, when intending to interview Rwandan peasants. That it had to be granted by a Minister (incidentally, an RPF insider and founding member) was another sign of the degree of control I have described in Section 1.1, and of broader continuities in State-society relations, which I explore in Chapter 7.

Research “on the hills”

During the second half of fieldwork, when I was based out of Butare-town and travelling to Maraba – the district in which Sovu and Bunzazi are located – the two main ways in which I gathered data were participant observation and the conduct of semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews. In terms of participant observation, I spent most of my days in the two communities, and socialised with residents in the local markets or in the small shops that lined the main footpaths. I also observed weekly *gacaca* sessions, *abunzi* sessions, and several ad hoc “sensitisation” meetings called by sector and district authorities (see Appendix 5). I was able to attend several *ingando* sessions at the camps hosting released

prisoners originally from my two research sites. In terms of interviews, I worked closely with my research assistant, whom I coached to provide as much as possible word-for-word translations of my respondents' statements. I also encouraged an informal approach in our interviews, treating them more like conversations and allowing the respondent to stray away from the "interview guide" (see Appendix 7).

I selected people to interview in a number of ways. In prisons, I obtained a list from the *kapita*, the "head prisoner", of all the prisoners originally from my two research sites. I then selected names at random using a computer generated number. The same procedure was followed for the released prisoners I interviewed in the *ingando* facilities (I interviewed them several more times as well, once they had returned to their homes). For the population "on the hills", sometimes I found respondents by coincidence: I met people in *gacaca* or *abunzi* sessions or at the market or tending to their fields and solicited them for an interview. At other times, I asked prisoners I had interviewed to give me directions to their homes and I interviewed their spouse or parent. This served partly as a triangulation method (see below) and partly to find people whom I may not have otherwise met, for example people who lived away from the main footpaths I frequented, or women-headed households – these women seldom had time to attend meetings and tended to avoid socialising, making them difficult for me to meet. I also arranged to meet with the genocide survivor associations in both communities as well as with respected elders, one of whom in particular was able to provide an oral history of Maraba dating back to the 1930s. The overarching concern was to ensure a mix of "ethnic and social" backgrounds that would reflect different lived experiences (see Table 2: Overview of Interviews Conducted), but also to minimise whatever selection bias would have been introduced had I invited a local broker to choose my respondents for me.

Table 2: Overview of Interviews Conducted

2a. Interviews, by “Constituency”

“Constituency”	Location	Number of interviews
RPF government	Kigali	5
Donors	Kigali	8
Non-government elites	Kigali and Butare	18
Grassroots respondents	Maraba district	37
Total Rwandan Respondents		60
Total Respondents		68

2b. Interviews, by “Ethnic/Social Group”

Hutu	Prisoners	7
	Released prisoners	6
	Direct family in jail/has been in jail	8
	Survivors	1
	"Neutral" Hutu	8
Total Hutu		30
Tutsi	Survivors	13
	OCL returnees	10
	"Other" Tutsi	1
Total Tutsi		24
Mixed	Survivors	1
	Direct family in jail/has been in jail	2
	Prisoners	1
	"Other" Mixed	2
Total Mixed		6
Grand Total (Rwandan respondents)		60

Notes to Table 2b:

- OCL = Old Caseload Returnee (Tutsi who fled Rwanda before 1994 and who returned after the genocide)
- Survivor = Genocide survivor, usually but not always denotes a Tutsi (Hutu widows are also considered survivors)
- Mixed respondent = person whose parents are of different ethnicities *and who self-identifies as such* (traditionally Rwandan children take the ethnicity of the father)

N.B: See Chapter 4 for more discussion of these definitions.

My research assistant and I got to know some 40 residents of Sovu and Bunzazi in this way; I interviewed many two or three times, saw them socially many more times, and eventually got to know their family and neighbours as well (see Appendix 6). I was sensitive to the high visibility of my visits, and to the potential ramifications of the attention I, as a white woman driving a jeep, would bring to my respondents. I was thus careful to introduce myself to everyone, particularly grassroots authorities such as the Conseillers. I also explained my purpose, and made certain that the interviewees were aware that whatever they told me would remain confidential and that no penalty would be incurred by refusing to participate. However, very few turned me down. I cannot be certain

of the reasons of the ones who did, but of those who participated, I suspect at least part of the motivation had to do with curiosity and the novelty factor – of all my grassroots respondents, only one had been interviewed before. I also insured that I spoke to, and was seen to speak to, all different “social and ethnic” groups including genocide survivors, alleged perpetrators (in prison) and their families, released prisoners, and “neutral” people with no direct family member targeted during the genocide or in jail as a result of the genocide. This appeared to not have gone unnoticed, and decreased the anxiety of at least one of my respondents: “it is a good thing that it is known that you go into all the categories of the population, otherwise I’d have problems!”(Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor) Towards the end of my stay in Maraba, I organised two focus group discussions, where I invited some of the individuals I had already interviewed, and others I had met but not interviewed, for a debate. These group discussions are described in Chapter 5.

Lastly, I devoted a lot of time going through the district archives, looking in particular to draw up a socio-economic profile of my two research sites. However, I was also granted and became very interested in the “crime” or “security” reports the district drafts on a weekly and/or monthly basis; my research assistant and I spent a lot of time reading through these; they are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

A Difficult Research Environment

As discussed in Section 1.1., post-genocide Rwanda is ruled by an authoritarian regime, dominated by the RPF party – itself dominated by a small group of influential Tutsi former refugees, mostly Anglophone and whose central public figure is President Paul Kagame. Despite or because of this “Tutsification” of power, the RPF’s talent for controlling the information coming out of Rwanda (Pottier, 2002) and the centralised and bureaucratic nature of the State, the researcher working in Rwanda is faced not only with a number of ethical questions⁵⁷, but also with a daunting circuit for obtaining what are mandatory research permissions. This is regardless of whether the researcher is independent or affiliated to an organization – though the latter researcher, affiliated to an NGO or donor, and therefore more high-profile, may arguably face even more scrutiny (Paluck, 2007c). As stated above, the permission requirements become even more onerous if the researcher

⁵⁷ See last paragraph under sub-heading “Limitations of the Study”.

intends to conduct research outside Kigali – as was my case.⁵⁸ Authorities are particularly suspicious of questionnaires and survey-type work, and insist on having the questions attached to the application materials, as well as a full research proposal – based on which they accept or refuse permission and, more ominously, censure and edit questions and even research sites.⁵⁹

On paper at least, the government welcomes researchers, but through this research permissions system, it is also able to covertly or overtly derail, delay, manage, influence research agendas – something seen particularly clearly when research proposals refer to topics that can be related back to “ethnicity”, or which deal with certain parts of the country.⁶⁰ Though the research environment has no doubt since evolved and changed, in 2005, my counterparts and I were faced with a particularly difficult and tense research environment. Indeed, a major World Bank study (a multi-country study on “Coming Out of Poverty”) was shut down by central authorities in 2005. Several local researchers were arrested and the lead researcher (an international) was kicked out of the country.⁶¹ It was at this stage that at least two (international) researchers – one of whom had already obtained all required research permissions, another one of whom was mid-process, were asked to submit or re-submit their proposals and questionnaires. One of the researchers saw several of her questions (dealing with “groups” – often used as a euphemism for the outlawed “ethnicity”) censured and her sampling strategy for interviews in prisons denied. Established NGOs, specifically Human Rights Watch and Penal Reform International, who had been engaged in *gacaca* monitoring activities for years, were also denied renewal of their research permission during this period.

⁵⁸ In the case of my small-scale, low-profile and relatively benign sounding study, this research permission process nonetheless included vetting from four different government bodies, a detailed research proposal, and an audience with a minister (see discussion under “National-level Research” sub-heading, above) – all of which took over six weeks and my near-daily presence at various government offices to obtain. Paluck, a researcher who unlike myself was affiliated with a NGO working in Rwanda, had to devote four months to this same process (Paluck, 2007c, p.8).

⁵⁹ Because I repeatedly insisted I was not using a “questionnaire” but rather an “interview guide”, and because I was a relatively low-profile, independent (unaffiliated) researcher, I was able to forgo the vetting of my questions as a result. Paluck was not so lucky (Paluck, 2007c, p. 2).

⁶⁰ Researchers working on the genocide in the north of the country for instance, where many war crimes were allegedly committed by RPA, face additional scrutiny.

⁶¹ Apparently the problem had been that one of the research sites was a community in the north in which all of the Tutsi had been killed during the genocide (a “Hutu land” in other words) and the study’s questionnaire included questions on elections and democracy.

This sensitive research environment – coupled with the nature of my research topic, which I argue does not lend itself to large samples or survey-type work anyway (see section entitled “Concerns with Triangulation and Robustness of Findings”) – constitutes an added justification for my preference for “low profile” research, i.e. small samples and repeat interviews (as opposed to surveys), and gathering data only in two research sites, both in the south of the country (as well as Kigali and Butare) where authorities at Provincial and district levels were benignly disinterested.⁶²

Grounded Theory, or the “Common Sense” Approach

It is my contention that there are no “big theories” to be tested or falsified from the literature on reconciliation in post-conflict contexts.⁶³ This makes a traditional “theory-first” or “theory-verification” research design unfeasible (Punch, 1998 [2005], p. 17). In instances where the field of study is underdeveloped, a theory-after approach *guided by the data*, i.e. an emergent or inductive approach, is more appropriate. Though I tend to refer to this as “the common sense approach”, where theory is progressively and *inductively* developed even during the data collection phase (which incidentally includes literature reviews) based on a corpus of expanding data, it is more formally referred to as “grounded theory”. First developed within the field of Sociology in the late 1960s, grounded theory tends not only to be jargon-free, understandable to experts and laypeople alike, it also, according to its founding text, “works – provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications” largely because theory is slowly allowed to emerge and be refined as more and more comparative data come in. “As sociologists engaged in research soon discover,” these authors lamented, “there are as yet few theories of this nature”, i.e. where theory actually fits empirical situations (Glasser and Strauss, 1967, p. 1). Fundamental complementarities can be found between grounded theory and the various

⁶² This benign disinterest is mentioned again in Chapter 3.

⁶³ Several authors agree with me on this point: Lederach and Minow consider the study of reconciliation in post- civil war contexts as inadequate (see Lederach, 2001, p. 193 and Minow, 1998, p. 146). More recently, William and Brecke (2003, p. 147) characterised reconciliation in post-conflict contexts as an “undertheorized” phenomenon. In most cases the “relationships between reconciliation and the different measures employed to achieve this aim [...] ha[ve] not been convincingly demonstrated empirically” argues Gloppen (2005, p. 45); and “this idea [of reconciliation, or coexistence] has not yet been widely theorized, commonly debated, or universally implemented” according to Afzali and Colleton (2003, p. 4). This point is taken up again in Chapter 2.

techniques referred to as “Participatory Action Research” (Teram, Schachter et al., 2005). What I particularly value in the participatory research literature is the emphasis on privileging local actors as sources of legitimate and indeed invaluable knowledge.

I relied heavily on these combined approaches during fieldwork. For example, I deliberately chose not to use a questionnaire, instead putting together an “interview guide”, where I did however retain four overarching themes (see Appendix 7).⁶⁴ A method emphasised within grounded theory, and which is particularly visible in Part III of the present thesis, is constant comparison: “cases similar on many variables but with different outcomes are compared to see where the key causal differences may lie.” Similarly, cases that have the same outcome are examined to see which conditions they all have in common, thereby revealing “necessary causes” (Borgatti, undated). This is exactly the approach I relied on to uncover the findings presented in Chapters 6 and 7 on micro, meso and macro-level factors promoting (or impeding) the reconciliation process in Sovu and Bunzazi.

Concerns with Triangulation and Robustness of Findings

In a piece of purely qualitative research, which can rely heavily on interviews, how does one make sure that what respondents say, match what they do? As the researcher, and in settings where great poverty is the norm, how does one know if one is being told what respondents actually think, or what they think you want to hear as a person who is perceived as potentially able to harm or help them?⁶⁵ In the Rwandan context, given the *de facto* sensitive nature of some of the questions (see Appendix 7 for interview guide) how to avoid the incentive for some respondents to twist their version of events in order to have themselves or their family members seen in a more favourable light? Finally, how does one take into account the conscious and unconscious biases present in the interviewee, the research assistant/interpreter where applicable, and in the researcher him/herself? In any research project, triangulation is critical, but it is perhaps for these reasons all the more so in the Rwandan context.

⁶⁴ I also retained several specific questions which I asked of all grassroots respondents and based on which I compiled a “coexistence score”, introduced in Chapter 6.

⁶⁵ This is allegedly a particularly acute problem in Rwanda, given the oft-heard of Rwandan penchant to use language “strategically”, i.e. by telling an interlocutor what they want to hear (or what he or she thinks they want to hear), rather than what is factually accurate (Overdulse, 1998). However, Scott rightly comments that “there can be no conversation without acting” and that similar propensities permeate all human interaction (Scott, 1990). This point is developed at length by Erving Goffman (1959).

Some “biases”, such as the ones my Rwandan respondents (and my research assistant) would have had given the fact that all had been impacted, many very personally, by the events of the 1994 genocide, I saw not as weaknesses at all, but precisely as the object of study of this research.⁶⁶ What is more, when conflicting accounts of the same event were presented, what some authors term “contested events” (Roth and Mehta, 2002), I used these as opportunities to uncover patterns of subjective understanding within the community, of different “discourses”, rather than as a faulty rendition of “the Truth”. One example of a contested event that I investigated personally and recount in Chapter 5 concerns the interpretations of a fist fight which occurred in a local bar in Bunzazi and involved a young male genocide survivor. Different levels of analysis – the national or official discourse of the RPF government for example, and the local-level discourse of the grassroots – are also used. So, in the example of the fist fight in Bunzazi, it was apparent that some of the language found in local interpretations had been “imported” from the official (macro-) government discourse. Indeed, though the young male genocide survivor and his mother (his only surviving relative) were probably not aware of the anti-divisionism law for example (and certainly did not name it), they had incorporated in their vocabulary language such as “divisionism” and “genocide ideology”.⁶⁷

Other potential biases, such as the temptation to “please” the researcher, underscore once more the appropriateness of an in-depth study rather than a comparative or statistically significant one. Indeed, “large N” (statistically significant) or “small n” (comparative) sampling would not have permitted the building of relationships and the investment in time required to circumvent this difficulty. Indeed, many times it was only possible to speak to respondents in private *on the second or third visit*. Making several visits and conveying a clear description of my goals enabled me to approach the subject from different angles and establish some rapport. The efficacy of this methodology is demonstrated by one member

⁶⁶ See next section, on “Limitations of the Study”, for expansion on this point.

⁶⁷ Here, I would argue that they are not acting as passive receptacles of government messages, but rather using this official discourse to try to lend more weight to their complaints and circumvent their powerlessness. These are issues picked up again in Chapter 8.

of the Bunzazi group discussion (who I quote again later in the thesis). Discussing ethnicity and things “under the surface”, my respondent recounted the following anecdote:

You go into a cabaret [local bar] and you hear someone ask “do you have a piece of paper?” Asking for paper is a signal that a Tutsi has just come in and that they should change the topic of conversation (Bunzazi, Group interview).

And yet, at our first, one-on-one interview, the same respondent had talked enthusiastically about ‘Rwandan Unity’ and that ethnicity did not exist (emulating the government’s discourse). Only through building relationships with a hand-full of interviewees was I able to move beyond the (government-endorsed) “official discourse” and access “hidden transcripts” – something which all the survey-based studies that I am aware of on attitudes towards reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda have resoundingly failed to do.

An example of survey-based research leading to inaccurate results is the work of Longman, Pham and Weinstein (2004). Relying on a survey of ca. 2,000 respondents in four districts (two in the south and centre, two in the north of the country) administered by 26 trained Rwandan final-year college students over a period of 20 days, the authors find “quite positive” attitudes towards *gacaca* (p. 217) and “strong support for *gacaca* among those surveyed, reinforcing what other surveys have found” (p. 222). Yet the study was conducted in 2002, the same year that Human Rights Watch reported that people in many communities questioned the government position that no RDF crimes could be heard, that “[t]here were problems obtaining the required quorum of one hundred adults [...] local authorities threatened fines or other sanctions against absentees or used the Local Defense Forces, a government paramilitary force, to compel attendance.” (HRW, 2002) Penal Reform International during the same period also reported “a growing lack of interest” in attending *gacaca* (PRI, 2002b, p. 12); the problem of absenteeism got so bad that the *gacaca* law was modified in 2004 to reduce the number of judges required for a session to begin and local authorities were called on to become actively involved in ensuring attendance (PRI, 2004a, p. 72). More broadly, as outlined above, 2002 was the year in which several *gacaca* judges were fired because they were found to be complicit in genocide, that the law against divisionism came into effect as well as a new press law allowing heavy sentences against journalists (at least three newspapers were closed down), and that the government began clamping down on NGOs (local and international) and opposition parties in

preparation for the 2003 national elections. Yet, no mention of the RPF government's authoritarianism or the fact that *gacaca* was a government-endorsed (and increasingly, government-enforced) institution, was mentioned, nor that respondents may potentially have felt it more prudent to repeat the official RPF line to the survey administrators.

A second, equally damning example of the vagaries of survey work in this context is the series of public opinion surveys fielded by the IRC (International Rescue Committee) and the NURC from 2002 onwards.⁶⁸ In the 2007 "social cohesion" survey, the authors of the report see no contradiction in writing that there is 98% support for *gacaca* among the general population (and 96% among survivors and 83% among prisoners) on the one hand, and in the following paragraph reporting: "[a]lmost two thirds of the general population believes that witness accounts on either side, the prosecution and the defense, cannot be trusted [in *gacaca*]". Unsurprisingly, given that the co-authors (the NURC) are a government agency, the report also makes no mention of the RPF's authoritarian record, reporting instead that "an overwhelming majority of respondents, 97%, agree that 'the Government is doing its best to improve standards of living' in the country." Yet we know from Justino and Verwimp (2006) and Ansoms (2007) that inequalities all over the country increased as wealth was increasingly concentrated in a few hands (see above). The IRC/NURC report however congratulates the government for its "unusually unanimous approval rating [... which is] much higher than in 47 industrialized and developing countries polled in an international opinion survey in 2007". Indeed, they conclude without a hint of irony that only China came close to the RPF government's approval ratings, with 89% (NURC with IRC, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

Despite the strengths of the methodological strategies adopted, this study remains bound by several limitations. First, with reference to the "grassroots" and "non-government elite" constituencies in particular⁶⁹, given the purely qualitative nature of the data and my preference for a limited number of in-depth interviews, this study cannot make definitive

⁶⁸ From 2002 to 2005, NURC and IRC conducted "thematic surveys", on *gacaca* in 2002/03, decentralisation in 2003/04, and land reform in 2004/05. They then began combining all these surveys into one "social cohesion" questionnaire, which they fielded in 2005, 2006 and 2007 (NURC with IRC, 2007).

⁶⁹ For the RPF and top five donor constituencies, qualitative (interview) data was coupled with extensive documentary analysis countering the "representativeness" problem somewhat.

policy recommendations or claims that the data presented is representative of the broader “constituencies” in Sovu and Bunzazi, of “non-government elite” opinion in general, much less of opinions in other areas of Rwanda. Nonetheless, the findings present several serious challenges to the literature on reconciliation, as well as challenge some of the dominant perceptions in the academic literature on social dynamics in post-1994 Rwanda.

Second, my status as a Westerner, and my reliance on translation no doubt cost me many cultural and linguistic subtleties – all the more so given Kinyarwanda’s known complex and intricate nature, which forced my research assistant to concede (albeit only on rare occasions), that he was unable to capture the exact essence of a response in French – the language into which he was translating. Charles Mironko, a Rwandan anthropologist who studied the motives of individual perpetrators in the Rwandan genocide, writes on this point that:

[T]here are certain things about the Rwandan genocide that only Rwandans can understand. Not because they are inborn, but because they are woven into our histories with such subtlety and complexity that they are extremely difficult to untangle without in-depth knowledge of Rwandan culture, language, and ways of knowing and being. (Mironko, 2004a)

I remain sceptical of the scope of the validity of this argument, and of the inherent superiority of “indigenous” study it seems to posit, but I nonetheless wish to acknowledge it here.

Third, as a post-genocide context, and as already mentioned, all the Rwandans I interviewed for this project had been affected by the 1994 genocide directly or indirectly. Nearly all spoke to me of subsequent trauma, frustration, guilt, anger, confusion, and despair. This necessarily influenced their perceptions and, consequently, their understanding of social reality. Some would perhaps assume – again, as mentioned previously – that this represents a weakness in the study, or makes the Rwandans I spoke with less reliable informants. The authors of a Penal Reform International (PRI) report comment on precisely this type of bias when, referring to PRI researchers (all of whom are Rwandan), they conclude that “in this sense, they are all ‘insiders’”, i.e. lacking the assumed greater objectivity of outsiders (PRI, 2005, p. 3). However, neither the authors of the PRI report nor I conclude that this inevitably impoverishes a study. For example, the

PRI authors point out that these “insider” perceptions can provide “a depth of understanding, particularly of the cultural context and the social stakes” which I, as a Westerner (and according to Mironko), lack. And again, nor does respondents’ subjectivity affect the validity of my conclusions: indeed, exploring and contrasting these various “insiders” perceptions and discourses is precisely the core purpose of Part II of the thesis.

Lastly, the ethical ramifications of doing research in the specific “climate” of Rwanda, which I qualified above as tense and difficult, need to be acknowledged. As already laid out, I was fairly fortunate in that I was allowed to conduct my interviews in Rwanda almost completely unobstructed and “unsupervised”. However, my (Rwandan) respondents themselves may not have felt the same degree of freedom or latitude to say and do as they pleased despite my guarantees of confidentiality.⁷⁰ Indeed, the broader atmosphere in which my respondents operate, one that as the coming pages of this thesis will make clear, is marked by the near-ubiquitous presence of government authorities, by incentives to pay lip-service to the “public transcript”, by a claustrophobia – where everyone knows what everyone else is doing – poses obvious challenges to the researcher, both ethical and methodological. This is compounded by a Rwandan culture that allegedly values social advancement via communication, i.e. saying what the interlocutor believes the socially superior party wants to hear (rather than what is factually accurate – see above). Ultimately, I can only report and analyse what my respondents were willing to tell me. However, the research questions I asked, the research design I adopted including the combination of methods I used, and my concern with triangulation, all act, I believe, to safeguard the validity of my findings.

Conclusion

I have provided here an overview of the main policies, institutions, laws and programmes of the 1994-2006 period for twin purposes: first, to underscore the fast-paced and complex

⁷⁰ Not only respondents, but research assistants are potentially put in danger through the high visibility generated through affiliation with (international) researchers and NGOs. Indeed, the researchers and NGOs may unwittingly fall out of government, or a specific figure of authority’s, graces and the most vulnerable retaliatory target in such instances is not the international, but the local staff. Rwandan researchers affiliated with the aforementioned World Bank study shut down in 2005, as well as researchers working for the NGO Penal Reform International, have been imprisoned for example.

character of this period – worthy of study in its own right – and second, to highlight the way in which many of these policies, laws and programmes are linked to, if not justified in the name of the reconciliation imperative. Many of the policies introduced here – *gacaca*, *ingando*, TIG, etc. – will be returned to throughout the thesis (see also the Glossary). This chapter also foreshadows the central role of the post-1994 RPF-dominated government, and more precisely of a small circle of RPF insiders (cf. Chapter 3).

I devoted the second half of the chapter to a discussion of methods and pitfalls, in light of the particularities – topic and context – of this research project. Though the precautionary measures I took are laid out here, I believe the most compelling case for the validity of my findings lies in the reading of the thesis itself – the way I use the data and the implications I draw, or do not draw, based on these.

The following chapter provides an assessment of the reconciliation literature, which I have already stated is extensive but lacking in both empirical and theoretical rigour. In this respect, it provides added justification for the aims and scope of this study.

Chapter 2: Thinking about Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Meanings, Approaches, Problems

Introduction

Part of the case for the relevance of this study, laid out in Chapter 1, has been the state of the literature on “post-conflict reconciliation”, which I (and others) have described as both theory *and* evidence poor.⁷¹ This does not imply that there has been little written on reconciliation. On the contrary, the volume of literature, both grey and published, has been increasing exponentially since the 1990s. Indeed, as I argue in Section 2.1, starting in the post-Cold War period, the concept of reconciliation began for the first time being applied, systematically, by both academic and policy circles, to countries described as being in a “post-conflict” or “transitional” phase. As a result, parties to violent conflicts, particularly of the intra-state kind – since 1989, the most prevalent, and fought chiefly in the developing, hence donor-dependent world (Eriksson, Wallenstein and Sollenberg, 2003) – found themselves expected not only to stop hostilities and rebuild infrastructure, as per the “usual” practice. Now, they were to “account for” and “deal with” painful pasts, too. How to carry out these qualitatively *new* “reconciliation” tasks – part of the broader “peacebuilding” or “post-conflict agenda” (see below for more on these terms) – and under what circumstances these are a desirable, or feasible strategy to begin with, has not however been critically examined. The “reconciliation” literature remains plagued with untested normative assumptions – as Section 2.4 of the present chapter details.

To be clear, in taking reconciliation as my central concept, I do not wish to argue that it is new, but rather that its systematic use in post-conflict (and post-genocide) contexts is.⁷² In the aftermath of World War II for example, there were no calls for reconciliation between the Allies and the Axis powers of Germany, Japan and Italy; the Tokyo and Nuremberg trials were not expected to promote reconciliation, as the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda – established almost 50 years later – was. Nor were belligerents in

⁷¹ See Footnote 63. I elaborate on possible reasons for the underdeveloped state of the literature on post-conflict reconciliation in Section 2.2.

⁷² Dyzenhaus agrees: “While the label ‘transitional justice’ is very recent, the topic is not. [...] the question of amnesty was addressed in the Athenian Constitution that followed Athens’ defeat in the Peloponnesian War. [...] Moreover [...] Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* contains both significant instruction about how to achieve reconciliation or civic harmony in the face of deep ideological division and an account of the construction of political and legal institutions in order to maintain that harmony.” (Dyzenhaus, 2003, p. 164)

civil wars expected to “reconcile” after hostilities had ceased, much less victims and perpetrators of genocides. Such a thing – until the 1990s – would have been considered irrelevant, if not obscene. To continue with the best known and most written about example of the Holocaust: the academic literature on life after the Holocaust features important ethnical and philosophical debates about, for example, who the legitimate bestowers of forgiveness are and if there are such things as unforgivable crimes (see in particular Wiesenthal, 1998). The importance of uncovering, documenting, remembering in the Holocaust literature is justified in the name of “Never Again” – and not in the name of “healing” or “reconciling” – as we will see it is now, in more contemporary post-conflict contexts.⁷³ In terms of the literary responses to the Holocaust (as opposed to the academic ones), these too have avoided the “reconciliation” language. According to Teichman and Leder for example, poets and authors of fiction dealing with the Holocaust are invariably engaged in either truth-telling, “meant to convey the stark reality of evil and suffering during the Nazi period”, or lamentation, “a response coming mostly from Jewish writers, is often elegiac in character, expressing grief and loss.” (Teichman and Leder, 1998, p. 187) Even literature on “second generation” Jews and Germans, i.e. on the children of victims and perpetrators, has not broached the topic of reconciliation.⁷⁴

As a result of what I argue is a new imperative for post-conflict (and post-genocide) reconciliation, – and though I draw on older texts as appropriate throughout the thesis – I engage here, in Chapter 2, with what is a relatively contemporary literature. In order to summarise and assess this nonetheless voluminous literature, I elaborate on some of its shared characteristics in Section 2.2. In Section 2.3, given the welter and patchwork of institutions and reconciliation policies on the one hand, and the lack of conceptual (and semantic) clarity I argue the field is plagued with on the other, I have constructed three

⁷³ Here again the writings and life of Simon Wiesenthal provide a good case in point. The Simon Wiesenthal Center’s *Museum of Tolerance* in Los Angeles (opened in 1993) describes him as follows: “Simon Wiesenthal’s work has been driven by one goal – that the world will never forget the men, women and children who lost their lives to the darkest evils. For if we remember their souls, bring their murderers to justice, and learn to speak out in the face of discrimination and oppression – we will be providing a memorial to the victims, a warning to the potential murderers of tomorrow, and a lesson for all humanity.” – the tone and vocabulary used show a concern with prevention, not reconciliation.

⁷⁴ Instead, this literature consistently stresses the partial or total familial silence about the past in which both generations were raised (Hass, 2004). Seminal texts on second generation Jews and Germans include Epstein (1979), Sichrovsky (1987), and Bar-On (1989).

“reconciliation paradigms” to help break down the literature into broad philosophical frameworks. Finally, Section 2.4 highlights underlying assumptions and overlooked questions which plague each of these three paradigms and the literature as a whole, and which my research findings serve to refine (and revisit in the concluding chapter).

2.1 A Paradigm Shift

Politicians, journalists, academics and policy makers began to take the term “reconciliation” out of its usual inter-personal context and use it in contexts of past systematic human rights abuses, (civil) wars and genocides in the early 1990s. The re-branding which took place around that time of “commissions of enquiry” (into past abuses) into “truth and *reconciliation* commissions” is one testament to this.⁷⁵ This new use of the word is visible in the naming and mandating of other types of bodies as well: a “Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation” was established in 1991 in Australia, a “Northern Ireland Fund for Reconciliation” was established by the parties to the Good Friday Agreement in 1999. As we saw in Chapter 1, the mandate of the ICTR, established in 1994, included explicitly contributing “to the process of national reconciliation in Rwanda” (UN Security Council, 1994) – quite an unusual aim for a criminal court.

Until the early 1990s then, whatever came after tentative ceasefires, peace accords or negotiated settlements began to take hold, was relatively uncharted waters. Indeed, Abu-Nimer (2001) argues that throughout most of the 20th Century, the meanings of “peace” and “peacebuilding” were interpreted too narrowly so as to denote only the early phases of war-to-peace transitions. Concretely, this meant the pre-negotiation phase, or how to get conflicting parties to the table, and the mediation and negotiation phase itself, or how to get the parties to agree to stop fighting.

The Poverty of Peace Studies

This relative neglect of “what comes after” may also have been due to the fact that peace – from which reconciliation would eventually result – was construed as (a return to)

⁷⁵ Taking the US Institute of Peace’s digital collection of 24 commissions (spanning from 1982 to 2002) as a sample, the first use of the word “reconciliation” in the title of a commission occurs in 1990, in the Chilean case. This is followed by the 1995 South African commission. By the early 2000s, nearly all new commissions – in East Timor, Ghana, Peru, Serbia and Montenegro (formerly the Republic of Yugoslavia), and Sierra Leone – had the word “reconciliation” in their title and mandate (USIP, various).

“normality”. Yet it is the abnormal, the bad news, the inhumanities humans are capable of that are perversely more interesting for media, publishers and classrooms. As a corollary to this, the mere absence of war and violence came to be considered as peace. However, this overlooked the fact that peace in its fuller sense, and in the sense that reconciliation projects and policies intend it, involves more than the mere absence of violence. Indeed, the word “peace” can also imply a certain measure of inter-group collaboration, social cohesion, and even in more ambitious conceptions, empathy, forgiveness and trust. Galtung was the first scholar to make the distinction between what he terms “positive peace”, which incorporates ideas of harmony, cooperation, and integration, and “negative peace”, which denotes an absence of direct, or somatic violence, but not of “structural” or “indirect” violence (see among others, Galtung, 1964; Galtung, 1969; Galtung, 1985). However, his typology of peace has not been built on or further refined into theories of peace.

This neglect of “peace” is visible in the breath and depth of the academic literature. One could expect “peace studies” on the one hand, and “conflict” or “war studies” on the other to be two sides of the same coin – if not the same discipline, then complementary ones, alter-egos of sorts. However, whereas the study of the causes of war, violent conflicts and military history is a well-established, indeed prestigious discipline, there are no comparable debates, or prominent university departments devoted to the study of the “causes of peace”.⁷⁶

It now appears that reconciliation, along with a host of other “peacebuilding” measures into which it is subsumed, have been mainstreamed into academic and policy thinking.⁷⁷ Kritz speaks of a “paradigm shift” in the means by which new leaders are addressing their nations’ violent pasts. He points to the growing trend for inclusion of

⁷⁶ Exceptions could perhaps include the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, INCORE (International Conflict Research) at the University of Ulster, and the independent research institute, PRIO (International Peace Research Institute) in Oslo.

⁷⁷ “Peacebuilding” typically connotes “activities that go beyond crisis intervention such as longer-term development, and building of governance structures and institutions.” (Morris, undated) This can include the disarmament of ex-combatants, the reintegration of refugees, the rehabilitation of infrastructure, the reform of governance structures, capacity-building for non-governmental organizations (including religious institutions), etc. Paris adds the further qualification that peacebuilding is typically understood as a *post-conflict* activity, to be distinguished from some broader definitions which see peacebuilding as “efforts to avert conflict either before or after war.” (Paris, 2004, p. 2)

reconciliation measures in the very texts of peace agreements, for example (Kritz, 1996, p. 128). The International IDEA Handbook on reconciliation after violent conflict concludes that “[r]econciliation must be implemented in parallel with and as a constitutive part of those other activities of reform or reconstruction. [...] It must be done not before, not after, but at the same time [as rebuilding].” (Bloomfield, Barnes, et al., 2003, p. 167) Uvin calls this the rise of a “new post-conflict agenda” which includes “explicit attempts [by donors] to influence core social and political dynamics of governance, reconciliation and justice” even though these are “areas that until a few years ago were totally off the development agenda” (Uvin, 2001b, p. 177-8). Similar to calls a few decades earlier advocating the streamlining of a gender approach, there is a growing consensus that without our “reconciliation glasses” on, post-war and longer-term development interventions will prove misguided and counter-productive (Chayes and Minow, 2003, p. xviii-xx). Crocker agrees: “[l]ong-term peace [...] cannot be realized if resentment, bitterness, and moral doubts about the just treatment of perpetrators and victims of human rights abuses linger in the minds of citizens” (Crocker, 1999, p. 63-4). The creation and proliferation of “post-conflict departments”, “fragile states” and “conflict adviser” positions in the World Bank, OECD and major donor governments is indicative of this “paradigm shift”.

2.2 Some Shared Characteristics

A Multi-disciplinary and Underdeveloped Concept

The study of reconciliation is characterised by a high degree of multi-disciplinarity. Authors with backgrounds in philosophy (Jaspers, 1946; Dwyer, 1999; Govier, 2002), social psychology and psychiatry (Bar-Tal, 2000; Summerfield, 2002; Sluzki, 2003; Staub, Pearlman et al., 2005), sociology (Humphrey, 2002), theology (Villa-Vicencio, undated; Crocker, 1999; Tutu, 1999; Shriver, 2001), history (Garton Ash, 1997; Ignatieff, 1997), anthropology (Wilson, 2000; van Bisbergen, 2001; Sommers and McClintock, 2003; Burnet, 2005), law (Kritz, 1995; Minow, 1998; Sarkin, 1999; Huyse, 2003), and political theory (Honig, 1993; Edkins, 2003) have all written on reconciliation in contexts of systematic human rights abuses, (civil) war or genocide. There is also a large amount of writing by people specialising in area studies, be it sub-Saharan Africa (Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio, 2003), the Asia-Pacific (Wolff and Braman, 1999; Funabashi, 2003), Europe

(Kritz, 1995)⁷⁸ or the Middle East (Abu-Nimer, 2001 [1996]), describing situations of protracted conflict and the range of reconciliation models that have been adopted in different situations. Lastly, there is some extensive grey literature on the topic, written by conflict resolution NGOs, human rights advocacy groups, faith-based NGOs, and researchers, many of them PhD students.⁷⁹ Given the complexity of the concept, the consensus seems to be that this multi-disciplinarity is not a weakness but a strength, as reconciliation should ideally ultimately be approached in a *trans*-disciplinary way, in order to treat the topic as holistically as possible (Galtung, 1985, p. 144).

Another characteristic of the literature on reconciliation is the widespread consensus that there is no agreement of what reconciliation means, and therefore no clear or systematic way to assess the extent to which it has been achieved in a given case. Indeed, rarely are operational definitions or any sort of indicators for reconciliation offered. There are several reasons for this. First, this lack of conceptual clarity can partly be explained by the relative newness of the field of enquiry (reconciliation) and the relative neglect suffered by the discipline (peace studies) more generally – as discussed above. The former in particular is a frequently cited reason: the study of reconciliation is “barely in the stage of conception” (Lederach, 2001, p. 193) and studies of “human behaviour of reconciliation” (as opposed to animal behaviour) are “inadequate” (Minow, 1998, p. 146). However, to my mind, this particular argument’s shelf life has expired.

A second reason for the difficulty in defining, and evaluating, reconciliation is time: reconciliation is a distant goal, an ideal that can arguably never be achieved, or a long-term process, or both. Reconstruction efforts in the wake of war will “typically require at least two decades of sustained effort”. The implication is that reconciliation will take much, much longer (citing Paul Collier's work on Uganda, Sluzki, 2003, p. 21). How to evaluate

⁷⁸ Kritz considers 21 case studies, 15 of which are European or from the former USSR.

⁷⁹ On Rwanda, see Penal Reform International (PRI)’s numerous research reports on *gacaca* courts (available on their website www.penalreform.org) and the Institute for Research and Dialogue for Peace’s 2003 report (IRDP, 2003). For PhD-student work on reconciliation based on extensive fieldwork, see in particular Paluck (Paluck, 2007a).

the success of reconciliation programmes if the evidence will only emerge decades from now?⁸⁰

A third, related reason for this lack of clarity is that “reconciliation” has different meanings in different contexts. As mentioned above, the word reconciliation is commonly used in terms of formerly estranged spouses or friends, or in other words, in terms of a relationship between individuals. More recently however (1990s and onwards), reconciliation has begun to be used in post-war or post-mass human rights abuse settings. In these contexts, it is often not clear if the author means reconciliation between communities and nations on the one hand, or between individual victims and individual offenders and bystanders on the other.⁸¹ Moreover, each context in which reconciliation is called for is highly specific – perhaps unique – historically, politically, culturally. Reconciliation may not have the same connotations for a Sierra Leonean and a Cambodian, for example.⁸² There is therefore no such thing as a generic model or definition of reconciliation. Lastly, even two Sierra Leoneans or two Cambodians may not agree on whether reconciliation has occurred in a given context: one may deem that reconciliation has taken place once cordial relations are restored for example, while the other would qualify the same relationship as something falling short of reconciliation. This is further discussed in the following section.

A Common Typology: Reconciliation as Continuum

Parrying this last point in particular on the highly situational nature of reconciliation, several authors have developed typologies, usually envisaged as part of a linear continuum – though conceptions vary in their intricacy (Crocker, 1999; Cobb, 2003; Sluzki, 2003;

⁸⁰ Alternative research methods, such as longitudinal studies (as opposed to “cross-sectional” studies that act as “snapshots in time”), can be used to parry this particular shortcoming, but remain on the whole quite rare given resource constraints. The Penal Reform International *gacaca* monitoring and research programme, set up in 2001 and designed to follow the process through to its completion is one example; the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation’s annual South African Reconciliation Barometer is another (IJR, various; PRI, various).

⁸¹ The question of agency in reconciliation processes is not addressed adequately in the literature and represents a recurring weakness discussed in Section 2.4.

⁸² The relationship between cultural practice and conflict resolution is discussed by several authors (see Lederach, 1995; LeBaron, 1998; Avruch, 2000; Chew, 2001).

Borer, 2004; Assefa, undated).⁸³ Regardless of the specific conceptualisation, the growing consensus is that reconciliation, like peace, has a variety of meanings, and that these are not necessarily mutually exclusive or antagonistic. It is better to think of them, to use Crocker's terminology, as different *degrees* of reconciliation, ranging from more demanding "thick" notions, to minimalist or "thin" notions (Crocker, 1999).

Speaking in terms of degrees of societal cooperation, Crocker sees "thick" reconciliation as the kind advocated by Desmond Tutu in the South African case, which requires compassion and forgiveness. Conversely, in its "thinnest" sense, reconciliation requires simply that former enemies no longer routinely violate each other's basic rights to life and liberty, or alternatively, simply resume, or begin, ignoring each other.⁸⁴ In this case, reconciliation is understood to mean "peaceful coexistence", corresponding roughly to Galtung's (1969) conception of "negative peace". Crocker also discusses other interpretations of reconciliation, placing them on the thick-thin range. Less demanding than what Tutu advocates but still very difficult to achieve is the ideal of democratic reciprocity. Here "former enemies or former perpetrators, victims, and bystanders are reconciled insofar as they respect each other as fellow citizens. Further, all parties play a role in deliberations concerning the past, present, and future of their country." (Crocker, 2000) More robust than merely stopping killing each other, but dropping the requirement of forgiveness, this seems to present a midpoint in the continuum.

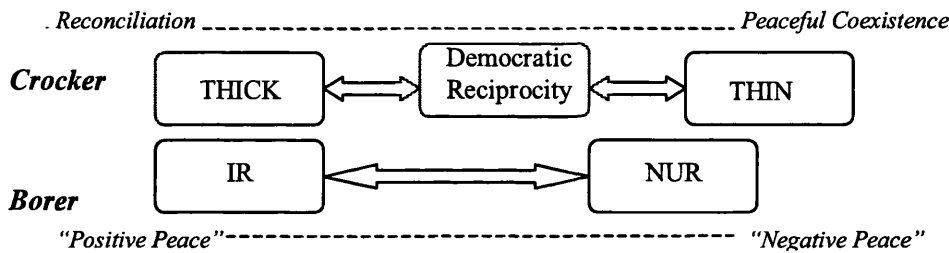
Borer (2004) takes this analysis further, correlating thick reconciliation with interpersonal relationships and the religious, medico-therapeutic language of healing and forgiveness. She dubs this the Individual Reconciliation, or IR model. On the other end of the range is thin reconciliation, which is more amenable to groups, and is characterised by political language such as democratisation and justice. She dubs this the National Unity and

⁸³ Another conception is that of reconciliation as a complex system of stages with "tipping points": "the unstable nature of any complex processes may lead in the long run to increasing (quantitative) oscillations, which may override their established threshold. When that happens, [...] the whole system shifts to a new and qualitatively different level of equilibrium, where again the system coalesces" (Sluzki, 2003, p. 27).

⁸⁴ This does not necessarily mean that "thin reconciliation" is a lesser, or more fragile, state of affairs. Indeed, routinely ignoring each other is in essence how Robert Edgerton described relations between different social groups who occupied the same beach – Venice Beach, in the US state of California – in the 1970s. He qualified this type of coexistence as being "alone, together" (Edgerton, 1979).

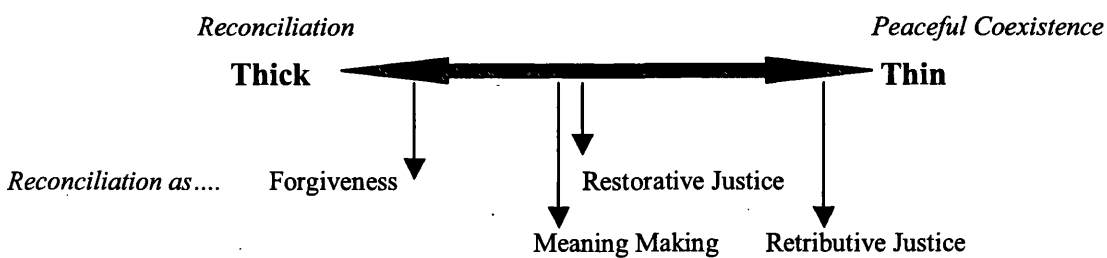
Reconciliation, or NUR model (Borer, 2004). Using the South African example, she further argues that the IR and NUR models, the thick and thin meanings of reconciliation, were used interchangeably by the government in the founding texts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and then by the Commissioners in their public pronouncements and Final Report.⁸⁵ In the Rwandan case, we will see in the concluding chapter that the RPF government discourse evolved towards fairly thick meanings of reconciliation, whereas grassroots respondents' discourses were to be found at the other end of the continuum, using very "thin" language.

Figure 1: The Thick-to-Thin Reconciliation Continuum



The conceptions of reconciliation as a continuum are however also beginning to hit a wall: many are descriptive (Cobb, 2003; Sluzki, 2003), and the more analytical ones (Borer, 2004) need further refining and testing against empirically-based work. But they are nonetheless a useful way to think about reconciliation. The three paradigms I identify in Section 2.3 can also be placed on the thin-to-thick scale. Figure 2 summarises this.

Figure 2: Three Reconciliation Paradigms, placed on the Thick-to-Thin Continuum



⁸⁵ Answering the question “was the South African TRC successful” she thus argues, is impossible before we answer the question, “according to whom?” Hamber and van der Merwe (1998) similarly note that: “very seldom is anyone in South Africa talking about the same thing when they refer to reconciliation. Equally so, the final outcome of a so-called reconciled South Africa means different things to different people.” The point these authors raise is reflected in my choice of research questions. My third research question (“Is the Rwandan reconciliation project ‘succeeding?’”) cannot be answered without beforehand addressing my first research question (“What does reconciliation mean to different constituencies in the Rwandan context?”) See Chapter 1.

2.3 Getting to Reconciliation: Three Paradigms

When looking at “how” questions – How is reconciliation achieved? How is the process set in motion? – I have grouped the growing and varied literature described above into three schools of thought, which I devised. Though they can be presented as competing explanatory frameworks, there is overlap and inter-linkages between them. As above, they can be conceived as part of a continuum of thin-to-thick conceptions.

I present them in the order in which they most frequently appear: reconciliation as justice (sometimes referred to as the “transitional justice” literature), reconciliation as reshaping memory and identity (or “meaning making”), and reconciliation as forgiveness. The first is usually presented as a dichotomy between retributive (prosecutorial or “classical”) and restorative (alternative or “traditional”) justice. The second sees reconciliation as an exercise in “meaning-making” about the past, led by either political elites, or local communities, or both. The third takes the restorative justice approach to its logical extreme, positing forgiveness (or in more secular terms, pardons or amnesties) as a prerequisite for individual, but also societal reconciliation.

Reconciliation as Justice: The Retribution versus Restoration Dichotomy

A first approach privileges the relationship between reconciliation and justice; this occupies by far the largest number of scholars and practitioners engaged with the subject-matter, at times referred to as “transitional justice”. Echoing this trend, the justice paradigm is also the reconciliation paradigm that “observers” of Rwanda (academics, journalists, etc.) emphasise the most. Indeed, even a cursory glance at the titles published on post-genocide Rwanda reveals that the vast bulk of writings and analysis focus on one or more of the three “justice” prongs, namely the ICTR, the *gacaca* courts, and (much less often) the Rwandan national courts (see *inter alia* Betts, 2005; Kasaija, 2006; Moghalu, 2005; PRI, 2005; Schabas, 2005; Waldorf, 2006a).⁸⁶ There is however significant debate on what kind of justice is conducive to reconciliation. In these works, the answer is usually presented as a choice between retributive justice, or justice as punishment, and some form of restorative

⁸⁶ This focus on justice, if exclusive, overlooks the myriad of other, non-judicial reconciliation initiatives that are either being spear-headed by the government (civic re-education camps, economic development and poverty reduction campaigns, the emphasis on Rwandan traditions and values, etc., see Chapter 1) or, as this thesis will show, are occurring in ways that are “un-planned” and therefore invisible to the policy world (life experiences *since* the genocide for example, Chapters 6 and 8).

justice, or justice as rehabilitating victim and offender – though increasingly, there is recognition that a mix of restorative and retributive measures is not only compatible, but potentially a more opportune mix for post-conflict contexts.⁸⁷

Retributive Justice: Justice as Punishment

In Western culture in particular, it is said that justice is first and foremost understood to mean retribution, or vengeance “curbed in accordance with principles of proportionality and individual rights” (Betts, 2005, p. 744). This is classical courtroom justice involving an assumption of innocence until proven guilty, an exposition of facts, a clear verdict of individuals’ guilt or innocence, and punishment of wrongdoers when applicable. There are both strong moral and practical arguments to be made in favour of this approach. One case lies with the argument of deterrence: punish offenders, and other potential offenders, are much less likely to re-offend (Maogoto, 2006).⁸⁸ But there are other arguments, including the inherent morality of inflicting some form of suffering on the offender, the individualisation of guilt, and the uncovering and documenting of “factual truth” for posterity. However, if the end-goal of retributive justice is reconciliation, it is important to underscore the distinction between retribution and revenge.⁸⁹ Revenge is about the victim and his or her feelings of vindictiveness; it tends to be cyclical and destructive. Retribution on the other hand is about “[l]egal punishment [which] carries no implication that the point of the offender’s suffering is to satisfy the victim, and the victim is not the agent of legally authorized punishment.” (Govier, 2002, p. 17) Though proponents of retribution rather dogmatically assert that it will lead to reconciliation, it is unclear which (revenge or retribution) if any lead to reconciliation and for whom.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Waldorf argues that touted cases of “successful” restorative justice – the truth commissions in South Africa, East Timor and Sierra Leone – in fact all benefited from a lesser publicised, concurrent retributive component, i.e. the threat of criminal investigation and prosecutions (Waldorf, 2006a, p. 16).

⁸⁸ This is a point made repeatedly by the RPF government, and notably by my grassroots respondents. See in particular Chapter 5.

⁸⁹ Let’s recall at this juncture that not all, indeed few, proponents of criminal prosecutions for crimes against humanity and genocide, state that the end-goal of trials is, or should be reconciliation: Fierens (2005), writing on Rwanda, states that: “Tribunals, regardless of their nature, do not find their place in processes of reconciliation [...] The law can only provide the circumstances for future reconciliation, which might take place, if at all, elsewhere...” (p. 918-9) Nonetheless, several authors do make this connection between trials and reconciliation, and the present section focuses on them.

⁹⁰ This rejoins Wilson’s (2000) argument about revenge being a possible, perhaps more sustainable route to reconciliation. See discussion under “Reconciliation as Beneficial”, below.

Several human rights advocacy groups, typically based in the West, take a very uncompromising, pro-retribution stand: a successful war-to-peace transition requires the prosecution and punishment of individuals, they argue. Human Rights Watch (HRW) for example, includes “bringing offenders to justice” in its mission statement (HRW, undated). HRW Director, Kenneth Roth, and Senior Advisor and Rwanda expert Alison DesForges, in a rebuttal piece to Helena Cobban’s essay on alternatives to retributive justice in Rwanda, argue categorically that “it is precisely at a time of atrocities [...] that a policy of trial and punishment is essential” (Roth and DesForges, 2002), and in so doing sidestep such issues as political stability and institutional capacity, among other things. Grounded in the logic of cosmopolitan law, universal human rights, and individual moral agency, the “legal retributivists” advocate for international criminal courts in circumstances where national courts are unable or unwilling to prosecute crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide – crimes that concern humanity as a whole. If reconciliation means something less than assigning legal responsibility for one’s acts, then it is a ruse to disguise “purer” types of justice, and it allows impunity and resentment to fester. In other words, reconciliation without “real” justice is unsound, both morally and practically. This is the legal retributivist tradition at its most extreme.

Authors and organisations which most neatly fall into this “retributive justice” category include, as mentioned above, HRW and Amnesty International (AI).⁹¹ Several distinguished law professors perhaps predictably fall into this category; the most clear-cut example is that of Orentlicher (1991), who spoke of the “duty to prosecute” in post-conflict settings – albeit, if need be, selectively (see p. 2598 *inter alia*). A UN report on amnesty laws, authored by Louis Joinet, vociferously argues against anything short of trials, concluding that “an amnesty covering persons guilty of conduct involving a serious infringement of human dignity [...] far from encouraging national reconciliation, would only increase tension” (Joinet, 1996). Kambudzi even claims that trials of war criminals and human rights violators can go “much further to enhance [...] soothing and

⁹¹ Interestingly, the RPF government’s official position in the early years after 1994 itself fell squarely in this legal retributivist camp, alongside HRW and AI, though the government’s position has since evolved substantially (see Chapter 3).

healing” than other truth revelation and reconciliation initiatives, such as TRCs (Kambudzi, 2006, p. 37).⁹²

Yet, it is precisely in those contexts where reconciliation is most called for that justice in the retributive sense is least possible (van Zyl and Freeman, 2002, p. 5). The former government that committed or allowed the crimes may still command the loyalty of (part of) the military. National courts may not be functional or independent and may do more harm than good if asked to intervene. Internationally financed courts do not necessarily side-step the issue of independence.⁹³ They are also costly, bureaucratic, require long lead times, and can be perceived as illegitimate, or as threats to the concerned nation’s sovereignty (Chuter, 2003). These concerns are only partly remedied by the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court. Sarkin (2001, p. 148) acknowledges these difficulties and lists a series of considerations to be taken into account in decisions on whether to prosecute.⁹⁴

Restorative Justice: Bringing in Victim, Offender and Community

Though proponents advocate it as an alternative to prosecutions under all circumstances, it is usually only when prosecutions are untenable for political or other reasons that the language of restorative justice comes in. Proponents of restorative justice claim to define “justice” in a more holistic way by viewing crime, including in contexts of mass human rights abuses, war and genocide, as harm done to *people* and *relationships* rather than as a violation of the law (Braithwaite, 1999). Accordingly, the line between victim and offender

⁹² Some “legal retributivists” will include non-criminal (non-penal) sanctions in the panoply of what can be considered legitimate punishment: one example is an administrative measure such as lustration, i.e. purges of the civil and security services, of former, often senior officials that were closely associated with the abuses of the previous regimes (on lustrations in post-Soviet bloc states see Kritz, 1995; on de-Baathification in Iraq, see Meierhenrich, 2006).

⁹³ This is certainly the case of the controversial ICTR. On the one hand, it has not been able to try war crimes allegedly perpetrated by the RPA (see Chapter 1). It has accordingly been accused of trying only “Hutu crimes” and imposing a form of victors’ justice. On the other hand, scandals involving fee-splitting between defense council and defendants, as well as general mismanagement problems and the exclusion of the death penalty in ICTR sentencing have discredited it as, respectively, corrupt, incompetent and too soft in the eyes of many Rwandans including the government in Kigali (US Department of State, 2002, see Section 4).

⁹⁴ These considerations are: “ (1) the nature of the transition and whether the former regime is still capable of an effective uprising; (2) the type and extent of crimes; (3) the applicability of old and new laws; (4) the judiciary’s capacity to guarantee fair trials; (5) the public perception of the intention behind the trials and the effect the trials could have on reconciliation; (6) the cost and resource question in relation to other priorities; and (7) the effect of trials on investor confidence.”

in these contexts is blurred (Minow, 1998).⁹⁵ So, justice is better served through the restorative approach because it takes into account the needs, psychological and economic, of the victims, the perpetrators, and of a society as a whole. In restorative models, victims may even come out empowered when, for example, the offender repents or, at least, confesses. By contrast, retributive, prosecutorial approaches focus on the offender - victims are either ignored during trials or compelled to testify in ways that are psychologically harmful to them, and society pays for penal and legal systems that are more likely to produce repeat offenders.

Generally, the restorative justice approach stresses the importance of focusing on repairing existing (or forging new) relationships between victim and perpetrator (Lederach, 1997; Umbreit, 2001). This can be done through “personalising” the crime committed by bringing victim and offender face-to-face with the help of a trained mediator.⁹⁶ Reparations programmes (symbolic and/or monetary) for victims are also frequently promoted (ICTJ and IDRC, 2004; de Greiff, 2006), as are public and participatory “truth acknowledgment” exercises, i.e. truth commissions, as opposed to historical commissions, parliamentary inquiries or the factual truth of courts of law (see on Rwanda, Sarkin, 1999; Bolocan, 2004). Indigenous or traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are also shown much respect within the restorative approach (Honwana, 2005; Penal Reform International, 2002; Quinn, 2006).

The Limitations of the Restorative-Retributive Dichotomy

Restorative justice approaches come with a host of assumptions. They assume that offender and victim are operating in the same moral framework: in other words, the wrong-doer recognizes s/he has done wrong. They often assume that (i) an apology has been proffered, that (ii) it is (perceived as) sincere, and that (iii) this somehow soothes the suffering of the victim. This is seen for example in the “revealing is healing” slogan used during the South

⁹⁵ In some cases, the offender is also considered to be a victim: Antje Krog’s *Country of My Skull* provides vivid anecdotal evidence on the psychological toll perpetrators of violence and their families can pay for years after the event (Krog, 1998).

⁹⁶ These interventions are typically referred to as Victim-Offender Mediation Programmes (VOMP) or Victim-Offender Reconciliation Programmes (VORP).

African TRC.⁹⁷ Perversely, some writing on restorative justice even tends to stigmatize members of the victim group who continue to feel vengeful and angry, describing them as suffering from trauma or brutalisation.⁹⁸ Yet, it is all too easy to forget that experiencing these kinds of emotions after a wrong has been committed to oneself, one's family, or one's community is instinctive natural and indeed, human.

An important misconception, increasingly recognised in the literature, concerns the line between restorative and retributive justice: is it as clear as it is often made out to be? The dichotomy between the two may be a false one. In Rwanda, some authors argue that both retributive and restorative models appear to be working side-by-side, within the institution of *gacaca* (see Bolocan, 2004; Kirby, 2006), though others argue that the retributive, State-enforced character of *gacaca* has overshadowed and undermined its initial restorative and reconciliatory aims (Tiemessen, 2004; Waldorf, 2006a).⁹⁹ Moreover, the application of restorative principles to penal systems has been experimented with in a host of countries, including Canada, the UK, the US, New Zealand, Belgium and South Africa; these are referred to as “restorative corrections” or “restorative detention” and happen within the prisons. Some of these countries are also experimenting with alternatives to prison sentences based on restorative approaches (Levin, 2005).

The above discussion has raised several other points deserving clarification. Is there, as legal retributivists argue, a hierarchy of justice, with restorative justice being inferior? Is the “factual truth” produced by trials superior to accounts produced by commissions of enquiry or truth commissions, for example? Are trials better suited to cope with unrepentant offenders, if indeed any significance should be accorded to repentance at all – as it is in the restorative tradition? And who should decide which model (restorative or

⁹⁷ This and other untested yet widely accepted assumptions about reconciliation processes are discussed below. See Section 2.4, “The Wishful Thinking Syndrome”.

⁹⁸ See discussion under “Reconciliation as Beneficial”.

⁹⁹ Though it was originally a traditional conflict resolution mechanism firmly rooted in the restorative approach, in its current form - *gacaca* verdicts are enforced by the State not by the moral authority of the elders mediating the dispute, and verdicts can and often do include jail time - *gacaca* includes important elements of the retributive approach. In this sense, modern *gacaca* combines elements of both approaches – hence pointing to the falseness of the retributive-restorative dichotomy (Betts, 2005, p. 743; see also Chapter 1).

retributive) or mix of models is more appropriate? In the wake of World War II, it was the victorious Allies who decided that German and Japanese war criminals should be tried in Nuremberg and Tokyo, and set up and staffed special international tribunals to that effect. The validity of these trials remains contentious to this day. More recently, donor governments and the broader International Community have influenced to various degrees the choices made by developing countries – where the bulk of the civil wars have taken place since the 1990s.¹⁰⁰

Though restorative justice is not necessarily a lesser justice, it is to my mind deeply morally problematic in instances where it is taken to its logical extreme, i.e. the granting of forgiveness by the victim, or by government institutions *on behalf of* the victim, regardless of the offender's attitude or behaviour.¹⁰¹ Though advocates are careful to make the distinction, it can be argued that the logic of restorative justice leads unavoidably to a form of institutional forgiveness, or amnesty. These issues will be taken up in more detail in the discussion of the third paradigm, reconciliation as forgiveness.

Reconciliation as Re-interpreting the Past for a Better Future: The “Meaning Making” Paradigm

A second approach is one that sees reconciliation not as a legal or even a social question, but an epistemological one involving meaning-making (Eltringham, 2004). It rejoins some post-modern thinking that all historical truth is subjective, that there is no one, coherent Truth, and that history is a selective and interpretative account of the past (White, 1973). As we will see in Chapter 3, the RPF government's conception and operationalisation of reconciliation relies heavily on this revision of memory paradigm.

According to this school of thought, the root of the problem is the drastically different, indeed incompatible ways in which adversarial sides in conflict and post-conflict contexts understand, and describe the *same events*. As Ignatieff writes: “[e]ither the siege of

¹⁰⁰ In the case of Rwanda, we saw in Chapter 1 that the UN Security Council voted for the creation of the ICTR in November 1994 despite the fact that Rwanda, which had originally called for the Tribunal, ultimately cast the only vote opposing the Resolution due to disagreements over location, structure and mandate. (Rwanda coincidentally had a seat on the UN Security Council in 1994, and was therefore invited to cast a vote.)

¹⁰¹ The ramifications of an institutionalised form of forgiveness (in the context of two rural communities in southern Rwanda) are introduced in Chapter 5 and discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Sarajevo was a deliberate attempt to terrorize and subvert a legitimately elected, internationally recognized state, or it was a legitimate preemptive defense by the Serbs of their homeland against Muslim attack. It cannot be both.” (Ignatieff, 1997, p. 175-6) Lemarchand picks up the same point, referring the “the meta-conflict – the conflict about the nature of the conflict” and the “radically different cognitive maps” political actors (in this case, in Burundi) have, “each connecting past and present through divergent paths.” (Lemarchand, 1994, p. 17) Reconciliation then is the process of revising adversaries’ incompatible descriptions of events in order to arrive at an acceptable, shared dominant narrative.

Doxtader and Villa-Vincencio, of the South African Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, are part of this “meaning making” school of thought. The stuff of reconciliation, according to them, is “not what *is* the conflict but what are the ways that participants describe it and is there room to forge common ground from within these different and often opposed perceptions?” (Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio, 2003, xvii) Dwyer concurs: “[i]n my account of reconciliation, the core notion is that of bringing apparently incompatible descriptions of events into narrative equilibrium.” (Dwyer, 1999) Van Bisbergen has a similar conception: “reconciliation is a creative social act of rearrangement and reinterpretation.” (van Bisbergen, 2001)

Psychologists writing on reconciliation have taken up the same idea, sometimes using the vocabulary of identity-formation, or the process by which we progressively accommodate new information from our environments in ways that allow us to preserve our beliefs about ourselves and the world. Hicks, using Piaget’s (1954) work on identity-formation, argues that there are limits to how much and how fast we can accommodate new, destabilising information within our internally consistent repository of beliefs. When this accommodation capacity is overloaded, for example in situations of violent conflict, a self-preservation instinct kicks in: “beliefs become rigid and extremely resistant to change, complexity is lost, certainty of our assessment of what is ‘right’ rises, and the feeling of

ambivalence about what we ‘know’ is lost” (Hicks, 2001, p. 137).¹⁰² Reconciliation, she concludes, is the creation of conditions allowing two former enemies to develop a “mutually tolerable” interpretation of events (Hicks, 2001, p. 146). Bar-Tal (2000) defines reconciliation in comparable terms: “Reconciliation [...] refers to a societal-cultural process that encompasses the majority of society members, who form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship between the two groups.” Attaining this “narrative equilibrium” or this “mutually tolerable” version of history is usually understood as having a beneficial, or “healing” effect on all parties concerned (see discussion below, on “The Wishful Thinking Syndrome”). Similarly, Staub (2003), discussing the Rwandan case, emphasises the importance of victims and “members of the perpetrator group” understanding the process which led to violence, including through studying other contexts where genocide took place. This “makes survivors and members of the perpetrator group more willing to accept each other [and leads to healing and reconciliation]” in part because “[s]urvivors can see the acts of perpetrators, horrific as they are, as more human in origin.” (p. 803)

What remains a point of debate is who should be guiding this process of revisiting, and re-interpreting, the past? Some authors think that in order to ensure sustainability, the mutually tolerable narratives must emerge from the grassroots. Reconciliation is thus a “track two” affair – in opposition to “track one”, the official track of international relations, involving formal government channels and heads of State.¹⁰³ Pankhurst for example concludes that “reconciliation is generally a more domestic affair in which the roles of members of the international community should be limited to supporting what emerges from within societies” (Pankhurst, 1999. p. 255). Partly, this belief stems from the romanticism tied to whatever comes from the grassroots and its reputed “authenticity”. Accordingly, civil society should be spearheading, or at least be extensively consulted and involved in, reconciliation processes. Local communities need to be mobilised.

¹⁰² Pham, Weinstein and Longman’s (2004) results from a survey conducted in 4 Rwandan communes are compatible with this argument. The survey showed that attitudes towards reconciliation were significantly correlated with whether respondents had been exposed to traumatic events in 1994 and whether they exhibited PTSD symptoms.

¹⁰³ The term “track two diplomacy” is attributed to Joseph Montville. He was speaking of the work of religious organisations and NGOs conducted outside the regular – track one – government channels (Helmick, Raymond et al., 2001, p. 4).

Reconciliation cannot be legislated or imposed in a top-down fashion. “In any case, reconciliation in the sense of learning to live together peacefully is a goal that can only be achieved at the local level, not delivered from above” (Dougherty, 2004, p. 50). It is in this light that observers of the well-known case of South Africa argue that the government’s approach was too top-down, neglecting to take sufficient account of the perceptions, confusions and frustrations of the 43 million “ordinary” South Africans (Bloomfield, Barnes et al., 2003, p. 25; Borer, 2004). As my use of Scott’s terminology of “public” and “hidden transcripts” foreshadows, a similar dynamic is at play in Rwanda; Chapter 7 explores these questions in the context of two rural communities in southern Rwanda.

Another strand in the reconciliation as meaning making literature emphasises the role of political leaders, both nationally and internationally. The argument made is that without an “enabling” environment, i.e. a political discourse at the national level, reconciliation is a non-starter. Nelson Mandela’s legendary leadership in South Africa is a frequently cited example – could the more or less non-violent transition from Apartheid to democracy have been possible without his conciliatory words and deeds? The potentially positive (or negative) role of official memorials, museums, and formal apologies – or symbolic gestures of remorse falling short of apologies - by heads of state, has been the topic of many writings. In 1997, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Irish potato famine, Tony Blair “almost” apologised for British “policy failure” (Edkins, 2003, p. 114). In 1998, Bill Clinton offered something close to an apology in Rwanda, on behalf of the West’s inaction during the 1994 genocide. The next year, he made a similar statement regarding US involvement in Guatemala’s 36 year-long internal war. Japanese officials, including former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, have repeatedly apologised for Japanese troops’ conduct during World War II. In Australia, “apology books” were displayed so citizens could sign their names in acknowledgement of how the white settlers had treated the Aboriginal community over two centuries (Summerfield, 1999, p. 421). All of these apologies caused a significant amount of controversy.

Wilson (2001) makes a related point about political elites and “healing truths”, arguing that commissions of enquiry and official truth and reconciliation commissions,

through the “Truth” they are tasked with producing, are better understood as nationalistic tools at the service of a new elite interested in constructing a new myth for a new nation. In this light, truth commissions have little to do with helping individual survivors heal, or with contributing towards some form of (restorative) justice – as they are frequently, and publicly proclaimed to do. This suggests an important question on the role of historians, but also on the function of truth commissions. Do they produce truth? For whose benefit?¹⁰⁴

Truth commissions and commissions of enquiry are one institutional embodiment of the meaning making paradigm: the South African post-Apartheid experience has brought much attention to the truth commission, but (parliamentary) commissions of enquiry, and/or historical commissions (typically looking into events that are decades old) and/or non-governmental reports are similarly aimed at publicly documenting and acknowledging the truth about particular episodes of mass human rights violations (Freeman and Hayner, 2003, p. 123-4). This “meaning making” paradigm of reconciliation can also translate into a host of educational initiatives such as civic (re-)education programmes, the revision of history curricula and/or the inclusion of peace and human rights education in schools, and work with the media: all of these programmes are present in Rwanda (cf. Chapters 1). The latter in particular is gaining the attention of practitioners and donors as the potential role of the media as a peacebuilding tool has been recognised (Howard, Rolt et al., undated).¹⁰⁵

Another way “reconciliation as meaning making” has been operationalised is through a range of initiatives that promote contact between formerly warring parties. Associations or programmes specifically designed to foster cross-party contact and cooperation, such as small-scale income generation projects, are good examples. Premised on a seminal concept in psychology and sociology, dubbed the “Contact Hypothesis”,

¹⁰⁴ In the Rwandan context, the *gacaca* courts embody precisely this kind of dual dynamic. Because *gacaca*, like the Rwandan national courts and the ICTR, do not discuss RPF crimes (Corey and Joireman, 2004), they can be seen as an attempt to impose a new version of Rwandan history that favours the current political elite. On the other hand, because of the central role played by local communities in *gacaca* – judges are elected from the communities in which the courts sit and the (pre-trial) proceedings can only progress when a certain quorum is reached, guaranteeing a degree of popular participation – *gacaca* can also be understood as providing a platform for local debates on reconciliation and the generation of local histories. See Chapter 5 for discussion of “official” versus “grassroots” Truths.

¹⁰⁵ See for example the work of an NGO called LaBenevolencija, which produces weekly radio programmes in Rwanda aimed at fostering reconciliation (Paluck, 2005).

revisited in Chapter 6, which states that contact helps “unfreeze” negative stereotypes of the other (Allport, 1954; Sherif, Harvey et al., 1961), the rationale is that such interventions make a more nuanced reinterpretation of the past, and the emergence of a mutually-tolerant interpretation, more likely. However, the somewhat naïve idea that “social contact will naturally occur and inevitably lead to positive results” has been refuted by the few evaluations that have been attempted. Indeed, it was found that “superficial contact can generate conflict rather than harmony.” (Minow, 2004, p. 218) The Contact Hypothesis has since been refined to include provisions for the context within which contact occurs.¹⁰⁶

As in the case of the justice paradigm, authors who see reconciliation as meaning making are also faced with normative conundrums. Indeed, cast in a more negative light, does “meaning making” come down to selective forgetting?¹⁰⁷ If it is true that to some extent “[a]ll nations depend on forgetting: on forging myths of unity and identity that allow a society to forget its founding crimes, its hidden injuries and divisions, its unhealed wounds” (Ignatieff, 1997, p. 170), is this forgetting necessarily a bad thing, a form of disrespect to the dead? Moreover, the question mentioned above about who should be revising memory – the “elites”, the “grassroots”, or some form of joint effort – is also important because it addresses the point made by Wilson regarding motive. Do self-interested government elites produce versions of history that suit their interests? Should this be overlooked in favour of stability? What about individual victims? These questions are taken up again below (cf. Section 2.4).

Reconciliation as Forgiveness

The third paradigm was mentioned in the discussion on restorative justice: the logic behind the restorative approach taken to its extreme leads to reconciliation as *requiring* forgiveness. There are strong religious connotations to this and indeed the most high-profile proponent of this paradigm is South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu.¹⁰⁸ Though he

¹⁰⁶ The Contact Hypothesis is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁷ Such “selective forgetting” certainly seems to be an integral part of the RPF’s historical narrative (cf. Chapter 5).

¹⁰⁸ This is how Graybill describes Tutu’s chairmanship style at the TRC: “Dressed in ecclesiastical garb, Tutu officiated at the hearings as if he were conducting a sacred service-opening with prayer, leading hymns and lighting holy candles in memory of those who had sacrificed themselves. Although the TRC’s enabling legislation had not been framed in religious terms, the former Anglican archbishop and his co-chairman, Alex

makes no excuses for the deeply religious and more specifically, Christian roots of his understanding of reconciliation, he attempts to draw in audiences with other religious backgrounds and more secular audiences. He does this by referencing African culture, through the concept of *ubuntu*: Africans, he argues, are “generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. [...] We say, ‘a person is a person through other people’” (Tutu, 1999, p. 34-5). He also appeals to audiences’ pragmatism: “[t]o forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest.” (Tutu, 1999, p. 35) Indeed, Rigby explains that “as long as people hold on to their identity as victims”, they “will remain imprisoned by their personal and collective memories”; only forgiveness can break “this destructive cycle” (Rigby, 2002, p. 2).

However, the deep religious connotations, especially Judeo-Christian, are important to recognise and draw out.¹⁰⁹ Forgiveness is emphasised in Christian teachings, where it is required to forgive even one’s enemies, unconditionally and universally (Govier, 2002, p. 158-9). Part of the reasoning behind this is human fallibility; as humans we are bound to commit sins, and accordingly we will all ask for someone else’s forgiveness one day, including ultimately, God’s. Almost obligatory, this generalised Christian forgiveness has a strong *unilateral* angle: the sinner’s repentance is not mandatory.¹¹⁰ Conversely in Judaism, repentance is integral to forgiveness. However, once repentance is expressed adequately, the obligation to forgive is much more explicit than in Christian teachings. In Jewish tradition, if a wrongdoer approaches his/her victim three times asking forgiveness and showing clear repentance, and is three times refused, it is the *victim* who has failed in her/his duty to forgive. Provided that the wrongdoer repents, there is thus an *obligation* to

Boraine, a former president of the Methodist Church, certainly set the religious tone to the proceedings.” (Graybill, 2004, p. 1118)

¹⁰⁹ In other major world religions, forgiveness appears to be less emphasised. In Buddhism for example, the law of karma means that a wrongdoer will be punished for his deeds later or in another life, and virtuous people will be rewarded, without human interference (Harvey, 2000, p. 27-9).

¹¹⁰ Catholicism has been the dominant religion in Rwanda since the colonial period (Longman, 1998, p. 51). As an example, of the 37 people I interviewed in Maraba district (see Chapter 5 for complete profile of this group), 31 were practicing Catholics, 3 were in the Pentecostal Church, there was one Adventist respondent, one Muslim respondent and finally one respondent who reported no religious affiliation. Of these, some cited their religion’s emphasis on the obligation to forgive: “[n]ow we will forgive them. What else can we do? Even God asks that we forgive.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor) See Chapter 7 for a full discussion of the “institutionalisation of forgiveness”.

forgive in Judaism. Interestingly, many Jews – intellectuals, survivors, religious leaders – argue that an exception be made for the Holocaust.¹¹¹

These arguments, though thought-provoking, do not satisfy secular audiences. Nor do they offer much advice on how to settle concrete and complex problems in daily life: “[t]o ground an ethic and politics of human forgiveness on theological premises is difficult, owing to the uncertainty both of the premises and of their implications.” (Govier, 2002, p. 158) Indeed, different theories about God have led to different theories about forgiveness, as outlined in a simplified form in the previous paragraph. Even within one religious tradition, there can be significant discord about interpretations.

Moreover, in much of the writing on forgiveness in contexts of mass atrocities, there is a lack of clarity regarding agency: who forgives? who is being forgiven? can nations forgive or is this the reserve of individuals? The classical model of forgiveness implies an individual victim and wrong-doer. Writing in the wake of the Holocaust, Simon Wiesenthal argues in his famous *The Sunflower* that forgiveness is fundamentally an “act of volition, and only the sufferer is qualified to make the decision” (Wiesenthal, 1998, p. 13). The sociologist Nicholas Tavuchis similarly argues that “once the symbolic overture [a sincere apology] has been made, the victim alone holds the key” (Tavuchis, 1991, p. 34). Increasingly however, “political forgiveness” is being discussed, in line with public apologies by political figures and other symbolic acts of contrition or clemency. Amstutz elaborates a theory of political forgiveness in his book *The Healing of Nations*. He calls on “political actors to confront their culpability and responsibility through the acknowledgement of truth, the expression of remorse, and a willingness to offer reparations and accept punishment.” The victims, on the other hand, “must refrain from vengeance, express empathy, and respond to repentance by reducing or eliminating the offenders’ debts or the deserved punishment or both.” (Amstutz, 2005, p. 5)

¹¹¹ Rabbi Meir Y. Soloveichik argues that hate and unforgiveness are actually virtues in Judaism under certain circumstances. This is what Jesus, Christianity’s founder, acknowledged and disagreed with from the outset (Soloveichik, February 2003). On a related point, social psychologists at UC Berkeley and the University of Pennsylvania found that Jews were more inclined to find crimes unforgivable than Protestants, and that religious commitment was more positively correlated to the belief in unforgivable crimes among Jews than among Protestants (Cohen, Malka et al., 2006).

One offshoot of the “political forgiveness” paradigm is the granting of amnesties by government authorities. Though they are considered against the norms of international law (Orentlicher, 1991), amnesties have been used in countless contexts.¹¹² Here too, the argument of “the self-interest of forgiveness” is used by some, particularly in instances where “forgiving” the (still influential) wrong-doers is a politico-military necessity to safeguard a fragile peace.¹¹³ Conversely, and echoing the debate between retributive and restorative justice proponents, others argue that amnesty laws are short-sighted, allow the perpetuation of the culture of impunity, and ultimately counter-productive (Huysse, 2003, p. 109).¹¹⁴

What little common ground exists between proponents and opponents of “political forgiveness” is found in the sphere of conditional amnesties.¹¹⁵ The South African TRC’s celebrated (and unprecedented) use of such amnesties – amnesties granted on a case by case (individual) basis in return for something (in the South African case, the exposition of the truth on wrongdoings, if deemed complete by the TRC authorities) – was, according to its own report, pivotal to the TRC’s completion of its mandated tasks (South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998, Vol. 1 Chap 5, p. 128). For similar reasons, Daly argues for conditional amnesties to be used in the Rwandan context, via the *gacaca* courts. This would concurrently eschew the many problems faced by the courts – important procedural deficiencies, huge caseload, the “politicised application” of the *gacaca* law (i.e. not applied

¹¹² And indeed, appear to be increasing in frequency: Mallinder documents a clear rise in the number of amnesty laws passed world-wide since World War II, with the highest numbers coming since the establishment of ad hoc tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda (Mallinder, 2007, p. 209-10).

¹¹³ The transitions in Latin America in the 1980s were with few exceptions characterised by amnesties, usually self-granted by out-going elites. Raoul Alfonsin, the former president of Argentina, for example, defended his government’s limiting of who could be held accountable of atrocities committed under the military dictatorship by stating that “punishments are morally justified only if and when they are effective in preventing society from suffering greater harm” (Alfonsin, 1993, p. 18). However, a number of these Latin American amnesty laws have since been overturned.

¹¹⁴ Kritz (2002, p. 33) argues that the “amnesty logic” backfired in Sierra Leone when, within a year of the signing of the 1999 Lomé peace agreement, which featured an “absolute and free pardon to all combatants and collaborators in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives”, RUF rebels had breached the agreement and resumed attacks on civilians. Mozambique, however, stands as a counter-example: a blanket amnesty was given to (then) rebel (i.e. Renamo) and government (i.e. Frelimo) forces in 1992, ten days after a peace agreement was signed – a peace which has been sustained for over 15 years (Graybill, 2004, p. 1124-5).

¹¹⁵ In their use of conditional amnesties, the forgiveness paradigm of reconciliation and the (restorative) justice paradigm of reconciliation can and do overlap, as in the case of the South African TRC discussed here.

to RPF crimes) – while enhancing *gacaca* courts’ ability to promote reconciliation (Daly, 2002, p. 393).

To buttress the forgiveness paradigm in post-conflict contexts, however, a number of problematic claims must be made. For instance, in the context of “regime offences, such as genocide or society-wide crimes”, Amstutz argues that guilt is “partly collective” (Amstutz, 2005, p. 7). This is a highly controversial statement. An obvious danger is that the argument of collective guilt is open to abuse by victim lobby groups.¹¹⁶ A closely related point is the question of whether moral and legal responsibility for past abuses can be hereditary. Amstutz further argues that: “[b]ecause governments make decisions on behalf of political communities, they are moral agents for groups and nations, capable of fulfilling conditions for the granting and receiving forgiveness” (Amstutz, 2005, p. 12). This is also problematic for several reasons. First, we have seen that Wiesenthal argues that only the sufferer is qualified, morally, to forgive. Second, it is unclear if “political communities” can be considered to have psyches like individuals do (Ignatieff, 1997). And third, as Wilson (2001) asks in his discussion of truth commissions, in whose interests are representatives of these political communities acting?¹¹⁷ Applying the interpersonal meaning of forgiveness to a collective or political level of analysis is for these and other reasons, highly contentious.

All three paradigms, and the reconciliation literature more broadly, are therefore permeated by unresolved and frequently overlooked considerations, both of a normative and practical character. Examples of these unresolved questions include: Who should decide what kind of model of justice should be used? For whose benefit is memory and identity being reshaped and why? Who is entitled to bestow forgiveness or amnesty?

¹¹⁶ This is the thrust of Finkelstein’s argument in his *The Holocaust Industry* (Finkelstein, 2000). In the Rwanda context, the controversy surrounding the collectivization of guilt for the genocide to all Hutu is mentioned in Chapter 1, and will be discussed in several later chapters as well.

¹¹⁷ All of these questions are relevant to the Rwandan context and will be returned to in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

2.4 Weaknesses in the Literature

Even though thinking and writing on reconciliation share some core characteristics (Section 2.2) and can be categorised in more or less comprehensive explanatory frameworks (Section 2.3), fundamental points of clarification and disagreement remain. Here, I single out two points that are unsatisfactorily dealt with in the literature, and that I will revisit and refine throughout the thesis, as well as address more comprehensively in the Conclusion.

Who is Reconciling with Whom? Ignoring Agency

A first point concerns the question of agency in reconciliation processes, and the related points of moral legitimacy and sustainability. The question of agency is relevant to all three paradigms. Taking the three in turn: Who should be deciding on the model of justice to be used (the International Community? the new government? the affected populations?) Who should be guiding the process of narrative revision (the national elites? the ‘grassroots’?) And, who should be acting as the agent of forgiveness – and apology (individual victims and offenders, or their representatives?) In the Rwandan case, much tension arises out of the central role the RPF government has given itself in the reconciliation process, to the detriment of local (community) dynamics – giving rise to the “hidden transcripts” documented in Chapters 4 and 5. This top-down approach to reconciliation is analysed in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

An underlying problem all these questions share is one hinted at in the discussion regarding the conceptualisation of reconciliation as a continuum: is reconciliation cumulative? We saw that Borer made the distinction between Individual Reconciliation (IR) and National Unity and Reconciliation (NUR). This distinction suggests important implications. Does it take a certain number of individuals committed to reconciliation and reconciled themselves with their victims or tormenters, to lead to a critical mass which in turn makes group reconciliation possible? Are individual and group processes mutually reinforcing? However, in at least some cases, interpersonal reconciliation is distinct, and in fact potentially in tension with, political reconciliation. A simple example is that individual reconciliation may require prosecutorial justice, or even revenge, whereas political (or national) reconciliation may only work in a context where a certain degree of amnesty is guaranteed. This tension between individual and national reconciliation, or the “thick”

(individual) and “think” (group) meanings of reconciliation, has not been explicitly incorporated into conceptions of reconciliation, with authors tending to slip from one level of analysis to the other.¹¹⁸ We see this tension reflected in the Rwandan case, where (as we will review in Chapter 8) the RPF government uses thick meanings whereas grassroots and Rwandan elites use thin and even thinner vocabulary (respectively) to describe their understandings and expectations of reconciliation. We also see the RPF as self-elected central actor, “imposing” its reconciliation model in ways that are at times counter-productive.

The “Wishful Thinking” Syndrome

A second source of confusion in the literature on reconciliation stems from what I have termed a “wishful thinking” syndrome, or a conflation of aspiration on the one hand, and fact on the other. Slogans such as “truth leads to reconciliation” or “revealing is healing” are examples of this.¹¹⁹ Though these propositions have never been tested, commissions of enquiry into past abuses have now been almost universally re-branded “truth and reconciliation” commissions (see above). Furthermore, what is perhaps a normative statement, truth *should* lead to reconciliation, or a tentatively advanced hypothesis, revealing *may* help healing, have taken on the qualities of universal axioms.¹²⁰ In Hayner’s study of over twenty truth commissions around the world, this is among the first things she notes: “[u]nfortunately, many comfortable assumptions have been restated over and again in untested assertions [...] Some of the most oft-repeated statements, and those that we perhaps most wish to be true, are due careful scrutiny.” (Hayner, 2001, p. 6) Borer concurs: on whether truth leads to reconciliation, she states “the exact opposite could also be true: truth commissions might exacerbate anger and pain.” (Borer, 2004, p. 21) This “wishful

¹¹⁸ One notable exception does exist however, and it is found in discussions regarding collective guilt – which are particularly relevant in the Rwandan case. There is no consensus on the merits and morality of collective guilt. In the case of Rwanda, the accused allegedly actively and directly participated. But what about bystanders? Parents or neighbours who pointed out where Tutsi were hiding? Or people who turned away Tutsi looking for help? Accordingly, assessing guilt in the wake of the Rwandan genocide is extremely complex, due to the complexity of the crime itself.

¹¹⁹ Both commonly used slogans during the work of the South African TRC.

¹²⁰ Similar slogans used in Rwanda, and found on billboards (part of a government awareness-raising campaign for *gacaca*) in Kigali and major town centres across the country, include: “Let us talk about what we saw, let us admit what we did, and that will heal us.”; “Truth, Justice, Reconciliation.”; “The truth will set you free.” I am grateful to Constance Morrill for bringing these to my attention.

thinking syndrome” represents a big obstacle to empirically-informed thinking on reconciliation.

The Democracy Assumption

One example of this “wishful thinking” syndrome is the widespread assumption that successful reconciliation processes require a democratic or democratising, or “transitional”, backdrop. Indeed, Bloomfield writes that “democracy underpins reconciliation” but that likewise “reconciliation underpins democracy” and that “[d]emocracy and reconciliation are intertwined, indeed, interdependent.” (In his "Introduction", Bloomfield, Barnes et al., 2003, p. 11) Yang, writing on Japan-China relations, concurs: “[t]here is much truth in the argument that the ‘voluntaristic and multidimensional essence of reconciliation presupposes a democratic context’.” This means that reconciliation between Japan and China may have to wait until “China becomes a free-market, liberal democracy like Japan” (Yang, 2003, p. 85). Sarkin, writing on Rwanda, unequivocally states that “Rwanda cannot have a transition and deal with the past in a way which has long-term positive effects without moving to a democracy.” (Sarkin, 1999, p. 120)

This democracy assumption is justified in some authors’ work by the significant degree of popular participation, debate and ownership that they see as integral to the sustainability and ultimate success of a reconciliation process (see previous discussion on agency). Others see democracy as a precondition to reconciliation because “it [democracy] channels conflict through peaceful dispute-management mechanisms” (Wierzynska, 2004, p. 1950). This entails that reconciliation would only be possible in a setting where political rights of freedom of expression, speech and assembly are protected. Accordingly, Yang sees “the freedom to criticize one’s own government and a willingness to subject one’s own past record to the same standard of judgement that one applies to the history of other nations” as crucial (Yang, 2003, p. 85).

A similar endorsement of democratisation as a precondition to reconciliation is found in the three-volume work entitled *Transitional Justice*, one of the “invaluable” reads

in the literature on reconciliation (Kritz, 1995, p. 35).¹²¹ For this edited work's authors, who document the way traumatic national pasts have been dealt with in different parts of the world from 1945 to 1995, the underlying but largely unchallenged assumption is also a transition from a presumed repressive past regime to a (hopefully) consolidated democracy. This is the backdrop against which "dealing with the past" takes place in the 21 case studies presented.

This assumption however does not leave room for the possibility that a concerted effort to promote reconciliation as defined here, can occur – and succeed – within the context of an authoritarian regime, as the one in post-genocide Rwanda. To what extent reconciliation can be said to be succeeding in what is generally recognised as an authoritarian regime is part of what the concluding chapter of this thesis will explore.

Reconciliation as Beneficial

A second way in which the "wishful thinking" syndrome manifests itself is through the pervasive assumption that reconciliation is desirable, if not necessary or mandatory for future individual and collective well-being. Authors will regularly advance reconciliation as being psychologically healthy – specifically for the victim, but also for all parties to the conflict. When giving public testimony on their ordeals for example, victims are expected to feel "respected as persons with dignity [...]. This respect enables those once humiliated as victims to become empowered..." (Crocker, 1999, p. 52)¹²² The "central significance of reconciliation [is that] without it people have no sense of safety, no trust, no confidence in the future." (Tutu, 2003, p. 4)

Few question this assumption. One exception is Summerfield, a psychologist who has studied the invention of stigmatising and pathologising psychiatric categories to explain away reactions to extreme events such as wars. He asks "whether anger, hatred, and a felt

¹²¹ Garton Ash described the Kritz three-volume book as "invaluable" and Bickford considers it to bring together all "the early and significant texts of the field" (Brickford, 2004).

¹²² Such statements in favour of the "catharsis" or confessional model promoted by TRCs ignore empirical evidence suggesting that individuals and communities may actually prefer "social forgetting" or "voluntary amnesia" (see Shaw's 2005 study on Sierra Leone and Etcheson's 2001 study on Cambodia) over revisiting the violence of the past in the name of reconciling.

need for revenge in people who have been grievously wronged are necessarily bad things” and challenges the premise that these feelings are dangerous for the victims and for others, and that they therefore must be altered (Summerfield, 2002, p. 1105). On the contrary, he argues that asking victims to shed feelings of anger and revenge, is not only unnatural, but unjust and a double-standard.¹²³

Also taking exception to the presumed revenge=bad/reconciliation=good dichotomy and taking the argument one step further, Wilson (2000) argues that anger, hate, and ultimately, the seeking of revenge has led to reconciliation in certain cases. He cites the example of Boipatong, a township in South Africa, where severe public beatings, often resulting in hospitalisation, were used against offenders (often collaborators with the former Apartheid regime) tried by informal local courts known as *kgotla*. Often the offenders would themselves consent to this punishment, rather than be handed over to the centralised justice system. These public shows of vindictiveness, Wilson argues, were conducive to the reintegration of offenders in their community, much more so than the TRC proceedings. Offenders having undergone these public beatings in Boipatong apparently tended to stay in the community, feeling safe from future attacks partly because the public had been satisfied that justice had been done and partly because they benefited from the protection of the *kgotla* courts. In other townships where this ethos of revenge was not allowed, former collaborators did not return to their homes (Wilson, 2000, p. 75-87; also see Wilson, 2001).¹²⁴

However, overall, quotes like this one – “protracted and violent conflicts [...] require reconciliation” (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 355, emphasis added) – remains the norm. This belief in the necessity and benefits of reconciliation is based on practical grounds (as a

¹²³ Summerfield expands on this point using the Holocaust as an example: “[s]hould Jewish survivors of the Nazi genocide have been counseled in 1945 not to hate Germans? Were the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war leaders, which handed down capital punishment after the Second World War, the result of the brutalisation of victims of Nazism and their unhealthy feelings of hatred and revenge? Or did the trials show justice in action and help victims to make sense of a man made catastrophe?” (Summerfield, 2002, p. 1105) Here, we see that Summerfield’s conception of reconciliation equates it with forgiveness and amnesty. But even if the notion of forgiveness is divorced from reconciliation, it may still be psychologically impossible for some, who will simply not be able to contemplate such a thing, particularly in the wake of brutal crimes.

¹²⁴ See also Govier (2002, p. 37-9) and Borneman (1999), for similar argument.

conflict prevention tool), but also on psychological grounds (for the benefit of both victims and perpetrators) and even moral grounds. Moreover, due to the positive connotations with which the word reconciliation is imbued, expressing the wish to work toward reconciliation also serves to obtain at least a verbal consensus on a common goal. Galtung argues that “it is hard to be all-out against peace”, and the same applies to reconciliation (Galtung, 1969, p. 167).

Conclusion

The term “reconciliation” began being used in contexts of past civil wars, systematic human rights abuses, inter-state wars and genocides in the 1990s. It has now been streamlined into government and where applicable into donor language and interventions. Emerging writings on post-conflict reconciliation share some characteristics: the conceptualization of reconciliation in terms of degrees (on a linear scale) is common, for example. Another characteristic is that the meaning of reconciliation, and its translation into policies, programmes and institutions, remains highly contextual, and usually highly amorphous and ill-defined.

I distinguish three schools of thought within this reconciliation literature. The most frequently used is the one that sees reconciliation and justice as twin concepts. There is however significant controversy over the definition of justice. Schematically, the terrain is usually divided into two camps: proponents of the retributive justice approach on the one hand and proponents of the restorative approach on the other. However, the line between restorative and retributivist justice need not be unassailable: the two approaches can and have been combined in Rwanda, as well as other contexts. A second school of thought sees reconciliation as the revision of collective memory about the events in question, in order to arrive at a “mutually tolerable” interpretation of events. This process of narrative revision can be guided “from above” by governments through truth commissions, the revision of school history curricula and the discourses of senior political figures, or “from below” by civil society groups, local opinion leaders, associations that bring antagonistic parties in contact with each other on collaborative projects, and local conflict resolution or mediation efforts. A third school of thought sees reconciliation as requiring an act of pardon from the

victim or victim group. A logical extension of the restorative justice approach, this paradigm sees forgiving offenders as the only way to bring them back into an undivided society. Forgiving, and “moving on” also helps the victims psychologically – this rejoins the widespread assumption that reconciliation is “beneficial” for all involved.

Reconciliation literature is permeated by unresolved and frequently overlooked questions. Two were developed in more detail. First, who is reconciling with whom? Who should be, taking the three paradigms respectively, deciding which form of justice is more appropriate, guiding the process of narrative revision towards “healing truths”, granting forgiveness? Second, the literature is plagued with “sloppy” thinking, where untested causal relationships become “fact” through the sheer force of repetition. An example of this is the assumption that reconciliation requires a democratic or democratising backdrop. Though no absolute answers are brought here, the research findings presented in the following chapters help refine and elucidate these points. In fact, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and as we will come back to in Chapter 8, the findings also cast doubt on the usefulness or validity of the concept of reconciliation itself, particularly in terms of policy formulation in post-conflict contexts.

* * *

Part I has defined and justified the remit of the thesis by outlining the importance the word “reconciliation” has acquired in the Rwandan post-genocide context on the one hand, and its inadequacies as a conceptual framework on the other. Based on what we now know – an authoritarian government which tends to impose its own interpretation of facts on the ground, a complex and seemingly ubiquitous reconciliation policy, and little insight (in theory or in practice) into what reconciliation “means” and how it “works” – the research questions guiding this study become increasingly relevant. We turn to the first one of the three questions, i.e. “What does reconciliation mean to different constituencies in the Rwandan context?” in Part II.

Part II: Discourses on Reconciliation: What does Reconciliation Mean to Different Constituencies in the Rwandan Context?

The following three chapters together examine how different constituencies in the Rwandan context understand the concept of reconciliation. This is an exercise that, I argue in Part I, has not been undertaken in a systematic way. Chapter 3 documents and analyses the “official story”, or “public transcript” as Scott (1990) has called it, of how the RPF leadership conceives of, implements and assesses reconciliation.¹²⁵ As Pottier (2002) argues convincingly, as the 2005 flights to Burundi hint at (cf. Chapter 1), and as the very name “official discourse” suggests, this is the version of events that tends to dominate all others in the public arena. Chapter 4 analyses the discourses of two other constituencies that can also be qualified as “elite”: the educated urban elite on the one hand, and major donors on the other. Finally, what I call “grassroots” discourses – based on in-depth interviews in two communities in southern Rwanda – are presented in Chapter 5. Overall, Part II will show that there are areas across “constituencies” (government, non-government elite, international donors, grassroots) and across Rwandan “socio-ethnic backgrounds” (Hutu, Tutsi, survivor, OCL returnee, etc.) where expectations and discourses overlap despite seemingly diverging agendas and great variance in personal circumstance and socio-economic status.¹²⁶ However, there are also several areas where interpretations and expectations of reconciliation diverge. These will also be explored.

¹²⁵ “Public transcript”, which Scott contrasts to the “hidden transcripts”, or the discourse that takes place “offstage” (Scott, 1990, p. 4; see also Goffman, 1959).

¹²⁶ The emphasis on the alleged inherently opposed interests, or natural antagonism between Tutsi and Hutu is misleading. This argument will be returned to and cemented in Part III.

Chapter 3: The Rwandan Patriotic Front on Reconciliation: The Official Government Discourse

Introduction

A Little-known Group

The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) is best known as the Anglophone Tutsi rebel group that put an end to the genocide in 1994 and has ruled Rwanda as a political party ever since (cf. Chapter 1). Although it was formally created in 1987 in Uganda, the RPF's roots lie in a refugee and diaspora (Tutsi) community that dates back to 1959, the eve of Rwanda's independence (Watson, 1991). From the beginning, there were disagreements within the refugee community – which had an important presence in Uganda but also in Burundi, Tanzania, Congo and, to a lesser degree, in some Western host countries – most notably on how forcefully to push for a right of return. With the years, this community grew more and more differentiated, from the cattle-herders in western Uganda to the lawyers and brokers in New York City (Prunier, 1993). It was thus difficult from the start to speak of the Rwandan Tutsi refugees as a homogeneous entity.

Even though the RPF was born out of a consensus for a militant campaign for repatriation, it too is not necessarily homogeneous and neither is the government it has created. Within the different institutions set up by the RPF-dominated government for example, we can see tensions and contradictory aspirations. On the issue of reconciliation, the FARG (Fonds d'assistance des rescapés du genocide) and the NURC (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission) are at odds with one another in some key respects. The former gives limited, but in poor rural communities, highly visible assistance to genocide survivors; the latter tries to downplay all forms of divisions between Rwandans. According to one FARG representative I spoke to, the Fund has been at times cited by the NURC as an obstacle to unity and reconciliation as a result (FARG representative, 13 November 2005, Kigali).

Generally very little is known about the RPF in terms of its founding members' political vision, influences, and their analysis of Rwandan politics and society, particularly

before 1994.¹²⁷ This does not mean that there is little written about the RPF. As Chapter 1 hints at, increasing amounts of, in particular, highly critical works on its post-1994 authoritarian tendencies continue to be published (see for example Amnesty International, 2000; ICG, 2002; HRW, 2003a; Reyntjens, 2004; Frontline, 2005; Reporters sans frontières, 2005). Yet, these writings tend to privilege criticism and documentation – be it of alleged human rights abuses, war crimes perpetrated in Rwanda and Zaire/DRC, or the curtailment of freedoms of assembly and expression within Rwanda – over analysis and explanation. For example, Reyntjens, among the few academics to have actually published his extremely critical views on the post-1994 RPF government, admits that he is “mainly concerned with the shortcomings of the present regime [...] leaving its achievements [...] largely undiscussed” because donors are already aware of the latter (Reyntjens, 2004, p. 179).

For human rights and monitoring or awareness raising groups such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, or issue-specific groups such as Reporters Without Borders, this emphasis on documenting and criticising is understandable given their organisational mandate and purpose. However, because these reports are so widely available – usually freely on the Internet – and because they are compounded by a paucity of academic writing on post-1994 Rwandan politics and society (see Chapter 1), they can lead to an a-contextual and fairly superficial image of the RPF, and of its motives and achievements. Moreover, because of their emphasis on criticism, these writings have also led to a polarization of the debate on the RPF government: as Uvin notes in a policy memo written in 2003, those critical of the government tend to establish a false dichotomy, “a Manichean vision of Rwanda in which all that is government is bad,

¹²⁷ I am aware of six studies that include some discussion of the RPF’s pre-1994 roots (Watson, 1991; Prunier, 1993; Cyrus Reed, 1996; Dorsey, 2000; Lemarchand, 2001; Mamdani, 2001 - especially Chapter 6, “The Politics of Indigeneity in Uganda: Background to the RPF invasion”); none deals specifically with influences on, or tendencies within the RPF’s political thought. Reyntjens argues that this is because the “ideology and the broad political orientations [of the RPF] have never been the object of a clear and coherent formulation; the eight-point political program [...] is less than original and not very detailed.” (Reyntjens, 1995, p. 41) This may be so, but neither has a serious attempt been made to discover whether this ideology or these political orientations were formulated coherently or not.

and all that is society is good.” (Uvin, 2003a, p. 1)¹²⁸ This regularly degenerates into unproductive defamatory exchanges. As an illustration, the following quotes are from a 46-page response from the government to a Human Rights Watch report published in 2000: “[t]he glaring shortcomings of this very mean-spirited, grossly prejudiced and shallowly researched report are obvious to everyone familiar with the situation in Rwanda today.” And “[t]he opinion of Human Rights Watch that the RPF should have no role in the Government of Rwanda, after the genocide, was indeed very strange, to say the least. It was an opinion that Human Rights Watch shared only with the forces responsible for the genocide.” (Republic of Rwanda, 2000a, p. 4-6)¹²⁹

The materials (speeches, interviews, press releases, reports) gathered for this analysis are thus the principal source of information regarding the RPF’s political ideology of reconciliation – in theory, and in practice – as well as its evolution. Though the RPF is not a homogeneous or uniform group as noted above, my premise here is that there is substantial consensus on key issues within the influential circle around President Paul Kagame, including on approaches to reconciliation. I thus use “RPF” as shorthand for this small circle of influential people.¹³⁰ This premise is also what guided my decision to focus my textual analysis solely on statements made by the President or reports issued by the President’s office – as described in the methodology section below – in order to isolate the opinions of these RPF insiders.

In a first section then, the RPF’s thoughts on reconciliation are elaborated, and their evolution traced through a study of speeches, interviews, policy statements, press releases

¹²⁸ Sebasoni, an RPF ideologue, makes the same point: “[i]n Rwanda, in the Western NGO circles, belonging to the RPF or being close to it is a quasi crime; being against the RPF constitutes a certificate of objectivity and even of normality.” (My translation of Sebasoni, March 2004, p. 5)

¹²⁹ A similar report was issued by the Presidency’s office in response to an Amnesty International open letter in 1996 (Republic of Rwanda, 1996b). Sebasoni has also engaged in similar exchanges (see for example Sebasoni, undated [2004?]).

¹³⁰ For a detailed description of this influential circle, including their kinship and marriage ties, and where they studied in Uganda, see Dorsey (2000, p. 328-9). Reyntjens refers to this group as the “new *akazu*” (Reyntjens, 2004, p. 187; Reyntjens, 2006, p. 1109). *Akazu*, meaning “little house” in Kinyarwanda, is usually a word used to describe the powerful network of people around President Habyarimana – a group largely understood to have contained the main planners, funders and masterminds of the 1994 genocide (DesForges, 1999). For a description of the concentration of power by, and the authoritarian drift of, the RPF, including who occupied what post in the government (including MPs, provincial governors), state security services, and state-owned enterprises, see ICG (2002, p. 10-12 and Appendix E).

and reports issued by the Presidency, with an emphasis on those published since 22 April 2000 – when Kagame was inaugurated President of Rwanda (see Table 3: Presidential Statements, Displayed by Date (1994-2005)).¹³¹ These are supplemented by interviews with five senior RPF members. A second section illustrates how the RPF's understanding of reconciliation manifests itself concretely, in specific examples, by contrasting the two research sites from the southern province of Butare (introduced in Chapter 1): Sovu, a sector chosen by central authorities to represent a bad example of reconciliation, and Bunzazi, a case of good reconciliation, both in Maraba district. I argue that these combined give us substantial insight into the RPF's understanding and representation of the reconciliation process "on the ground".

3.1 Reconciliation in Theory: The RPF Vision

How Important is Reconciliation to the RPF?

Because I purposively selected documents that mentioned reconciliation for my analysis and asked respondents to discuss matters relating to reconciliation, it would be fallacious to conclude on this basis alone that reconciliation is a priority for the RPF. However, there is some ground on which to base the assessment that reconciliation is of central concern – at least in the regime's rhetoric. First, the RPF government is commonly referred to as the "Government of National Unity and Reconciliation" and "[c]onsolidating national unity and reconciliation" is the first point in the RPF's founding document, the Eight Point Plan, approved at its inception in 1987 (see Chapter 1, and Appendix 3). Furthermore, Article 5 of the 11-article 1993 peace agreement signed at Arusha between the RPF and the multi-party government of then President Habyarimana concerned promoting "unity and national reconciliation". The same text evoked the need for a "Unity and Reconciliation Commission" (Arusha Accords, 1993). As one RPF representative explains: "[r]econciliation is not only linked to the genocide. Reconciliation is larger than the genocide. The genocide [...] complicated all the parameters of the reconciliation process." (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 3) The need and importance of reconciliation therefore predates the 1994 genocide.

¹³¹ Kagame replaced Pasteur Bizimungu (cf. Chapter 1).

Beyond this rhetoric, how important is the issue of reconciliation to the RPF really? A more convincing indicator of the place given to reconciliation in RPF political thought is the attention it receives in Presidential speeches over time.¹³² Of the 130 speeches delivered by President Kagame and whose transcripts were available on the Official Presidential Website (as at 11 February 2006, in both English and Kinyarwanda), 33 speeches or 25% feature the words “reconciliation” and/or “unity”. When related words such as “justice”, “*gacaca*”, “peace”, “ethnic”, “Hutu” and “Tutsi” are added, the number goes up to 28%.

Given that it is to be expected that a President of a country broach a myriad of topics such as (in a sub-Saharan African context) development and HIV/AIDS, or deliver speeches welcoming other heads of state, rather frequently, 25 to 28% is a relatively high percentage. However what is striking is the apparent total lack, in all the documents considered here – be it Presidential speeches, interviews, reports, press releases, official letters emanating from the President’s Office since 1994 – of any developed or sustained discussion of reconciliation per se. There is much interesting material presented in these documents, but their ramifications in terms of how the RPF understands reconciliation, or how it sees the process evolving, has to be distilled. In other words, no reconciliation model, or definition is explicitly presented. This was not the case in South Africa, for example: though at times divergent models were presented – there was significant tension within the TRC Final Report for instance – a public and quite developed discussion on reconciliation took place (Borer, 2004).

Methodology

As previously stated, this section presents findings from an analysis of selected Presidential speeches, interviews and other documents emanating from the President’s office. These span a period from October 1994 to December 2005 – just over 11 years – with a heavy emphasis on the period after April 2000 (see Table 3, a complete list of the Presidential statements analysed in this section is included in Appendix 8). Unlike its predecessor regime, the RPF-dominated government has not systematically compiled and published its

¹³² The figures in this paragraph solely concern speeches delivered by the President; press conferences and press releases, reports and interviews accorded by the President are excluded.

Presidents' speeches and interviews.¹³³ I thus collected these materials myself, using the President's official website (Official Website of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, various), an on-line database (Réseau Documentaire sur la Région des Grands Lacs Africains), the Lexis-Nexis database (www.lexis-nexis.com), and documents obtained in paper-format during my June-December 2005 research trip to Rwanda. These are supplemented with five in-depth interviews I conducted with senior RPF representatives.

Table 3: Presidential Statements, Displayed by Date (1994-2005)

Year	Number Analysed*	Political Milestones/The Backdrop
1994	1	The RPF takes Kigali; Pasteur Bizimungu becomes President. The ICTR is established.
1995	1	Forced closure of IDP camps in Rwanda. Mass arbitrary arrests of suspected genocide perpetrators.
1996	1	Forced repatriation of over one million Rwandan Hutu refugees from camps in DRC/Zaire and Tanzania.
1997	0	The insurgency in the north-west of Rwanda begins.
1998	1	Public executions of 22 prisoners sentenced to death by Rwandan courts on charges of genocide are carried out in April.
1999	3	A report on "The Unity of Rwandans", resulting from a series of high-level meetings at the Presidency, is issued. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) is established.
2000	7	Kagame is inaugurated after Bizimungu resigns. The NURC begins its activities.
2001	5	<i>Gacaca</i> law passed.
2002	7	Rwandan troops officially pull out of DRC. They had (re-) entered in 1998. Pilot <i>gacaca</i> courts begin operating.
2003	12	A national referendum on a new Constitution, and legislative and Presidential elections are organised, ending the transition period. Kagame wins the Presidency.
2004	3	The tenth anniversary of the genocide is commemorated.
2005	3	<i>Gacaca</i> launched nation-wide.
Total	44	

* Number of Presidential statements meeting selection criteria (see Table 5), excluding texts not translated from Kinyarwanda.

¹³³ The state broadcaster, the Office rwandais d'information or ORINFOR, published Habyarimana's speeches and interviews annually in book form; these are available in French (Habyarimana, various). No similar publication is available for the post-1994 presidents. Kagame's official website contains only speeches delivered by himself – not his predecessor – and I was unable to locate in a systematic way the speeches delivered by Bizimungu. He himself was imprisoned at the time of fieldwork, and his personal assistant, whom I contacted personally while in Kigali, reported not having kept any records (Personal communication, 22 November 2005). Attempts to obtain Bizimungu's speeches from the ORINFOR were equally fruitless. However, as seen in Chapter 1, since Kagame is considered the "homme fort" of the RPF this does not impoverish the study substantially.

To identify the relevant documentary materials, I used the following selection criteria: (i) the texts were delivered, drafted or published by the Presidency, and (ii) at least two of a set of eight key words appear, and one of them appear at least twice, in the transcript (see Table 4: Reconciliation “Key Words”). Seven “7 April” speeches, delivered on the occasion of the beginning of the annual genocide commemoration ceremonies, were also included.¹³⁴ Fifty-eight documents, the equivalent of over 400 pages, fit these criteria. Of these, 26 were originally delivered in Kinyarwanda; the other 32 were produced directly in English or French. Of the Kinyarwanda documents, 12 were translated. This means I surveyed 44 documents in-depth. Within these 44, several over-arching themes come up regularly; the ten that recur most frequently are summarised in Table 6, below.

Table 4: Reconciliation “Key Words”

All statements by the President of Rwanda and documents issued by his office were searched for the presence of at least two of the following key words, one of which must have appeared twice.¹³⁵

	English	French	Kinyarwanda
1	Reconciliation	Réconciliation	Ubwiyunge
2	Unity	Unité	Ubumwe
3	Justice	Justice	Ubutabera
4	<i>Gacaca</i>	<i>Gacaca</i>	<i>Gacaca</i>
5	Peace	Paix	Amahoro
6	Ethnic / ethnicity	Ethnie	Ubwoko
7	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu
8	Tutsi	Tutsi	Tutsi

Based on this methodology, at least three major conclusions can be drawn with respect to the use of the word “reconciliation” and meanings attributed to it.

The Re-introduction of “Reconciliation”

First, the data tentatively suggests that the frequency with which the word “reconciliation” appears in Presidential statements moves to the forefront in 2000.¹³⁶ This is buttressed by developments on the ground: the year before, in 1999, the law establishing the NURC had been passed, and the first national unity and reconciliation summit was held in Kigali in 2000. This phasing-in of the notion of reconciliation in government discourse was also

¹³⁴ I found the speeches from 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005.

¹³⁵ Composites, such as “peacekeepers”, and proper names, such as the “African Union” or the “Government of National Unity”, were excluded.

¹³⁶ “Tentatively” because the data is concentrated on the post-2000 period (see Table 3: Presidential Statements, Displayed by Date (1994-2005)).

noted by Rwandan non-government respondents from all walks of life. A prisoner, originally from the rural community of Bunzazi, put it as follows: “[r]econciliation is a word that came after I was put in prison.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 20, prisoner - he was imprisoned in 1996) A Rwandan member of the business community I interviewed in August 2005 made the same point: “[t]he government has not been talking about reconciliation for a very long time. It [the word] came like that, suddenly one day.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 11, survivor)

Table 5: Major Themes in Presidential Statements on Reconciliation, in Order of Frequency

Rank	Theme
1	The need for Rwandan (and African) self-reliance and emancipation
2	Responsibility for the genocide, focusing on the Church, the Colonialists, the International Community. N.B.: Evolution in language noted here, away from “mass responsibility” for a “mass crime”
3	The Unity of Rwandans, the place of ethnicity in Rwandan identity
4	Security, mainly with respect to the Rwandan armed groups in eastern D.R. Congo
5	The role of the International Community <i>since</i> 1994
6	The plight of genocide survivors
7	The importance of working together, and of popular participation in all processes and decision-making (through decentralisation, for example)
8	Civic (re-)education, building a “new society”
9	Poverty as an obstacle to reconciliation
10	Rwanda’s national heroes (soldiers and civilians)

This re-introduction of the word in and around 2000 appears further to have been a pragmatic reaction to the realisation that it was not only logistically impossible to try everyone in classical courts, but that even *gacaca* courts would have trouble fulfilling their mandate on time (cf. Chapter 1). Kritz for example, notes that “[t]hroughout their first year in office, many senior members of the new government insisted that *every person* who participated in the atrocities should be prosecuted and punished.” (Kritz, 1996, p. 135) However, the tone had clearly changed by 2000-2001, when Kagame admitted in several

interviews: “[w]e are in a very difficult situation. It is like we are damned if we do and damned if we don’t. [...] But we have a huge problem on our hands, that is 115,000 people in prison. We simply cannot continue with this situation indefinitely.” (Interview with President Kagame, 2000) Seen in this light, reconciliation appears to be the result of a pragmatic compromise of “purer” or “better” forms of prosecutorial justice – echoing the retributivist vision of a hierarchy of justice (see Chapter 2).

From Punishment to Forgiveness

The second major conclusion one can draw from the data is that there has been an evolution in the way the word “reconciliation” is used. In terms of the three reconciliation paradigms identified in Chapter 2, a clear shift is discernable – away from the language of retributive justice towards that of restorative justice, discussed in the context of *gacaca* courts (cf. first paradigm, or the justice paradigm). What is more, the language of forgiveness starts to be introduced with increasing frequency in the more recent texts (cf. third paradigm, the forgiveness paradigm). Indeed, in Kagame’s first genocide commemoration speech, in 2001, he praises Rwandans who have had the courage to admit their wrongs and ask for forgiveness: “[a]sking for forgiveness and forgiving go together, and call for courage, which may sometimes appear to be impossible,” he says in one passage (Kagame, 2001). This is the first occurrence of the word “forgiveness” in the documents surveyed. In a January 2003 interview, Kagame goes further to state that though Rwandans “are not able to forget, they are able to forgive” (Interview with President Kagame, 2003c). This language is echoed in RPF policy. A case in point is the 1 January 2003 Presidential Decree, which marked an important development in RPF policy on the issue of alleged genocide perpetrators. As Chapter 1 describes, this decree allowed for the mass conditional release of prisoners charged with genocide-related crimes in exchange for confessions and, importantly, asking for forgiveness.

Various reasons are cited to justify the January 2003 decree, mostly practical in nature. One is the fact that the released prisoners can help expedite the work of the *gacaca* courts through their testimonies. Speaking on the eve of the 2005 wave of provisional releases, the Prosecutor General of Rwanda told Reuters and IRIN respectively: “their

testimony could help because so many admitted to participating in the genocide” and “releasing the 30,000 will help expedite trials” (Reuters, 2005; IRIN, 2005a). A second and related reason is the decongestion of the penal system, and indeed the gradual emptying out from the prisons of all “regular” (lower-level) genocide perpetrators.¹³⁷ This so outraged some senators that, in a rare episode of open criticism of the government, several “complained about the state’s forgiving attitude towards suspected perpetrators of genocide.” (Africa Confidential, 2004b)

What is more, this pro-forgiveness language and policy show a relatively under-appreciated level of political skill on the part of the RPF. Because its top members are keenly aware that they are considered a Tutsi group, they find themselves in a good position to ask the distrustful Tutsi survivors for patience and support on pragmatic but difficult decisions, such as the January 2003 decree. Concurrently, they are making a gradual opening to the “Hutu majority” though not, it must be highlighted, in the realm of politics, and specifically, in the freedom of expression or assembly (cf. Chapter 1). One genocide survivor, who had emphasised her dismay at the release of prisoners, explicitly spoke of the tacit agreement the survivors have with the RPF: “I don’t know how I would govern this country. Those that are in government have not had first hand experience of the genocide. They know they fought to stop it, but it’s not the same thing. But I trust them to try to find solutions. I don’t have any.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 11, survivor)

By 2005, the documents surveyed show that justice in “most” cases (again, see discussion below on degrees of guilt) is spoken of almost solely in terms of *gacaca* and “thicker” reconciliation language.¹³⁸ For example, in a 2005 speech, Kagame uses the words “catharsis”, “healing” and “balanc[ing] the needs of justice and those of reconciliation” (Kagame, 2005a). In another 2005 speech, Kagame uses words such as “confess” and “repent” (Kagame, 2005b). The interviews conducted with RPF representatives validate this. One interviewee highlighted that genocide perpetrators must

¹³⁷ See Chapter 1 for a definition of “regular” genocide perpetrators; see also discussion below on degrees of guilt.

¹³⁸ This is not the case for the “big” *génocidaires*, i.e. those guilty of Category 1 crimes.

ask to be pardoned as part of the reconciliation process, and that “of course, when they ask for pardon, we encourage people to give it; and people are ready.” (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 5) Another echoed these thoughts: “[t]he one who wronged needs to show remorse and needs to ask for forgiveness from the heart.” (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 2) This stands in stark contrast, for example, to a speech given in 1995 by then President Bizimungu: “[t]he massive participation of the population in the genocide is a fact, without precedent in history [...] The government of Rwanda and the international community have the obligation to punish those who perpetrated genocide.” (République Rwandaise, 1995)

Though we cannot be certain of the motives behind this evolution in approaches to justice in Rwanda, they need not be altruistic. Indeed, as South Africa’s Desmond Tutu has argued, forgiveness can in some contexts be the most pragmatic way forward, and even make good sense politically (Tutu, 1999). This is certainly the way Gerald Gahima, a former RPF insider now living in exile in the US, sees the mass releases, describing them as “amnesties at politically opportune moments, for example in 2003, before elections.” (Gahima, 2006)¹³⁹

The political priority that forgiveness has become is perhaps most visible in President Kagame’s first genocide commemoration speech, mentioned above: “[t]here are many things we are required to do, some of which are difficult or appear impossible. [...] Confronting these impossible challenges requires a lot of courage. Courage is not only manifested on the battlefield, it can also be manifested in admitting your wrong and asking for forgiveness, as well as being able to forgive.” (Kagame, 2001)

Making Sense of the Past for a Better Future: The RPF’s “Healing Truth”

The third conclusion rejoins the “meaning making” (second) paradigm of reconciliation. For the RPF, spreading and promoting their version of the “Truth” – what happened during the genocide of 1994, what the causes were (proximate and historical), and who is responsible – has been an integral part of their platform since 1994. Important elements of

¹³⁹ Gahima is considered a “Tutsi hardliner” who fell out with the RPF in 2004 (Africa Confidential, 2004b). He was formerly Vice-President of the Supreme Court (2004) and Prosecutor General of Rwanda (1999-2003).

the RPF Truth can even be traced back to the days of RANU, the precursor organisation to the RPF.¹⁴⁰ Educating Rwandans, debating with them, convincing them of the validity of this version of history, and how previous regimes had perverted Rwanda's history to their own ends, is in fact *constitutive* of the reconciliation process according to one high ranking and founding RPF member (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 5).

This RPF Truth is fairly well-known and its fundamental components have stayed reasonably constant, with two important exceptions: the evolution, highlighted above, in the notion of responsibility after the genocide, and a progressive shift, described below, away from seeing ethnicity in purely socio-constructivist terms. In fact, the RPF Truth is available on the official government website, under a section entitled "History" (Government of Rwanda, undated). Perhaps the most exhaustive and detailed rendition is found in a report compiling and summarising discussions held in weekly reflection meetings convened by President Bizimungu in 1998/99 (Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, 1999). According to this and other documents, an abridged version of this Truth can be subdivided into four main elements: I first cite the two elements that have stayed constant over time, and then (as per above) the two that have evolved.

First is the question of the role of "bad governance" before 1994 and the "rehearsed genocide", which was being "taught" since Independence. Indeed, some in the RPF speak of genocide starting, in "slow-motion", in 1959 and of the genocide being "an on-going project since colonisation." (Eltringham and Van Hoyweghen, 2000, p. 225)¹⁴¹ The previous regime's authorities were responsible for the planning of the genocide and the shooting-down of the Presidential plane on 6 April is almost immaterial. In an interview accorded to West Africa Magazine shortly after he became President, Kagame echoes these thoughts: "genocide is not just a result of the downing of Habyarimana's plane. It has been taking place for quite a long period. A section of our population has always been targeted by the government and its forces. [...] This had been going on over thirty years." (Interview

¹⁴⁰ RANU stands for the Rwandan Alliance for National Unity. Formed in Kampala in 1980, it was transformed into the more militant RPF in 1987. Its very name underlines the importance of unity in its members' ideology.

¹⁴¹ If the genocidal project was so visible and predictable, this begs the question why the RPF itself failed to foresee the genocide in 1994.

with President Kagame, 2000) RPF leaders are especially prickly about allegations that their forces may have been behind the attack on the plane, and therefore responsible, at least in part, in provoking the genocide. In the same interview, Kagame states: “[t]here had been before leaders who have died in different circumstances and that didn’t lead to extermination of big sections of people.” (Interview with President Kagame, 2000)

The second element in the RPF narrative is equally pivotal and represents the single most frequently cited theme in the RPF speeches and interviews studied for this analysis (cf. Table 6, Rank 1, on p. 82). In essence, the argument runs that the 1994 genocide was preventable, people knew what was going on, when it was going on, and that this amounted to genocide. It is only because the victims were African that the International Community, and the United Nations Security Council specifically, did nothing.¹⁴² This is perhaps most bluntly stated in one of Kagame’s angriest speeches, delivered on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the genocide, on 7 April 2004. Despite knowing that what was going on in Rwanda was genocide, “[a]ll these powerful nations regarded one million lives as valueless, as another statistic that could be dispensed with. And, of course, some claimed that the dying people were not in their national or strategic interests. But if the death of a million people was not a concern to them, then what is? I hate to contemplate that this may have been due to the colour of the skin of us Rwandans.” (Kagame, 2004) This is proof, according to President Kagame, of a still prevalent racism in the world and irrefutably shows that Rwandans, and Africans, need to become self-sufficient in all realms including security and economic development.¹⁴³

The third element is the question of unity. Before the arrival of the missionaries and the Colonialists, Rwandans lived together in harmony; no inter-ethnic war existed, indeed no ethnic groups existed. Rwandans felt themselves to be part of one nation, and shared certain “unity characteristics” (see also Table 6, Rank 3, p. 82). These include a common language, the same culture, the same religion, the same King, participation in the defence of the Rwandan kingdom, and living together on the same territories; there was no “region for

¹⁴² This is an argument supported by inter alia, Melvern, 2000.

¹⁴³ Interestingly, this self-reliance was also an element strongly emphasised in Habyarimana’s speeches (Verwimp, 1999).

Hutus” for example. Another frequently cited element is that clans (there were reputedly 18 in pre-colonial Rwanda) were much more relevant to Rwandan identity and Hutu and Tutsi families were part of the same clans (Newbury, 1998, p. 83). The RPF understanding of ethnicity is thus purely socio-constructivist (Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, 1999). However, as noted above, this stance has at times been softened. In a 2000 interview, for example, Kagame recognizes ethnicity (“In Rwanda there are three ethnic groups: the Batwa, the Bahutu and the Batutsi.”), but maintains that it must come *second* to Rwandese identity (“[Rwandese] should associate along national, political and rational issues rather than looking at themselves as belonging to an ethnic group” – see Interview with President Kagame, 2000). An RPF official I interviewed echoed that very thought: “we try to construct citizens based on a Rwandan identity, above ethnic or other regional identities. Individuals can identify themselves as such [in terms of ethnic or other identities] too, but they must be Rwandan first.” (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 2) However, the claim that no “real” ethnic groups exist in Rwanda is returned to time and again. In an April 2005 lecture, Kagame states: “[t]he truth is that the Bahutu, Batutsi, and Batwa form one ethnic group – the Banyarwanda, sharing the same language, culture, history, and they have always lived in the same geographical location. [...] The evil spirit of division and sectarianism had been entrenched in the psyche of the Rwandan people. It has been an uphill struggle to reverse this legacy and we have faced huge difficulties.” (Kagame, 2005b)¹⁴⁴

The fourth and last major element in the RPF Truth is the one that has evolved most substantially since 1994. It concerns participation in genocide and the notions of justice and guilt. Though the RPF see the implementation of the genocide in Rwanda as being characterised by a breathtakingly high rate of popular participation, they also recognised *degrees* of guilt from the beginning and enshrined these in law as early as 1996 (Republic of Rwanda, 1996a). As seen in Chapter 1, the number of people who participated in “lower category” crimes (i.e. Categories 2 and 3) is estimated by the SNJG at close to 620,000 (2005 estimate). Though these people – neighbours, uncles, mothers, school teachers – are

¹⁴⁴ During a first trip to Rwanda in 2002-03, which lasted one year, the words Hutu, Tutsi and ethnicity were extremely seldomly used, particularly in public arenas; a noticeable relaxation was immediately noticeable during a second trip in 2005, during which this fieldwork was conducted.

guilty to differing degrees, the argument states that they were manipulated by “bad authorities”.¹⁴⁵ This rejoins what was argued in previous paragraphs, on the evolution in language towards more restorative forms of justice, and even towards forgiveness. It is important to be clear that the acknowledgement that the “bas people” (the low people)¹⁴⁶ was manipulated by the previous regime was present in RPF speeches as early as October 1994. What is central to my argument is that gradually, we saw a move towards considering the crimes committed by “most” perpetrators as horrendous, but forgivable.

This RPF Truth, sometimes referred to as the “Tutsi view of history” because it discounts the Tutsi’s demographic minority status and their alleged subjugation of the Hutu majority in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, stands in stark contrast to the Truth prevailing under Habyarimana and his predecessor, Kayibanda.¹⁴⁷ Habyarimana’s “peasant ideology” or “Hutu ideology” is summarised by Philip Verwimp as follows:

“Habyarimana wanted Rwanda to be an agricultural society. He glorified the peasantry and pictured himself as a peasant. In his ideology of rural romanticism, only the Hutu were the real peasants of Rwanda; the Tutsi were the feudal class closely associated with colonialist occupation.”
(Verwimp, 1999, p. 3)

This version of history, where the “bad Tutsi” were the foreign oppressors and the Hutu, the righteous natives, according to Verwimp, Mamdani, and others, made the genocidal project thinkable, and what is more, necessary. Accordingly, “[r]econciliation means a recognition that we are the same people” – therefore making another genocide impossible because it would literally be unthinkable (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 5).

Making Sense of the Past for a Better Future: Nation-building and “Improving” Rwandans

Going hand in hand with the RPF’s recasting of Rwandan collective memory towards their version of the Truth is a concomitant nation-building project, featuring pan-African

¹⁴⁵ Prunier, who speaks of “innocent murderers” and “victim killers”, concurs: “the responsibility lies with the educated people – with those in positions of authority, however small, who did not have the strength (or maybe even the wish) to question the poisonous effluents carried by their cultural stream.” (Prunier, 1995, p. 247-8)

¹⁴⁶ Expression used by my respondents and discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

¹⁴⁷ Lemarchand is writing on Burundi but the same statement can be made of Rwanda: “[i]nasmuch as one can speak of an official Tutsi position, it rests on a totally different view of history, one that emphasizes the organic unity of Hutu and Tutsi: because of their shared linguistic and socio-cultural affinities, neither group fits the defining characteristics of a ‘tribe’.” (Lemarchand, 1993, p. 75)

language reminiscent of anti-colonial movements.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, as seen in Table 6 (p. 82), the need for Rwandan self-reliance and emancipation is the single most frequently mentioned theme in the documents surveyed.¹⁴⁹ What is more, Rwanda is presented as a warning and a beacon for the rest of Africa – do not let what happened to us happen to you, seems to be the message. Donors should not be allowed to “dictate” to sovereign nations (Interview with President Kagame, 2003a), it is time for Rwandans and Africans to “realise their worth” (Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, 2003), “[b]eing a beggar is very difficult [...] eventually, we will get out of the cycle of begging and become self-reliant” (Interview with President Kagame, 2003b), and “we Africans must learn to find African solutions to African problems” (Kagame, 2005b). These and other quotes are underscored with inclusive, patriotic language, such as the possessive pronoun “our”, and the ubiquitous expressions “my fellow Rwandans”. What is particularly interesting and skilful is Kagame’s use of a very romantic vision of Rwandan unity and the strength of the Rwandan nation - Rwandans defying all odds, including grinding poverty and of course, the genocide, to succeed nonetheless – to rally support for difficult compromises, such as the January 2003 Presidential decree described previously.

However, the RPF’s project of recasting Rwandan identity and the Rwandan nation does not stop there. Indeed the language used by the RPF shows ambitions that amount to an attempt at “improving” Rwandan society as a whole. One RPF representative I interviewed highlighted Rwanda’s “cultural mediocrity” as a clear obstacle to reconciliation, and spoke of the need to teach people to express emotion, feelings, and crucially, develop the capacity for independent critical thought (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 3).¹⁵⁰ Another spoke of the need to transform and help Rwandans to be more ambitious (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 2). This also comes up regularly in

¹⁴⁸ This nationalistic aspect recalls Wilson’s argument that the South African TRC is best understood as a nationalistic tool for the new governing elite (Wilson, 2001).

¹⁴⁹ Habyarimana similarly put a heavy emphasis on Rwandan self-reliance – in this case, mostly in reference to domestic food production (Verwimp, 1999, p. 37).

¹⁵⁰ Here again, a parallel with the Habyarimana period is apparent: “Habyarimana often asked his public to be creative, innovative and to take responsibility” – this echoes the independent critical thought mentioned above. However, under Habyarimana, just as under Kagame, as I will argue in Chapter 7, “in fact, the peasants [...] were not allowed to do anything unless instructed by the administration.” (Verwimp, 1999, p. 19) These and other “continuities” between the pre- and post-1994 periods will be revisited in Chapter 8.

the Presidential speeches, interviews and other documents studied (cf. Table 6, Rank 8, p. 82). Indeed, it is not only “bad history” and “bad authorities” that made the genocide possible, it is also “bad culture”.¹⁵¹ What is being referred to here is the alleged Rwandan culture of obedience and submission, and to a lesser degree, a presumed Rwandan reluctance to express (dissenting) opinions publicly. This alleged cultural conformism is used by some to explain the high rate of participation in the genocide. Prunier, for example, writes: “[w]hen the highest authorities in that state told you to do something, you did it, even if it included killing.” (Prunier, 1995, p. 245) Jean-Claude Willame concurs: “[o]ne always obeys the boss in this country.” (Willame, 1995, p. 108)¹⁵² Chapter 7 looks into the question of Rwandan obedience in more detail.

These efforts to “improve” Rwandan culture, “emphasise individual accountability” and “help Rwandans to make better choices” (RPF Representative, Interviewee no 2) – not only with respect to calls to violence by authorities, but also for a range of other life choices such as family planning, health and welfare – are acted on through a strong emphasis on civic education programmes, including the *ingando* camps in particular but also, the ubiquitous “sensitization” meetings held often, in the country-side, on a weekly basis (cf. Chapter 1). The need to develop and modernize Rwanda is also given some prominence, with attention devoted to economic development generally, but also education, merit-based advancement in jobs, and the benefits of Internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT, cf. Chapter 1). In fact, three of the five RPF representatives I interviewed advanced ICT not only as a way to break out of the poverty trap, but also as a way to “broaden the minds” of Rwandans.

¹⁵¹ The case for improving “traditional cultural values” is also made in a DFID research paper on Tanzania and Rwanda: “[s]ome aspects of traditional culture were also found to be inimical to a modern, globalising nation. Examples here included some views on gender that barred women from accessing certain skills that were perceived to be ‘male’ skills; a lack of critical thinking, entrepreneurial skills and an ability to take the initiative rooted in traditional views of authority; and, a poor use of time. In the case of Rwanda, the society has always been traditionally inward looking. Education and training have a critical role to play [...] in developing those cultural traits required by globalisation such as critical thinking and taking initiative that are perceived to be lacking in traditional culture.” (Tikly, Lowe et al., 2003, vi) See Chapter 4, Section 4.2, for a full discussion of donors’ “operationalisation” of the reconciliation concept.

¹⁵² “*On a toujours obéi au Chef dans ce pays*” [my translation]. Prunier and others have also offered a detailed account of why and how this tradition of deference to authority evolved in Rwanda. They usually illustrate their arguments with references to the pre-colonial tradition of *umuganda*, or communal (mandatory) labour.

Preliminary Conclusions

Based on the documentary evidence gathered and the interviews conducted for this analysis, the RPF's understanding of reconciliation – at least in theory – seems to be premised on a two-pronged approach, comprised of both “forward-looking” and “backward-looking” elements. The first pillar, which represents the forward-looking component of the approach, amounts to a mass educational exercise to improve Rwandans. The second pillar attributes guilt, both moral and legal, and has at its core a strong emphasis on, indeed an institutionalisation of, forgiveness. Of course, we know from other, non-RPF sources (reviewed in Chapter 1) that this endeavour to implement and popularise this two-pronged approach to reconciliation is accompanied by a suppression and/or a discrediting (as genocide-sympathizers) of dissenting voices inside and outside Rwanda. It is clear that the kind of reconciliation the RPF intends to promote is one where Rwandans will have better (socio-economic) life chances (at least in theory), but not necessarily more liberty (ICG, 2002, p. 1-2). A distrust of the “majority” can be felt here (ICG, 2001a, p. 5).¹⁵³

This mass education exercise, or revision of memory and identity to “make sense of the past”, is closely tied to a nation-building project, and there is a certain element of defiance in the patriotic language used.¹⁵⁴ As Chapter 4 will demonstrate, relations with the main donor countries are much more nuanced than appears here, but very generally, a rejection of the West's moral authority is used to rally Rwandans around the challenge of reconciling, developing, working, achieving – and “improving”. Up-beat assessments of progress made and visions about Rwanda's future were particularly frequent during the campaign year of 2003. Reconciliation has therefore become one of the RPF's political slogans.

This inclusivity in terms of nation, identity and destiny, has been made possible by a gradual but tangible evolution in terms of criminal (legal), and even moral, responsibility for the “ordinary” participant in the genocide. By no means does this amount to a blanket amnesty. But the general trend is towards getting the “average” prisoner – even or especially the confessed killers – out of prison. Partly this is paternalistic (they were

¹⁵³ As Chapter 4 will show, this distrust finds resonance with the other two “elite” constituencies.

¹⁵⁴ Accompanied by all the usual symbols, such as a new flag and new national anthem.

manipulated), partly this is pragmatic (we need to de-congest the prisons), and generally amounts to an ideological shift within the RPF in terms of the appropriate notion of guilt and model of justice.

3.2 Reconciliation in Practice: “Bad” Reconciliation and “Good” Reconciliation in Maraba District

Methodology

During my fieldwork period in Rwanda, I conducted extensive research in two local communities in southern Rwanda. Though the research findings could of course have benefited from a wider comparative focus – with research sites in different parts of the country for instance – for the reasons expanded on in Chapter 1 (difficult research environment characterised, in 2005, by the active interference of government authorities into several research projects), it was prudent to capitalise on the “benign disinterest” characteristic of the authorities in Butare in order not to endanger the integrity of the study or the safety of my respondents.

To identify the research sites, I contacted provincial authorities across the country and asked them to select sectors that were characterised by: (i) geographical proximity; (ii) similar socio-economic indicators; and (iii) similar experiences (patterns of killing) during the genocide. (iv) One community, I further asked, would be making “good” progress in terms of reconciliation; the other would not. I deliberately left “good” and “bad” reconciliation undefined in order to see how Rwandan authorities (Kigali-based and provincial) defined reconciliation, and to what this corresponded concretely.¹⁵⁵

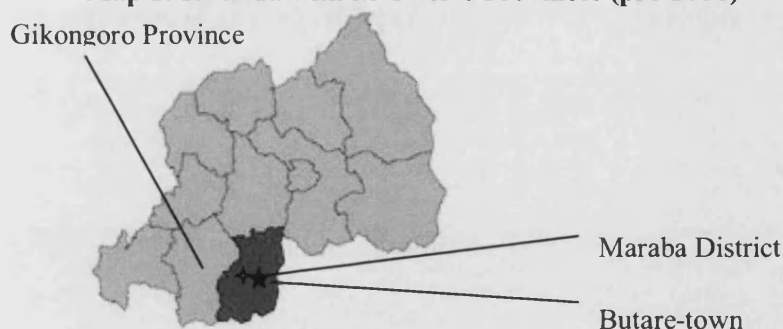
Among the most conscientious of the responses I received was one from the province of Butare, where the provincial authorities pointed me to Sovu (the “bad” sector) and Bunzazi (the “good” sector) within the district of Maraba (cf. Maps 1 and 2).¹⁵⁶ Several

¹⁵⁵ I chose to approach provincial authorities because they were concurrently (i) the holders of detailed information about their province, including down to district and sector-level, and (ii) nominees of Kigali, meaning that préfets are frequently close to, or themselves powerful RPF members.

¹⁵⁶ A significant reform of local administration and territorial units took place in late 2005. As of 1 January 2006, Rwanda was divided into four provinces (named North, East, South and West) plus the municipality of Kigali-city, and subdivided into 30 districts and 416 sectors. My research sites are today located in the South Province, Huye district, sector Simbi (see Chapter 1).

reasons led me to choose Butare as a research site. The local authorities, including importantly the Préfet’s office (provincial authority) and the Mayor of the district appeared cooperative but not too interested. The sites were relatively accessible, with the district office some 15 km away from Butare-city and 2/3rd of this distance navigable on a paved road.¹⁵⁷ And importantly, I was offered justifications for the suggestions made. According to provincial and later, district authorities, Sovu was characterised by constant, “opaque conflicts” between residents and between residents and their local authorities. *Gacaca* courts were behind schedule – as at December 2005, they were struggling to finish the “collection of information” phase when most other sectors in the district had moved ahead to the “validation of information” phase (see Chapter 1). Frequent “sensitisation meetings” had to be organised by all levels of authorities in Sovu, to dispel rumours and disinformation. In August 2005, shortly before my arrival in Maraba, stones had been thrown at a Tutsi woman’s home in Sovu and her coffee fields had been destroyed – this was interpreted as a manifestation of “genocide ideology”; the police were investigating. In 2004, “genocide ideology” had also been documented in the form of anonymous death threats left at the doors of Tutsi in Sovu. This happened in April – a month strongly associated with the genocide; 7 April is a national day of mourning.

Map 1: Rwanda with its Twelve Provinces (pre-2006)



The province of Butare is highlighted.

Source: Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butare_Province, last accessed on 3 February 2006)

Bunzazi, I was further told, had no such problems. It was a relatively quiet sector. Conflict and violence were present in Bunzazi, but they tended to be of a more mundane nature. Conflicts were frequently associated with petty thefts of crops in times of food

¹⁵⁷ A vehicle was nonetheless required to reach most respondents. Many respondents’ homes were removed from paths navigable by car requiring that the last stretch of distance be covered on foot.

insecurity; there were also regular cases of domestic violence and fist fights related to drinking. *Gacaca* courts, moreover, were making swift progress in Bunzazi; they were even ahead of schedule and so were in recess for several weeks during my stay. The new *abunzi* (conciliators) committees, charged with mediating minor conflicts in sectors so that these do not escalate and congest the court system, appeared to be functioning well in Bunzazi. The Conseiller of the sector, a Rwandan Hutu who was a former military man (ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises, or ex-FAR), was well-liked.

As presented to me, the conclusions were clear: the reconciliation process in Sovu was not going well, whereas it was succeeding in Bunzazi. To what does these officials' understanding of "successful" and "less successful" reconciliation correspond? In the following pages, I will look into this question using some socio-economic indicators in both sectors obtained from the district, the municipality of Butare-city, the Butare prison authorities, and the Prosecutor's office. I will also provide a brief history of how the genocide unfolded in Maraba, and in Sovu and Bunzazi more specifically.¹⁵⁸

Map 2: Butare Province, north-western corner



Source: African Rights (2000) "Obstruction of Justice: The Nuns of Sovu", London: African Rights
 N.B.: Maraba district and the sectors of Sovu and Bunzazi are circled.

Sovu and Bunzazi: A Socio-Economic Profile

The district of Maraba borders Gikongoro Province to the west, and the city of Butare to the east. According to a district official I spoke to, Maraba was ranked the third poorest

¹⁵⁸ Chapter 5 presents the views of residents of Sovu and Bunzazi themselves on what reconciliation means and whether it is succeeding.

commune in all of Rwanda in the late 1980s (in data collected for the preparation of the 1991 general census).¹⁵⁹ He suspected its ranking had not changed much since then (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba).¹⁶⁰ Until the territorial reform of January 2006, Maraba was comprised of 20 sectors, including Sovu, which abuts the municipality of Butare-city and is directly on the tarmac road leading to Gikongoro, and Bunzazi, a little removed from the tarmac road and further away from Butare's urban centre.

In 2005, Bunzazi had a total population of 2,828; Sovu's was 3,415. Both sectors had a young population: in Bunzazi, 50% of the population was under 30, in Sovu, over 50% of the population was under 25.¹⁶¹ District officials collect a variety of data on each sector under their district's remit, including economic development indicators.¹⁶² The quality of the roofing of houses is one of the proxies used for the prosperity of inhabitants in a given sector. Table 7 shows that the quality of roofing in Sovu is significantly higher than in Bunzazi, as well as higher than the district average.

Table 6: Quality of Roofing in Bunzazi and Sovu, and in the District of Maraba

Location	% of houses covered in...		
	Aluminium ("Toles")	Hay ("Chaume")	Terracotta Tiles ("Tuiles")
Bunzazi	93%	5%	2%
Sovu	11%	8%	81%
Maraba District (average)	28.45%	12.53%	59%

Source: District of Maraba archives

* Aluminium sheets are considered the worst roofing material, causing houses to become extremely hot under the sun.

The amount of cattle per sector is another proxy used for aggregate prosperity. Cows remain status symbols in Rwandan society and are particularly valuable (ranging from US\$ 150 to US\$ 500 per head), followed by smaller farm animals such as goats and pigs (Sundvoll, 2006, p. 65-66). Table 8 shows that, on a per capita basis, Bunzazi's

¹⁵⁹ Before an administrative reform in 2001, districts were known as *communes* (and provinces as *prefectures*).

¹⁶⁰ Before 2001, when Maraba commune was fused with neighbouring Mbazi commune to form a larger district of Maraba, local authorities joked it was like two domestics getting married; it was bound to remain a poor household (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba).

¹⁶¹ These numbers are below the national average: a December 2005 UN Population Fund report places 67% of the Rwandan population at under 25 (Muia, Dec 2005).

¹⁶² All of the statistics in the following pages are official District of Maraba statistics (District de Maraba, 2005).

inhabitants have slightly more cows than Sovu's, and are above the district average. Bunzazi and Sovu are roughly on par when it comes to small farm animals.

Table 7: Farm Animals per Inhabitant in Bunzazi and Sovu, and in the District of Maraba

Location	Farm animals per capita						
	Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Goats	Rabbits	Chickens	Bee hives
Bunzazi	0.16	0.15	0.01	0.20	0.03	0.08	0
Sovu	0.10	0.04	0.01	0.33	0.11	0.12	0.006
Maraba District (avg)	0.11	0.10	0.03	0.21	0.06	0.14	0.008

Source: District of Maraba archives

Another indicator of welfare is the category of the head of household, with female and child-headed households being considered significantly more economically vulnerable, chiefly for reasons of access to land and manpower.¹⁶³ As Table 9 shows, Sovu has a significantly higher percentage of female-headed households.

Table 8: Heads of Households in Bunzazi and Sovu, and in the District of Maraba

Location	% of heads of households		
	Men	Women	Children
Bunzazi	65.47%	31.08%	3.44%
Sovu	44.53%	51.40%	4.07%
Maraba District (avg)	59.25%	29.87%	10.88%

Source: District of Maraba archives

Overall, the above data show that Sovu is significantly better off in terms of housing, Bunzazi is relatively better off in terms of heads of household, and that the two sectors are roughly on par in terms of farm animals per capita.

When I asked respondents about socio-economic status, the picture was shifted even more in Sovu's favour. Sovu is perceived by both its own inhabitants and those of Bunzazi as being better off. Reasons for this include the relative proximity to Butare-city: people from Sovu could walk to Butare-city's market and back in one day (over one hour's walk each way), thus selling their products at better prices; some could even secure waged work as cooks, security guards, etc. in the town. A second reason was that Sovu's two markets were more active because both abutted the tarmac road (cf. Map 2).¹⁶⁴ Lastly, some

¹⁶³ The challenges faced by women headed households are also discussed in Chapter 6.

¹⁶⁴ There is no market in Bunzazi itself, residents go to a neighbouring sector's market.

respondents pointed to the fact that some houses and little businesses in Sovu had electricity, whereas Bunzazi was not electrified. As Butare had generally experienced severe power cuts ever since the genocide, this had more symbolic than material significance.

However, through interviews and through consulting the district archives, it soon became clear that Sovu and Bunzazi differed starkly in one very substantial way - in terms of “ethnic” composition. This was something I was ill-advised to enquire about before selecting the research sites, as discussing ethnicity in Rwanda is heavily discouraged – it is part of the “bad history” that was taught by the previous regimes.¹⁶⁵ My search for a “balanced” set of interviewees – one that included genocide survivors – and interviewees themselves soon revealed however, that Bunzazi was nearly mono-ethnic Hutu, with ca. 25 Tutsi (genocide survivor) families living in the sector at the time of fieldwork – out of a total of 729 families in Bunzazi, this represents less than 3.5% (District de Maraba, 2005; Bunzazi, Interviewee no 2, “neutral”). Some Tutsi from Bunzazi had gone into exile starting from 1959, but none had returned to Bunzazi after 1994, as they had in Sovu.¹⁶⁶

Sovu, on the other hand, had a very large Tutsi presence. Before the genocide, 18% of all families were Tutsi, approximately 300 out of a total of 1,627 families in Sovu. This was much higher than the surrounding sectors. In 2005, there were approximately 150 families left in Sovu, including Tutsi returnees who had fled from 1959 onwards – making up 19% of all families in the sector.¹⁶⁷ The Tutsi of Sovu either lived dispersed on the hills with the rest of the population, or in an *umudugudu* close to the Sovu convent and health centre – the site of a large massacre during the genocide. Several were perceived as coming from “powerful” Tutsi families, benefiting from remittances sent from abroad and more importantly, from privileged relationships with authorities.

¹⁶⁵ There are potentially serious repercussions of discussing ethnicity openly, including being charged with divisionism, a criminal offence. See Chapter 1.

¹⁶⁶ Some Tutsi returnees from Bunzazi settled in neighbouring sectors, for reasons that are unclear but may be related to lack of land.

¹⁶⁷ This means that over half of Sovu’s Tutsi families were either killed or displaced during the genocide.

Table 9: Estimated Ethnic Breakdown in Bunzazi, Sovu and Butare Province, post-1994

Location	No of Tutsi families	Total no of families	% of Tutsi families
Bunzazi	25	729	3.5%
Sovu	150	786	19%
Butare Province*	Unknown	Unknown	17%*

Source: Interviews in Maraba, DesForges, 1999

* The 17% figure is a pre-1994 estimate, no post-1994 figures exist.

Sovu's ethnic composition matched more closely my expectations of a community in Butare. The province was historically considered to have the highest proportion of Tutsi: before the genocide, 17% of Butare province's residents were thought to be Tutsi, which was much higher than the official nation-wide average of 9% (DesForges, 1999, p. 353). Also before the genocide, it was estimated that the city of Butare was one quarter Tutsi – higher even than Kigali's 17% (DesForges, 1999, p. 432). Butare was further known as the area of the country where Hutu and Tutsi had intermarried most. Hutu from the north, the area where allegedly the purest Hutu came from, and the home region of President Habyarimana and his influential wife's family, sometimes said that there were "no Hutu in Butare, meaning that the Hutu population there was so fully integrated with the Tutsi that it had lost any distinctively Hutu characteristics." (DesForges, 1999, p. 353)¹⁶⁸

At least one other startling find, based on the reports on general security that Mayors of each district are supposed to send to the Province on a weekly and/or monthly basis (and to which I had access in Maraba) related to the number of "security incidents" or crimes.¹⁶⁹ Having heard about how much more prone to conflict Sovu was – both latent and overt – and about recent incidents involving "genocide ideology", I expected this to be reflected in the security reports collected at the district office. Based on the reports I consulted (see discussion below on the quality of the data), Table 11 shows that Sovu does have a higher aggregate number of crimes reported over the period (2001-2005). However, Sovu and Bunzazi have the same number of incidents attributed to "genocide ideology": two each. Moreover, Table 12 suggests that Sovu is not particularly problematic in relation to the other sectors in the district.

¹⁶⁸ This feeds into the rationale of the January 2006 administrative reforms which reduced and renamed the provinces (see Chapter 1). As seen above, the province of Butare no longer exists; what used to be Butare is now part of Southern Province.

¹⁶⁹ These same reports are then passed onto central authorities in Kigali.

**Table 10: Number of Crimes Reported to Maraba District Authorities
All Crimes (“All”) and Genocide Ideology Crimes (“GI”), 2001-2005**

Year	All	GI	All	GI	All	GI	All	GI	All	GI	Total	Total
	2001*		2002		2003*		2004		2005*		ALL	GI
Bunzazi	2	0	6	1	3	0	3	1	3	0	17	2
Sovu	9	0	5	0	6	0	12	1	7	1	39	2
Maraba	67	1	161	2	85	0	136	15	120	14	569	32

Source: District of Maraba archives

* Notes on completeness of data:

- The 2001 figures are estimates, based on March to August reports; the rest were missing.
- The August 2003 reports are missing; as it was the month of Presidential election, they may exceptionally have not been produced.
- The figures for 2005 go to November 2005 inclusive.

Table 11: Crimes by Sector as Percentage of Total Crimes Reported to Maraba District Authorities (2001-2005)

Sector	% of total crime over 4 year period*
Gihindamuyaga	9.2%
Tare	8%
Simbi	6.7%
Sovu	6.5%
Cyarumbo	6.3%
Muhororo	6%
Kabuga	6%
Mbogo	5.5%
Kabusanza	5.3%
Maraba	4.6%

Rusagara	4.5%
Nyangazi	4.5%
Kabuye	4.5%
Karama	4%
Mwulire	3.6%
Mutunda	3.6%
Bunzazi	3.25%
Shanga	3.25%
Kibanda	2.7%
Gisakura	2%
Maraba (Total)	100%

Source: District of Maraba archives

* In descending order

Because the security reports had not systematically been archived by the district, and because they tended to be narrative in style – including on top of descriptions of the incidents, reports on food security, public works, and “the general climate” in the district – they provide a partial glimpse of social reality rather than accurate, quantitative crime statistics. Moreover, the thoroughness and quality of the reports varied significantly, apparently as a function of the different staff members charged with drafting the reports over the period. Within the timeframe I considered – from 2001, when, following yet another administrative reform, Sovu became part of the district of Maraba, to November 2005, the most recent data available by the end of my fieldwork period – several reports were missing or never produced (see notes to Table 11). Lastly, it is impossible to know to

what extent residents of Maraba actually report security incidents to the authorities: rape and domestic violence, for example, tend to be under-reported (HRW, 2004b, p. 24).¹⁷⁰

Despite all these disclaimers, it can nonetheless be said that the types of crimes reported throughout Maraba during this period are generally violent and routinely include domestic violence, rape, rape of minors (including infants), manslaughter or attempted manslaughter, and alcohol-induced fights that sometimes included weapons (machetes, hoes and grenades are examples). There were also several suicides or attempted suicides each year, and robberies, including armed robberies. More than anything, what is clear from the security (crime) reports is that life in Sovu and Bunzazi, and in Maraba generally, is hard, brutal, and brutalising. For example, in 2002 alone, torrential rains destroyed housing and crops in nearly all of the district in January and again in May, leading to food shortages (and an increase in petty thefts) which were then compounded by lack of rains in October. A malaria epidemic is reported in July, and again in November, along with an outbreak of dysentery and meningitis. “The population is hungry” is the understated conclusion of one of the November 2002 security reports.¹⁷¹ In terms of reconciliation however, there is no evidence in the reports to support the official depiction of Bunzazi as having less conflicts, or of Sovu as being relatively worse off than Bunzazi, including in terms of “genocide ideology” crimes.¹⁷²

Genocide in Maraba

The civil war that had a severe impact on much of the north of the country and Kigali from October 1990 had no immediate, tangible impact on the people of Maraba. People knew there was a “war in Byumba”, but no one knew the details (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7,

¹⁷⁰ Compounding the faultiness of the data is the fact that Maraba is a rural and very poor setting, difficult to compare with the few national (aggregate) statistics available for Sub-Saharan African countries. However, as a rough guide, when placed on a ranking of national per capita crime rates of 60 countries around the world, it may be interesting for the reader to note that Maraba’s per capita crime rate (1.87 per thousand), ranks between the 57th and the 58th place, i.e. between Papua New Guinea and Azerbaijan respectively (NationMaster).

¹⁷¹ These descriptions of peasant rural life vividly recall Scott, particularly his repeated reference to a quote by R.H. Tawney: “[t]here are districts in which the position of the rural population is that of a man standing permanently up to the neck in water, so that even a small ripple is sufficient to drown him.” (Scott, 1990, p. 1)

¹⁷² The police investigation into the burning of the old Tutsi’s woman’s coffee plants in Sovu in August 2005 had by the end of my stay closed, with no proof found that this was indeed a crime born out of ethnic tensions. Yet it was referred to, and reported as (in the district crime reports), a divisionist crime nonetheless.

family member in prison). When asked when trouble began in their communities, interviewees in Sovu and Bunzazi usually responded that they didn't see anything coming, that the genocide descended on them suddenly in early April of 1994. Only one interviewee, a respected elder, placed the arrival of tension that ultimately led to genocide in Maraba back to 1991, when multiple-party politics was introduced (Sovu, Interviewee no 29, family member in prison).

The political parties created in 1991 began to hold recruitment and propaganda drives all the way down to sector-level. As the meetings multiplied, and the rhetoric heated up – some even daring to ridicule President Habyarimana in public – the situation became tense. Indeed, political parties vying for recruits were the ones who really brought the war in the north to bear in Maraba, according to this interviewee. For example, two new parties, the PSD (Parti social démocrate) and PL (Parti liberal) – associated with the “Hutu moderates” (who later would oppose the genocide) – were accused of fundraising for the RPF, and the idea that all Tutsi inside Rwanda were fifth columnists for the RPF began to be circulated around that time (Sovu, Interviewee no 29, family member in prison). Throughout the commune of Maraba, the MDR party, which had been revived in 1991, had the most supporters.¹⁷³ According to other reports, the PSD and the PL were the most popular throughout most other communes in Butare province (DesForges, 1999, p. 436-7). However, though these parties created youth wings, no substantial anti-Tutsi militia existed in Maraba, or in Butare until early April 1994 (DesForges, 1999, p. 437).

Residents of Maraba first saw massacres on the hills to the west, inside the province (then préfecture) of Gikongoro. Many respondents reported seeing burning houses in early April. We know from other reports that this would have been around 7-8 April 1994. The first displaced persons from Gikongoro arrived shortly thereafter. Maraba was among the first communes to receive displaced persons as it was adjacent to Gikongoro, where the massacres had already begun. In Maraba, the displaced were directed towards the Sovu

¹⁷³ In Sovu, the leader of the MDR was Emmanuel Rekeraho. His name was mentioned in most of my interviews in Sovu in particular, as he was the main planner of the genocide in the greater region and a zealous killer himself. He is serving a life-sentence in Karubanda prison, Butare-town.

convent and adjoining health centre, to the monastery in Gihindamuyaga, to the church at Rugango, and to the church at Simbi, neighbouring Bunzazi.

At first, local authorities from different communes organised all men, both Hutu and Tutsi, to defend the western borders from bands of assailants coming from Gikongoro. The Burgomaster of Maraba, Jean-Marie Vianney Habineza, was among those authorities.¹⁷⁴ One account has him defending displaced Tutsi at the church at Simbi, the same Tutsi whose massacre he supervised less than ten days later: “[w]hen assailants penetrated to the vicinity of the church [at Simbi] where Tutsi had taken shelter, he went to the nearby playing field of the school to frighten them off by firing his pistol.” (DesForges, 1999, p. 449)

Like much of the rest of Butare, Maraba (and Huye, the district in which Sovu was located at the time) remained relatively calm for nearly two weeks after the genocide had begun, with no large-scale massacres occurring until 17-18 April. On 18 April, the Préfet of Butare – the only Tutsi occupying such a position in April 1994 – was removed (DesForges, 1999, p. 454). That same day, the interim president Théodore Sindikubwabo, who had replaced President Habyarimana after his plane was shot down over Kigali on 6 April, and who was himself born in Butare, had toured a number of communes in the province, including Maraba, to try to mobilise the population. At the ceremony appointing the new Préfet, he delivered a speech where he chastised Butareans for their “it’s not my business” attitudes and asked them to “step aside for us and let us work” (DesForges, 1999, p. 460). His convoy passing through Maraba District was cited by several respondents as a major catalyst for the killings.

The genocide unfolded in Maraba much like it did in other parts of the country. There were roadblocks on all main roads, and even on footpaths up “on the hills”. Killings in homes or outdoors happened, but most victims in Maraba died in a handful of locations - churches, health centres - where fleeing Tutsi had congregated, often in their thousands. Much is known about the massacre that took place on 20-21 April 1994 at the convent in

¹⁷⁴ Burgomasters of Communes are today known as Mayors of Districts.

Sovu. In 2001, a Belgian court, acting on a 1993 Belgian law allowing for the prosecution of war crimes in Belgium no matter where the crime was committed or the nationality of those involved, tried four Rwanda nationals, including two nuns from the Sovu convent.¹⁷⁵ Soeur Gertrude, the Mother Superior (Mukangango, Consolata), and Soeur Kisito (Mukabutera, Julienne), were accused of a number of crimes, though not killing per se. Among the chief crimes of which they were convicted was asking the Mayor (known as a Burgomaster at the time) to “remove” the relatives of some Tutsi nuns who had come to the convent (Soeur Gertrude); and giving fuel to militia who then used it to set a garage on fire with hundreds of Tutsi inside (Soeur Kizito – see Schotsmas and Verwimp, 2001). Two of my respondents were flown to Belgium to act as witnesses during the trial. The fact that this trial was held had made a big impact on the community, if only for the prestigious opportunity for travel it afforded the locals that were called upon to act as witnesses (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba).

Most genocide victims originally from Bunzazi perished in the 18 April massacre at the church in the adjoining sector of Simbi. This massacre is less well documented than the massacre at Sovu, but the basic facts are known. The Tutsi from Maraba and elsewhere (especially Gikongoro) who had sheltered in the church and nearby school, found themselves encircled by bands of Hutu men from the immediate area (including Bunzazi). Military men (FAR) were apparently also there. The military shot and lobbed grenades into the church and the workshops and classrooms of the adjoining school, while the other (local) men were to catch and kill those who managed to run out of the buildings. The massacre lasted for several hours and the bourgmestre of Maraba, Habineza, was present. It is possible that relatively few people were killed inside Bunzazi itself. However, cows were slaughtered and eaten, houses burned, people chased away – these are all acts considered genocide crimes and tried as such by *gacaca* courts under Category 3 (lowest category) crimes. Once the *gacaca* courts in Bunzazi, Sovu and elsewhere finish their work, a much

¹⁷⁵ The court was called a “Cours d’Assises”, and featured a 12-member jury of Belgian nationals. The trial lasted from 17 April to 8 June 2001. In 1999, the 1993 law was amended to include genocide and crimes against humanity, but as the Rwandan genocide took place in 1994, the trial accused the four Rwandans of war crimes only (RCN Justice & Démocratie).

clearer picture of what happened and where, should emerge, as should more definitive figures on how many died, including in the massacres at Sovu and Simbi.

Generally however, Maraba became known for the zeal of its killers. One respondent told me that “just as [roving bands of killers from] Gikongoro had been a problem for us, we became a problem for the rest of Butare” (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba). Another respondent claimed that the district gained a reputation for having been among the most violent during the genocide (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 7, survivor). From prison statistics, used as a rough proxy for participation in the genocide, it is clear that Sovu residents were much more active than Bunzazi residents in the killings (see

Table 12: Number of Prisoners from Sovu and Bunzazi).¹⁷⁶

In late June 1994, RPF troops swept in from the north and gradually took control of the area. Though this ended or at least impeded genocidal killings from continuing, it did not bring security for residents of Maraba immediately. Respondents – Hutu but also some Tutsi – reported being terrified of the advancing RPF troops. Some explained they feared revenge killings, a kind of rebuttal-genocide, but many also fled out of instinct, to escape the advancing front-line. Very few of Maraba’s residents were in their homes at that stage and the hills had “emptied out”.¹⁷⁷ Some fled to IDP camps in Gikongoro, including the infamous Kibeho camp, which was forcefully closed by RPF troops in 1995 (see among others Pottier, 2000). They were partly fleeing the RPF, but they were also partly attracted by the French troops who had set up a “humanitarian safety zone” in the south-west of the country, under their “Opération Turquoise”. Some Maraba residents fled, mostly on foot, into Zaire/DRC. Of these, some returned with the forced repatriations of 1996-97, and some never returned.

¹⁷⁶ Perhaps as a result of the fact that there were so many fewer Tutsi in Bunzazi to kill.

¹⁷⁷ The RPF found similar “empty” territory during its war in the north (Cyrus Reed, 1996, p. 491).

Table 12: Number of Prisoners from Sovu and Bunzazi

Originally from...	Detained (as at 2005)	Released (2005)	Total (pre-2005 release)
Bunzazi			
Ruheru (cell 1)	4	4	8
Marambo (cell 2)	14	16	30
Total Bunzazi	18	20	38
Sovu			
Gako (cell 1)	43	3	46
Karuhayi (cell 2)	43	1	44
Kigarama (cell 3)	40	0	40
Total Sovu	130	4	134

Source: Prison authorities in Karubanda and Mpanga prisons, Butare province.

3.3 The Official Vision and the Messy Reality

The two case studies introduced here will be examined in more detail in Chapters 5 through 7. However, we can already conclude at this early stage that central authorities' understanding or ways of assessing reconciliation do not correspond well to reality on the ground, at least in these two communities. Indeed, from the choice of Bunzazi and Sovu, four conclusions can be extrapolated.

First, *gacaca* is used as the main indicator of how well reconciliation is going in various localities, and the emphasis on the speed and diligence with which *gacaca* is carried out hints at the fact that process may matter less than product or result.¹⁷⁸ Yet, process does matter, as subsequent chapters will show; and indicators that rely on product delivery – such as the speed with which the gathering of information phase is completed in *gacaca* courts – may speak to compliance, but not to reconciliation.¹⁷⁹ Second, as foreshadowed in Chapter 1, the labels “divisionism” and/or “genocide ideology” are not defined and too quickly resorted to, to explain any number of conflicts. For example, a particularly vicious fight in a local bar during my period of fieldwork involved a young male Tutsi survivor – apparently the only one in Bunzazi – and had really upset and rattled the members of the small survivor association in Bunzazi, *Girimpuhwe* (which means “be

¹⁷⁸ This conclusion is buttressed by Rwandan non-government elites respondents on the one hand, and grassroots respondents on the other: both voice concerns over shortcomings in the way or the process by which various “reconciliation” strategies have been implemented (see Chapters 4 and 7 respectively).

¹⁷⁹ The conflation of compliance under duress and willful compliance is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

merciful” in Kinyarwanda). However, the fight, which was reported to the district authorities and which I investigated personally, ended up being over an unfaithful fiancée flirting with the young man (the genocide survivor) and not proof of persistent inter-ethnic hatred. In fact, at least one of the genocide survivor’s attackers was himself also a (Tutsi) survivor from a sector adjacent to Bunzazi. More generally speaking, crimes appear at times to be almost arbitrarily branded as “genocide ideology” in the district (crime) reports. This poses obvious problems of opportunism and settling of scores, but it also significantly muddles the picture of what is actually going on. Third, as will become clear in Chapter 6, the role mixed small income generation associations – whose primary mandate is the promotion of economic development and poverty reduction can play in reinterpreting the past (though not necessarily along the lines laid out by the RPF) is not recognised at the central authorities’ level. Fourth, there appears to be little knowledge at the provincial, and to a lesser extent, at the district levels, of the different dynamics and characteristics of local communities. It would be unfair to expect Kigali-based authorities to know specifics about different sectors – much less so for provincial and certainly district authorities.

In any respect, it is startling to have mono-ethnic Bunzazi held up as a good or at least a better example of reconciliation than Sovu, particularly given the vehemence with which the RPF has emphasised the undesirability of separate areas (a “Hutuland” and a “Tutsiland”) and the need for unity (cf. Chapter 1). Moreover, Bunzazi has actually had the same number of “genocide ideology” crimes as Sovu, but for various reasons, they seem not to be talked about as much. One district authority speculated that a reason for this could be the skewed image, even notoriety Sovu has acquired in the area. Indeed, even though we saw that the genocide was apparently particularly fierce all over Maraba, it is Sovu that is remembered for the massacre at the convent and health centre, made famous by the subsequent trial in Belgium.

Conclusion

Based on Presidential statements and interviews with senior RPF members, I argue that the ideology of reconciliation espoused by the core RPF political strategists and intellectuals around President Kagame is primarily based on two “reconciliation pillars”: (i) the revision

of collective memory and identity (second reconciliation paradigm) to build a unified and improved Rwanda and Rwandan (what I have referred to as the forward-looking element of this strategy), accompanied by (ii) a gradual shift away from a purely retributive model of justice towards a form of institutionalised, top-down forgiveness for “most” perpetrators (third paradigm, and the backward-looking element of attribution of guilt and responsibility).

A host of RPF policies and programmes, reviewed in Chapter 1, buttress these two pillars. The progressive emphasis on forgiveness in the RPF rhetoric for example can be seen expressed through the *ingando* camps, the January 2003 Presidential decree, the *gacaca* courts themselves, and the introduction in 2005 of a programme of communal works as an alternative to prison sentencing (the TIG programme). When thinking about reconciliation, these policies, programmes, and the language that accompanies them amount to a significant policy shift away from prosecution and toward rehabilitation of “most” perpetrators – both in the discourse (cf. the RPF version of history) and in term of criminal/legal liability (cf. the mass provisional releases). I argue that this need not be a charitable act on the part of the RPF, but a product of pragmatism and of a political will – also visible in Presidential pronouncements – to move forward and to encourage Rwandans to “soldier on” or “move on” even if things are difficult.

In an effort to explore how this official discourse and vision of reconciliation translate into reality, I asked RPF authorities to suggest two communities, one “good” community, where reconciliation was progressing well, and one “bad” community, for me to study in more detail. I return to the two communities in Chapter 5, where I explore how local inhabitants understand reconciliation and where their expectations overlap and/or diverge from the official government discourse, and in Chapters 6 and 7, where I point to three factors that appear to be driving the reconciliation process. However, the mere choice of these communities gives us some important insights into how authorities “quantify” or assess reconciliation. The descriptions I received of these two communities were primarily based on fairly superficial indicators, such as the speed of the *gacaca* procedures in each locality, or badly defined indicators, such as the number of “genocide ideology” crimes.

However, the descriptions also did not necessarily correspond to the reality I encountered on the ground. For example, both basic socio-economic indicators and anecdotal evidence suggest that Sovu is economically better off relative to Bunzazi. Moreover, I found no evidence in the security reports (and later, through my own investigations) to support the claim that Sovu had substantially more conflicts than Bunzazi. Lastly, the suggestion that mono-ethnic Bunzazi was doing better than Tutsi-heavy Sovu actually represents a serious challenge to one of the central tenets of RPF political ideology – that of Rwandan unity.

This chapter lays bare what RPF ideologues mean by the ubiquitous word reconciliation. It also begins to examine how this usually amorphous term is translated into reality through the specific case studies of Sovu and Bunzazi. As argued in Chapter 1, when any discussion of reconciliation in the Rwandan context occurs at all, it is this RPF account – albeit usually rendered superficially – that dominates all others. The following chapter turns to some important alternative, “elite” accounts: those of non-government elites who have stayed in-country on the one hand, and the Top Five donors to Rwanda on the other.

Chapter 4: Alternatives to the Official Discourse: Rwandan In-country Elites and International Donors on Reconciliation

Introduction

As we saw in Chapter 1, since the RPF came to power in July 1994, there has been little or no political space inside the country for a genuine public debate on a wide range of political and social issues (Pottier, 2000; ICG, 2002; Uvin, 2003a; Reyntjens, 2004; Frontline, 2005; US Department of State, 2006a). These include the causes of the genocide, the model of justice adopted post-1994, the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi labels, and contemporary sources of tension in Rwandan society. Though “grassroots consultations” do take place, most famously in 2002-03 in preparation of the new Constitution, they are widely considered to be “mobilization of support for decisions already taken rather than open discussion of issues” (USAID/Rwanda, 2004, p. 38). Likewise, all political parties are formally consulted before government decisions are taken, maintaining the appearance of inclusion and political participation “although few doubt that ultimately the RPF remains in control.” (Piron and McKay, 2004) On occasion, opinions that are not in-line with RPF thinking are aired, but these are not necessarily publicized, much less acted on. During the popular consultations in preparation for the Constitutional referendum for example, participants in a series of August 2002 meetings apparently recurrently “requested strong guarantees of control over executive power that did not appear in the final draft of the Constitution.” However, their “reservation about grass-roots competitive politics” was heeded, because that was in-line with RPF views (Kimonyo, Twagiramungu et al., 2004).¹⁸⁰

Against this backdrop, I focus in this chapter on the rarely heard alternative elite discourses on reconciliation in Rwanda. In a first section, I present findings from interviews with Rwandan non-government elites who have stayed in-country. By contrast to the web of Rwandan Diaspora political groups – who give interviews, issue press releases and have websites – Rwandan (non-government) elites inside Rwanda, out of prudence or out of conviction, rarely express critical views, or any views at all, even in private or semi-private

¹⁸⁰ As Chapter 1 discusses, there was indeed a ban on political parties’ campaigning at local (sub-national) levels throughout the various electoral campaigns, though the RPF violated this rule.

settings. Through guarantees of anonymity, relationships I had with some respondents, and a snowballing selection technique, I document and analyse some of their rich, nuanced and critical reading of events.

In the second half of the chapter, I look at another “elite’s” understanding of the reconciliation process – that of the donor community, focusing on the Top Five donors to Rwanda. Today, reconciliation in Rwanda is squarely on donors’ minds and tongues – with the establishment of the ICTR being perhaps the earliest and clearest sign (cf. Chapter 1). Indeed, the Rwandan experience has helped shape what amounts to a larger “new postconflict agenda” and moves towards the “judicialization of development cooperation”, which now includes aims such as “good governance”, “rule of law” and “reconciliation” (Uvin, 2001b; Oomen, 2005). Here, some literature, academic and grey, on the international community’s impact on Rwandan reconstruction, and later on development, exist. In terms of the early emergency interventions, the best known study is the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR, 1996) though smaller-scale studies were produced as well (USAID, 1996). Post-emergency phase evaluations also exist and continue to multiply (these include Baaré, Shearer et al., 1999; Uvin, 2001b; Kimonyo, Twagiramungu et al., 2004; Piron and McKay, 2004; Killick, 2005). However, how donors understand reconciliation and how they attempt to promote it in Rwanda has been almost entirely overlooked.

Why Elites?

Some may question this chapter’s emphasis on “elites”. Aren’t “ordinary” Rwandans’ opinions more “genuine”, more “representative”, more eclipsed, and therefore more worthy of study? I concur that it is important to explore “ordinary” Rwandans’ perceptions and opinions, and I begin to do so in the following chapter (cf. Chapter 5). However, elite voices do not deserve to be relegated to the realm of “irrelevant”, “too narrow” or a “second best” option until better data can be collected. Moreover, as Eltringham argues, if one accepts that the Rwandan genocide was the product of a political and military elite trying to stay in power, “it is appropriate to place the focus on [...] the successor class” (Eltringham, 2004). Moreover, the RPF itself, conscious of the role played by the previous

ruling class, considers current elite attitudes and behaviour central to national security and to reconciliation (cf. Chapter 3 and Eltringham 2004).

4.1 The Other Rwandan Elites: Non-RPF Views from within Rwanda

Methodology

I conducted 18 in-depth interviews with influential Rwandans in Kigali and Butare, in their capacity as private citizens and guaranteeing their anonymity. The interviews were conducted between June and November 2005.

Table 13: Profile of Rwandan Elite Respondents

Occupation	Gender	Socio-ethnic group	Date and location of interview
1. PhD candidate, Consultant	M	OCL Returnee	20 Jul., Kigali
2. Lawyer and National University of Rwanda (Butare) lecturer	F	OCL Returnee	8 Sept., Butare
3. Private sector employee	F	OCL Returnee	19 Jun., Kigali
4. Journalist and Consultant for international organizations	M	OCL Returnee	23 Jun., by email
5. Employee of Rwandan NGO	M	OCL Returnee	20 Jul., Kigali
6. Journalist, Rwandan and international media	M	OCL Returnee	15 August, Kigali
7. Parish Priest	M	Survivor	26 Sept., Butare
8. Employee of Rwandan NGO	M	Survivor	25 Oct., Butare
9. Employee of Rwandan NGO	M	Survivor	12 Jul., Kigali
10. Parish Priest	M	Survivor	4 October, Butare
11. Private sector employee	F	Survivor	18 Aug., Butare
12. Consultant with INGOs	F	Hutu	12 Nov., Kigali
13. Employee of Rwandan NGO	M	Hutu	2 Sept., Butare
14. Retired politician and army general	M	Hutu	17 Jul., Kigali
15. Journalist, Consultant	M	Hutu	5 Sept., Butare
16. Employee of INGO	M	Hutu	16 Sept., Butare
17. Journalist, Rwandan and international media	F	“Mixed”	16 Jun., Kigali
18. Private sector employee	M	“Mixed”	23 Jul., Kigali

N.B.: “OCL” stands for Old Caseload; these are former refugees who fled Rwanda as early as 1959 and returned after 1994; denotes a Tutsi respondent.

I used a non-random, snowballing method to identify respondents, which means I had a previous relationship with the respondent or was given a personal referral from a mutual acquaintance. The “Occupation” category in Table 14 is intended to justify my claim that these individuals are influential, local opinion leaders. The “Socio-ethnic group” is included to frame the respondents’ answers but also to show that a plurality of views – based on lived experiences – was sought out. OCL (Old Caseload) Returnees are Tutsi who fled, or whose parents fled Rwanda as of 1959 and who returned after the genocide. The

law establishing the FARG and the 2004 (revised) *gacaca* law both define a genocide survivor (Republic of Rwanda, 1998; République Rwandaise, 2004b). Paraphrasing and translating from a French text, a genocide survivor is thus “any person whose relatives were killed, who escaped attempts on his/her life, who was tortured sexually or was raped, who was hurt or was subjected to any form of violence, whose goods were looted, whose house was destroyed, or whose goods were damaged in another way, or who was persecuted because of his/her opposition to the genocide ideology during the period of 1 October 1990 and 31 December 1994” (see Appendix 2, Article 34). This technically includes Hutu as well as Tutsi. However, “genocide survivor” is almost always used as a synonym for Tutsi, and all of my Rwandan non-government elite respondents who fall in the survivor category self-identify as Tutsi. A “Mixed” respondent refers to a person whose parents are of different ethnicities, and who self-identifies as such; traditionally, ethnicity is passed down from the father to the children in Rwanda.

Complex Conceptions of Reconciliation

A first conclusion one can draw from these interviews stands in contrast to an earlier remark made on the lack of breadth and depth in official government discourse on reconciliation (cf. Chapter 3). The non-RPF Rwandan elites I interviewed tend to be much more explicit, go into significantly more detail, and bring in and discuss significantly more variables and scenarios of reconciliation than do RPF representatives and/or the President (through his interviews, speeches and documents drafted by his office). This could in part reflect the fact that political leaders dealing with complex issues need to simplify messages so as to appeal to the broadest audience possible. This would certainly apply to the Presidential speeches that were originally delivered in Kinyarwanda and were therefore intended for the home audience. However, I also studied a number of documents – speeches delivered at universities in the US, reports from conferences on reconciliation in Kigali, and the 93-page report that came out of the series of meetings hosted by the Presidency (the so-called *Urugwiro* meetings) – that were intended for an audience that was presumably interested in more detail. This greater breadth and depth in my discussions on reconciliation with elite respondents could also reflect the fact that they were presenting their personal

views, not those of a group or organisation, and were speaking under the cover of anonymity.

Converging Opinions with the RPF

Reconciliation and Sliding Scale Justice: The First RPF Reconciliation Pillar

A second conclusion reflects the bulk of the literature on reconciliation (cf. Chapter 2), and, to a large extent, the *de facto* and *de jure* RPF approach (cf. Chapter 3): all but one respondent equated reconciliation with justice, but with different types of justice for different types of people. Indeed, within this definition of justice, we find an allowance for considerable creativity in terms of what punishments are deemed appropriate, and an acknowledgment of “degrees of guilt” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 3, OCL Returnee). As we saw in Chapter 3, this echoes the text of the 1996 genocide law and Kagame’s own pronouncements on the matter (Republic of Rwanda, 1996a). To a non-negligible extent then, respondents – whether begrudgingly or not, consciously or not – ended up endorsing the RPF tendency towards the mitigation of sentences: “[p]eople in Kigali know that the population did not conceive the genocide [...] As far as I can tell, the intention is to release all this population [from prison] that were merely the executioners” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 16, Hutu respondent); and “[t]rying to reduce sentences is a good first step.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, 'Mixed' background) When asked what he thought of the mass provisional releases of prisoners since 2003, another respondent said “it is stronger than the government” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 8, survivor), indicating that the situation dictated pragmatism and flexibility to the government, and not the other way around.

An important point deserves clarification at this juncture: not one respondent advocated abandoning punishment altogether, or adopting some form of amnesty.¹⁸¹ Most highlighted the preventative function of punishment: “[w]ithout punishing them, we’d have

¹⁸¹ Indeed, two spoke about the desirability of the death penalty (which was allowed under Rwandan law until 2007). One respondent argued that “these people deserve the worst – capital punishment” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 11, survivor) and “[o]f course the only solution when you have a Herman Goering or a Goebbels or an Albert Speer is to hang them.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 4, OCL Returnee) Another respondent emphasised the need to socially segregate perpetrators through the penal system. Putting victims and perpetrators together (on the hills, in *gacaca*, etc.) was “not right” and akin to “terrorism” like “9/11” or the “London bombings”; “the place for criminals is in prison” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 9, survivor). It is noteworthy that all of the respondents quoted here are Tutsi.

things like this – *Kwica umututsi si bibi, ikibi ni ukukabyirega* – which means that killing a Tutsi is not bad, what’s bad is not admitting it!” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent) Moreover, conspicuously absent, and in contrast with Presidential statements on reconciliation, is the use of the word “forgiveness”. However, as stated above, this did not preclude respondents from being creative in their views of what constitutes punishment. One respondent suggested a naming and shaming tactic: “[f]or the rest [not the political leadership], we should identify the guilty and without necessarily putting them in jail, break the culture of impunity, underline the graveness of their acts, by unmasking them – it is dangerous if only they know what they did.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 5, OCL Returnee) Others supported the TIG programme of community works (cf. Chapter 1), though with some caveats as discussed below. Overall then, a strong endorsement of the RPF’s attempts to establish “degrees” of responsibility and focus (penal) punishment on the top offenders is found here – even though words like “forgiveness” are avoided.

Reconciliation and Improving Rwandans: The Second RPF Pillar

A sense of patriotism is apparent in the interviews with the non-government elites. One respondent, speaking of Rwanda’s “glorious history”, proclaims that he is “proud to be Rwandan” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 9, survivor). Another speaks of Rwanda’s “amputation” by the colonialists, expressing an expansionist vision where Rwanda’s true borders would engulf parts of Congo and Uganda (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 14, Hutu respondent). Another respondent, a former (OCL) refugee, speaks of the “sense of belonging” he had never known before, growing up in exile (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 4, OCL Returnee). In this respect, President Kagame’s patriotic language does appear to find resonance with this particular audience.

However, when asked to describe Rwandan culture, or “Rwandanness”, respondents responded overwhelmingly negatively: Rwandans are “ignorant, incompetent, incapable of independent critical thought” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 8, survivor), “Rwandans are two-faced” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent), “my compatriots know how to hide what they’re thinking; I’ve learnt that at my own

expense” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 2, OCL Returnee), “since the colonial period, this has been a society that obeys orders from superiors” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, 'Mixed' background).¹⁸² Positive “Rwandan characteristics” reported included hard work and a tradition of working in teams/helping each other, particularly with respect to work in the fields, which shows a certain solidarity, as well as Rwandan courage in the face of great challenges, and dignity.¹⁸³ Overall, there did however appear to be a disconnect between the image of a great Rwandan nation, and that of its tangible constituent parts: its citizens. This is an audience that was therefore receptive to at least part of the RPF’s “societal transformation” project.

Some Caveats

As Chapter 3 details, this transformational project has several components to it. Though the desire to “improve” Rwandans or improve Rwandan culture may be endorsed by the non-government elites, the building of a “unified” nation (i.e. ethnic amnesia) and the imposition of a version of history which casts the new ruling elite as morally pure (i.e. ignoring RPF massacres allegedly committed in Rwanda, and later, in the DRC) is not. Here, some non-government elites rejoin the RPF’s harshest critics, decrying for example the “use of the genocide as a political instrument” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee). Another regretted the “politicisation of the act of commemorating” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 8, survivor) and many spoke about the alienation of large portions of the Hutu population, whose suffering during the civil war and genocide goes unrecognised. As we will see in later chapters, these same themes are found again in grassroots discourses (cf. Chapter 7 specifically).

On the RPF practice of ethnic amnesia, most elite respondents explicitly and implicitly did not endorse the view that ethnicity does not exist in Rwanda: “we are all Rwandan but we also belong to categories, no matter what people say. If not, how would

¹⁸² Some argue that a typically “negative” characteristic in Western culture, such as dishonesty, can have a positive connotation in the Rwandan context: “the goal of the speaker is not to transmit correct information, but to reinforce his/her position in the social hierarchy and win the sympathy of his/her superior [...] Morally, a word is either positive, if it produces a benefit, or negative, if becomes prejudicial to the speaker. Truth and lying have a radically different moral connotation in Rwanda and in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.” (Overdulve, 1998)

¹⁸³ This is a greatly-valued tradition by my grassroots respondents as well, one that, as we will see in Chapter 7, has apparently died out in the two Maraba communities studied.

you explain the genocide? How did people know who to kill?” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee) “Even if the current government says ‘there is no ethnicity’, we are soaked in the ethnic problem, from head to toe. It is part of our life.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent) The comparison with Burundi was made by two respondents: “[i]n Burundi, they are more advanced than us. At least over there, things are clear. And in the long term, they will understand that ethnicity has no importance.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 13, Hutu respondent)¹⁸⁴ And “Rwanda closely observes what is going in Burundi. Their approach is based on ethnicity, they [Burundians] had elections without violence [...] This [Rwandan] 2003 parliamentary report on the dissolution of the MDR for example, all this shows the limits of this ‘inclusive’ approach where we do not speak of ethnicities, where we are all Rwandan...” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee)¹⁸⁵

On the RPF imposition of what some respondents called the “victors’ version of history”, some alluded to RPA killings or “revenge crimes” only indirectly: “[i]n the north, reconciliation will be more difficult because we are not allowed to discuss certain subjects.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, 'Mixed' background)¹⁸⁶ Others were more blunt, talking about the necessity to “lift the veil of silence on revenge crimes” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee) and decrying the use of “victors’ justice” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 15, Hutu respondent), imposed by “those who won the war” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee). One survivor, who lost two children, her husband and parents, echoed this thought: “[w]e often forget to speak of the Hutu who were killed in 1994; they too must feel like survivors no doubt.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 11, survivor) Respondents were careful not to

¹⁸⁴ Burundi’s transitional process and new government (elected in 2005) are premised on an explicit power-sharing formula between Tutsi-dominated and Hutu-dominated political parties, following fairly closely Lijphart’s consociational model (Lemarchand, 2007).

¹⁸⁵ Based on his personal conversations with RPF representatives, the same respondent concluded that “the RPF is currently reviewing its unity and reconciliation policy” partly because of the Burundi effect and partly because of “these reports that show that the ethnicity question has not budged an inch” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee). This bolsters the argument made in Chapter 3 that the official practice of ethnic amnesia was being relaxed (at least at the time of fieldwork).

¹⁸⁶ From 1990 to 1993, RPA human rights abuses (including massacres and summary executions) were concentrated in the north, territory the then rebel army had occupied early in the civil war. As the ex-FAR and other armed elements were repulsed from Rwandan territory in 1994, RPA abuses spread to eastern, central, and southern Rwanda as well (DesForges, 1999, p. 701-722).

amalgamate all crimes – RPA massacres or individual criminal acts on the one hand, and genocide on the other: “[i]t’s sure that we have to preserve the memory of the genocide but we must not stifle the memory of other crimes.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 5, OCL Returnee) Some felt that this failure to acknowledge the Hutu who died during the 1990-1994 period led to a clear globalization of guilt: “these [official mourning] periods are seen by a part of the population as a way to spread culpability to an entire ethnic group” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 15, Hutu respondent) and “they [the government] are trying to implicate everyone” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 18, 'Mixed' background).¹⁸⁷

Neglecting Reparations for Victims and Rising Inequalities

The previous section shows that the Rwandan non-government elites I spoke to tended to support both, or more specifically, parts of both RPF reconciliation pillars. However, the Rwandan non-government elites I spoke to considered that several other key components of a reconciliation strategy were being totally overlooked by the RPF government. The two most frequently cited missing components were the lack of a reparations programme for victims, and a (perceived) marked deterioration of economic conditions in rural communities, resulting from a bifurcated development strategy that privileged only a certain “type” of Rwandan: the network of urban, educated, RPF loyalists. Both oversights were considered extremely grave and potentially able to derail the entire reconciliation process.

Reparations for Victims

Once justice had been defined as punishment, the type of punishment most consistently stressed as appropriate for “most” perpetrators was some form of restitution. The need for perpetrators to repay their debt to the individuals they harmed, as well as to Rwandan society, was repeatedly broached.¹⁸⁸ There is “not yet any real justice: people have not been compensated” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, 'Mixed' background). “Victims need concrete actions – from the government, but also from Rwandan society and the international community.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 9, survivor) Some

¹⁸⁷ This too is echoed in grassroots discourses (cf. Chapter 5).

¹⁸⁸ This need for compensation is in line with the views of *Ibuka*, one of whose main goals is to raise awareness on the bad life conditions of survivors of the genocide (Ibuka, 2005).

respondents recognised that perpetrators can repay by rebuilding the very things they helped destroy: “I am for the provisional releases and the communal work [TIG] programme. These people should work. Why should my taxes go to support them? They are the ones who destroyed everything [in the first place].” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 11, survivor) This is the more pragmatic argument for substitutes to lengthy stays in prison. One of my respondents, speaking about the TIG, also privileged the symbolic aspect: “TIG should be carried out in the prisoner’s community, so that we see him. He should work in his home community, he should be ‘in prison’ in his home community” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 8, survivor).¹⁸⁹ This restitution, in whatever form it may come, was repeatedly stressed as important, symbolically as well as materially.

In terms of who should pay the said restitution, the obvious and most frequently referred to mode of repayment came in the form of the labour of the “common” or “regular” perpetrators, who were anyway too poor to be expected to pay in cash. However, the government itself was also called upon to act here: according to a representative of the FARG, which has been lobbying the government for a (monetary) compensation package for each survivor, such compensation would be a “sign of acknowledgement of the wrong done to survivors by Rwandan society as a whole” (FARG representative, 13 November 2005, Kigali). Indeed during negotiations with government in 2004, the FARG apparently calculated and tabled what sums would be required to compensate survivors for the loss of one, two, three, and so on, lives. The victims’ occupation (particular if s/he was in waged employment) prior to death was also taken into consideration. A draft law, available only in Kinyarwanda, was circulated proposing that the FARG’s revenue be raised from the current 5% of the national budget, to 13% to allow for a compensation scheme to survivors.¹⁹⁰ In the end, negotiations unsurprisingly failed – it is questionable whether 13% was even economically viable – and the 5% was retained. Even less likely than a government

¹⁸⁹ The respondent was sensitive to avoiding the reinforcement of ethnic stereotypes: “we cannot ask prisoners to work only for the survivors” because prisoners are Hutu and survivors are Tutsi; this would seem too ‘feudal’.

¹⁹⁰ The current 5% is used chiefly for school and health-related fees for survivors – and is therefore not considered as compensation for lost loved ones or the pains, trauma and humiliations endured during 1994 (FARG representative, 13 November 2005, Kigali).

compensation scheme is an international community-financed compensation scheme, which the FARG has also argued for (FARG representative, 13 November 2005, Kigali).

Though the suffering and plight of genocide survivors is alluded to with a fair amount of regularity in the Presidential statements I studied (cf. Chapter 3, Table 6, p. 82), nowhere are reparations or any form of payment to individuals – monetary or in kind – mentioned in the Presidential statements or in the interviews I conducted with RPF officials. There were no indications at the time of writing that any compensation scheme was likely in the foreseeable future. The TIG community service programme – which, as its very name suggests, is designed precisely to allow for ordinary perpetrators to repay their neighbours for the crimes they committed – could plausibly act as a more practicable, but also symbolically important, substitute to compensation payments to survivors. However, as the first “TIGistes” were put to work (the programme began during the fieldwork period, on 22 September 2005), early signs foreshadowed that the programme’s design and purpose had shifted away from this community and reparations aspect. Indeed, instead of being put to work for three days per week in a location in their home sector or district, perpetrators were transported to one location chosen by the central authorities (in this case, in the province of Gitarama) and told their TIG days would be cumulated and carried out over one uninterrupted period. This went against the initial rationale behind the TIG, i.e. to work, and to be seen to work, for the rehabilitation of one’s own community, and as an offshoot, to aid in one’s reintegration (Rumin, 2002).¹⁹¹ Reflecting the move away from social reinsertion and restitution, several TIGistes had apparently begun referring to TIG as “slavery” (Akanga, 2005). Support for the principles of some government reconciliation initiatives, such as the TIG, which is then undermined by the way the government implements these same initiatives, is a topic we will come back to below.

¹⁹¹ It also amounts to another extended stay away from their homes for perpetrators: TIGistes had been released and allowed to return to their homes under the prisoner release programme and had frequently come back to poverty-stricken and dilapidated homes, or had to start new homes if their wives had taken up with other men: their labour is invaluable for the livelihood of their (remaining) family members.

Poverty and Reconciliation

The second oversight in the government's reconciliation strategy according to the Rwandan elites with whom I spoke was the failure to stop increasingly dire economic prospects, for rural Rwandans in particular, from deteriorating further. At first glance, this appears to be a concern shared by the RPF government. Indeed, just as the plight of genocide survivors was mentioned with some regularity in RPF Presidential statements, so were the poor standards of living of all Rwandans (cf. Table 6, p. 82). Moreover, a study of the government Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and other key government planning documents show the priority accorded to poverty alleviation and economic growth.

The criticism may have more to do with the weight the RPF places on poverty in its reconciliation discourse. Again, the RPF relies on a two-pronged reconciliation strategy, which privileges forgiveness for "most" genocide-related crimes on the one hand, and building a unified, and "better" Rwanda and Rwandan on the other. Poverty is mentioned, but not as often as it is by the non-government elites. Indeed, it would be difficult to overstate how frequently and with how much insistence non-government elites mention alleviating poverty levels as a key prerequisite for reconciliation. When asked what the main obstacle to reconciliation was, one respondent replied: "[i]t's the socio-economic problem. It is still at the root of certain attitudes." (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 14, Hutu respondent) The level of poverty among "most Rwandans" is described as so overwhelming that it makes worrying about anything else, including reconciliation, a luxury. "The people don't need us to come tell them 'reconcile yourselves'; their first preoccupation is to survive day-to-day: food, health care, clothing, that kind of thing." (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 15, Hutu respondent) One respondent claimed some people, survivors and non-survivors alike, have become so desperate, that they use *gacaca* as a last-ditch attempt for bettering their circumstances: "there are often unfounded accusations [in *gacaca*] because of the problem of poverty, and the problem that the survivors are not so well assisted." (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, 'Mixed' background)

Several people also mention poverty and the ease with which this can lead to scapegoating: “[p]eople fight over something, water for example, and take ethnicity as an alibi. If we have enough to give people to eat, there would be reconciliation.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 5, OCL Returnee), “[a]s it is, the competition going on in the country over resources makes Tutsi hate Tutsi, let alone making them reconcile with Hutu” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 4, OCL Returnee). The demographics in Rwanda are such that poverty provides fertile territory for mobilization along ethnic lines: “[t]he majority of people who are poor are not Tutsi. There are a lot of poor peasants, and many peasants are Hutu.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee) This is echoed by veteran Rwanda observers: “[s]ince the countryside is overwhelmingly Hutu, the poor are mainly Hutu; the majority group is therefore discontented.” (Africa Confidential, 2004a) Here, poverty actively undermines the reconciliation process.

In other words, for the non-government elites I interviewed, the immediate physiological and safety needs such as food, water, employment – to borrow Maslow’s (1943) terminology – appear to be a *sine qua non* for reconciliation. Conversely for the RPF, the meeting of immediate or material needs, although necessary, is of secondary importance: as the analysis of presidential statements in particular shows (cf. Chapter 3), primacy is given to the transformation of (political, historical, cultural) mindsets. In other words, reconciliation for the RPF is primarily an intellectual, or ideational process as opposed to a material one.¹⁹²

However, this misses one important subtlety in the non-government elites’ concern: the issue of class and inequality, specifically the alleged systematic discrimination in favour of one “type” of Rwandan: “[t]he biggest obstacle to reconciliation is class and money; this ties back to the labels people give each other.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 3, OCL Returnee)¹⁹³ So, in other words, it’s not only that poverty is worse than it was before

¹⁹² This does not appear to be so for the main donors, as the second half of this chapter will show.

¹⁹³ Referring in particular to the nicknames given to former (OCL, i.e. Tutsi) refugees from various host countries such as Burundi, Uganda and DRC/Zaire. These can include references to their language of choice, the “Anglophone” Ugandans for example, or be based on imputed character traits, “Waragi” for Rwandans from Uganda because of their fondness of drinking, “Dubai” for those from Zaire/DRC because of their fondness of the ostentatious, etc. (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 3, OCL Returnee)

the genocide, but it is also that there is a trend of *growing* socio-economic inequality in terms of an urban-rural divide, and in terms of an intra-urban and intra-rural divide: “[w]e are taking a giant step forward in terms of development in Kigali. But in the village, we are taking a step backward. It is the first time I see famine in Rwanda. That there are people who go to bed having eaten nothing... it is the first time I see that.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent) “It’s a like a drug, this development. We aim up there, and we forget the essential, the base, down here.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 11, survivor)

These perceptions appear substantiated by emerging studies on levels of economic growth and inequality in the post-genocide period. Indeed, several economists have argued that levels of poverty and inequality ten or more years after the genocide remain worse than those recorded in the mid-1980s, i.e. prior to the economic crisis that hit Rwanda (in ca. 1987) and the 1990-1994 civil war which culminated in genocide (see among others Ansoms, 2007; Ansoms and Marysse, 2004; Justino and Verwimp, 2006; see also Chapter 1). And even though major donors to Rwanda have largely praised the country’s economic progress, these studies further argue that the benefits of economic growth are accruing mostly to those Rwandans that are already better off.

Despite this apparent disagreement (between academics and donors), what can be said with great certainty however is that socio-economic justice is *perceived* to be lacking: “[t]here is more and more unemployment in the country. And people who have not come back from the outside [who are not OCL returnees] are not trusted for posts in the government. People from the outside are the favourites.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 16, Hutu respondent) This relates back to the RPF’s distrustful and authoritarian character, and more precisely to the fact that only a small number of people have access to political power and to the important economic patronage networks that go with it. In response to a question on his fears for Rwanda’s future, one respondent said: “it is the authoritarian drift and the impoverishment of a large part of the population while a miniscule minority enriches itself like crazy.” He further decried “the repetition by the

current regime of the same errors as previous regimes” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 15, Hutu respondent).¹⁹⁴

Perversely, poverty may well be among the top things “unifying” poor Rwandans.¹⁹⁵ “There is no difference between the woman living in misery because her husband participated in the genocide and is in prison, and the woman who lost her husband and has no more children and stays without assistance. They share the same difficulties in life...” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, 'Mixed' background)¹⁹⁶ This refers us back to the pragmatics of mitigating prison sentences, in terms of bettering households' livelihoods: “[e]conomically and socially, it is a huge relief for these families [to have their men released from prison]” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 6, OCL Returnee). Of course this relief is not available to genocide widows and orphans.

“Stage-managed” Reconciliation

Beyond overlap and divergence between government and non-government elite discourses, my interviews with non-government Rwandan elites revealed one last significant finding. This finding is centred on a concern with the RPF’s growing authoritarianism, linked to a top-down *style* and a neglect or inattention to *process* more generally. My respondents used several examples to illustrate this point. I list two here. First, what I have referred to as the “institutionalisation of forgiveness” is broached and, more specifically, the way the government chose to implement the provisional release programme, which respondents argued undermined the importance of remorse. Second, the government leaving no space for other, perhaps more credible voices within society (such as that of civil society groups)

¹⁹⁴ These types of statements are extremely explosive, recalling the use of the word *akazu* (“little house”) to describe how the Habyarimana regime used its power to systematically privilege a small group of Hutu connected by kinship and business ties to the powerful family of the President’s wife. Reyntjens refers to the RPF as “the new *akazu*” (Reyntjens, 2004, p. 187; Reyntjens, 2006, p. 1109).

¹⁹⁵ Poor versus rich, rural versus urban, powerful versus powerless, etc. are dichotomies that will be explored in detail in Chapter 7.

¹⁹⁶ This is the rationale behind the formation of a number of associations in Rwanda. I personally met with one association grouping over one thousand widowed genocide survivors and women whose husbands were in jail (until the various waves of mass prisoner releases). Called *Ubutwari bwo kubaho* or Courage to Live, the women are based in Karama, Butare, and meet every week to pray and discuss together. They also help each other cultivate their fields and have received some funding from international organizations and the Caritas (Source: field visits to Karama, 20 October and 3 November 2005).

is described as detrimental, specifically with respect to disseminating the RPF version of history and vision of a unified nation.

On the first point, my non-government elite respondents soon made clear their substantial disillusionment with the sincerity or remorse accompanying confessions. This top-down, “institutionalised forgiveness” bestowed by the government is described time and again: “the liberated prisoner, liberated by the President, who finds his family again, will say to the survivor ‘we are free because of our Papa Kagame, not because of you’” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent). Another respondent cites the example of two prisoners released on his *colline* in August 2005, i.e. the second wave of mass provisional releases: “[t]hese are big génocidaires; I’d even put them in the first category. It’s excruciating to see them. But we can’t do anything; the entire *colline* can’t do anything. They have confessed. They have been liberated by the State.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 8, survivor)¹⁹⁷ The same respondent further describes this as “a theatre”, where prisoners do and say whatever is necessary to make them eligible for the provisional release programme.

It is important to distinguish here that it is neither the idea of provisional releases or the underlying goal of decongesting the penal and legal systems that seems to be disputed. Rather, it is the implementation, or the *process* that is singled out for criticism. One respondent suggests that “first we should have compensated victims, and put the emphasis on [perpetrators] asking for forgiveness from Rwandan society and his or her victims. *After* all this, we could have talked of the possibility of liberating people. Not the other way around [...] How do we know that they are being sincere, or just expressing remorse in order to get liberated?” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent) Another considers that the “wrong” prisoners are being released: after the first wave (2003) of releases, some “went back to finish the job: in Kaduha, in Butare. Genocide ideology still exists and is still very strong in some [prisoners].”(Non-government Elite, Interviewee

¹⁹⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 1, decongestion exercises began even prior to the 2003 Presidential decree on provisional releases of genocide suspects. However the May 2003 release of ca. 22,000 prisoners was the first formal mass provisional release; I therefore refer to it as the “first wave” of releases, and the August 2005 releases as the “second wave”. The releases that occurred in 2004 concerned prisoners that were not accused of genocide-related crimes.

no 11, survivor) Yet another respondent asks: “what about the prisoners who have been in jail for let’s say, ten years, and who know themselves to be innocent?” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 8, survivor); they have nothing to confess and are therefore not eligible for the provisional release programme.

On the second point, and similarly to complaints about the way in which the government implemented the prisoner release programme, many respondents advocated allowing civil society organisations (CSOs), local communities and individual perpetrators and victims the space to play a more important role in reconciliation initiatives generally.¹⁹⁸ In particular, some Church initiatives were highlighted: “[r]eligious leaders have created something like a *gacaca*; after prayer groups, they talk together. They’ve called this *gacaca ntagatifu*, or ‘holy *gacaca*’” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 17, ‘Mixed’ background). Doubt was also cast over the sustainability of government attempts to change attitudes and behaviours: “[i]t is a shame that education and sensitisation [for reconciliation] is essentially done by the government, and not civil society. When it is done by the government, with *ingando* camps for example, in my opinion, this is not appropriated by the population because only one version of history, of memory, of justice is given, the official version that suits them [the government].” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 1, OCL Returnee) “I don’t have much faith in *ingandos*. It’s a ‘trick’, a pretence so that the regime’s propaganda can be disseminated, a sort of brainwashing. And even if the participants play along, no one is fooled.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 15, Hutu respondent)¹⁹⁹ These concerns mirror an important debate in the reconciliation literature (cf. Chapter 2). As we have seen, the second reconciliation paradigm, which sees reconciliation as a process of “narrative revision”, is one of the two RPF reconciliation pillars and finds resonance with the non-RPF Rwandan elite I spoke to. However, some authors argue that this narrative revision needs to be an exercise which involves the political “elite” as well as the “grassroots”: “reconciliation [...] is a goal that can only be achieved at the local level, not delivered from above” (Dougherty, 2004).

¹⁹⁸ Chapter 1 mentions the intimidation and cooptation of civil society. CSO capacity to do such work remains an open question.

¹⁹⁹ The tension between the “official” and “grassroots” versions of Rwandan history is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The Exceptionality of the Rwandan Context: A Note of Caution

The previous sections explore areas of overlap and divergence in the RPF and non-government elite discourses, as well as several “implementation shortcomings” tied not to substance, but to style; the way the RPF designed and implemented the mass provisional releases was cited as an example. However, throughout all of these issues, the criticisms of the non-government elites I interviewed remained couched in caution and in constant referencing back to the genocide. For example, many suggested that a strong government was appropriate – though some proof of a future opening of political space should also be produced: “it is right that full-fledged democracy is not suited to Rwanda [right now]. But still, we need a sign, one step.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 6, OCL Returnee) Compounding this view is the fact that several Rwandan respondents considered future massacres possible, and four thought another genocide was possible if the RPF was removed: “[t]he venom of racist ideology persists” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 7, survivor), “[t]here are extremists elements, that everyone knows.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 14, Hutu respondent)²⁰⁰

So, though non-government elites had several sharp criticisms of the RPF official discourse, it would nonetheless be inaccurate to portray all or even the majority of respondents as purely critical of the RPF government – as authoritarian or misguided. Recognising the difficulty of the task at hand and the progress made thus far, one respondent said that the RPF had, particularly through the *gacaca* system and the effort to encourage each Rwandan to confess his/her wrongs, adopted an “extremely good formula.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 14, Hutu respondent) The most ringing endorsement of the RPF, however, came from two genocide survivors. One said “I admire the government: at least they have the courage to do something [...] *gacaca*, confessions, *ingando*, etc. this is the best we can do under the circumstances.” Rwanda “only exists because the government is trying to resolve our conflicts” he further said (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 7, survivor). “I don’t know how I would govern this country” the other concedes, “people in government have not had a direct experience of the genocide [...]. But I trust them to try to find solutions. I don’t have any.” (Non-government Elite,

²⁰⁰ As we will see in the second half of this chapter, the Top Five donors to Rwanda share this concern.

Interviewee no 11, survivor) Almost all respondents had both praise and criticism for the RPF.

Perhaps this helps explain a general use of rather “minimalist” (cf. Chapter 2) language: “we have no choice, things are ‘ok’” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 12, Hutu respondent). “Thick” language, the language of interpersonal relations, healing, forgiveness, was used only to demonstrate how inappropriate such very language was. “For me, reconciliation, forgiveness, it’s useless to speak of it [...] These are empty, easy words.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 7, survivor) The word reconciliation itself was objected to: “[r]econciliation does not exist.” (Non-government Elite, Interviewee no 13, Hutu respondent)²⁰¹

Preliminary Conclusion: A Mixed Bag

That the RPF and non-government elite discourses diverge *and* overlap is to be expected and is in itself not a particularly damning condemnation or a ringing endorsement of the government’s performance. What is more, the non-government elites I spoke to exhibited tremendous breadth and depth in their conceptions of reconciliation as well as sensitivity to context, arguing for example that a post-genocide government should not be held to “average” standards.²⁰² Their most salient criticism came in the realm of “implementation” shortcomings and the “stage-management” of the reconciliation process. These are issues that will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7.

However, the non-government elites overwhelmingly echoed the official discourse on one key point, distinguishing, similarly to the RPF, between “big” génocidaires and “normal” génocidaires – though they were uncomfortable with the concept of forgiveness. On the second reconciliation pillar, a multi-level “societal transformation” project, support was, again, mixed: the benefits of educating and improving Rwandans were recognised, but the RPF version of history that was being disseminated was considered partial, if not dubious.

²⁰¹ Chapter 5 will show that grassroots respondents use similar minimalist language and Chapter 8 will argue that the word reconciliation is itself inappropriate for (post-conflict) policy purposes.

²⁰² Though certain power-sharing arrangements (à la Burundaise, for example) or hints of a future opening in the political space could be appropriate.

Based on the findings of this small sample, one more observation can be made: ethnicity and personal background did not appear to be an important determining factor in respondents' points of view, be it in terms of definitions of reconciliation, assessments of progress made, or perceptions of the RPF and its motivations. What appeared to matter more were experiences since the genocide: this causal link will be explored further in Chapter 6. For now, Table 15 reinforces this preliminary conclusion: in response to a question about the future prospects for Rwanda, responses were not predicated on ethnicity/background. Global opinion about the future of Rwanda was also split almost exactly down the middle: six respondents were pessimistic (four thought another genocide was possible in the future); six were optimistic or very optimistic; and six were undecided or optimistic with conditions.

Table 14: Rwandan Elites' Answers to Question "Are you optimistic/pessimistic/uncertain about the future prospects for Rwanda?"

Answer	Profile of respondent	Totals
Very optimistic	Hutu respondent, interviewee no 16	2
	OCL returnee, interviewee no 5	
Optimistic	OCL returnee, interviewee no 3	4
	Hutu respondent, interviewee no 14	
	Genocide survivor, interviewee no 10	
	Genocide survivor, interviewee no 8	
Optimistic <i>with conditions</i> (e.g. the RPF stays in power and continues its present policies)	OCL returnee, interviewee no 1	3
	OCL returnee, interviewee no 2	
	Genocide survivor, interviewee no 9	
Uncertain/neutral	Hutu respondent, interviewee no 15	3
	OCL returnee, interviewee no 6	
	'Mixed' respondent, interviewee no 17	
Pessimistic	Hutu respondent, interviewee no 13	6
	Hutu respondent, interviewee no 12	
	OCL returnee, interviewee no 4	
	Genocide survivor, interviewee no 11	
	Genocide survivor, interviewee no 7	
	'Mixed' respondent, interviewee no 18	
Total		18

4.2 The Donor Community: The "Top Five" on Reconciliation

Methodology

In this section, I focus on the "Top Five" donors to Rwanda, ranked by their net average yearly aid flows in the post-emergency (post-1999) period. I base my conclusions on a handful of interviews with one or two key informants from each of the Top Five, relying

more heavily on documentary sources: donor-produced country strategy documents, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), and independent evaluations.²⁰³ In the Top Five sample, the UK and The Netherlands have signed MoUs with Rwanda.²⁰⁴ Opting for a MoU is not as meaningful as it perhaps seems: a MoU does not necessarily denote a closer relationship or a more mature form of aid. The Dutch-GoR MoU contains heavy, one-sided conditionalities for example, though the second MoU (the MoU was renewed in 2005) mitigates this somewhat (Killick, Katumanga et al., 2005). In terms of the closeness of the donor-recipient relationship, what is more telling is the way aid is disbursed, through project financing or through Direct Budget Support (DBS) to the government. On this scale, there is no closer ally to Rwanda than the UK, Rwanda's largest bilateral donor over the 2000-2003 period: it delivers two-thirds of its total aid programme to Rwanda, i.e. £46 million for the 2005-06 financial year, as DBS (DFID, 2004).²⁰⁵ The EC also gives a sizeable portion of its total aid budget as DBS, 40% of its €124 million budget over the 2002-2007 period (Communauté européenne et République rwandaise, 2003).

Based on this data, how do the Top Five translate the nebulous term “reconciliation” into concrete policies and programmes? The “reconciliation = poverty reduction + good governance” formula simplifies and summarises their approach. The following sections turn to each of the two components of the “formula” in turn, but first, the importance the donors give to reconciliation – at least in rhetoric – is underlined.

Table 15: The Top Five Donors to Rwanda
Ranked by average (net) aid flows over the 2000-03 period, US \$ millions

Donor	2000-03
1. European Commission	48.81
2. IDA (World Bank)	47.84
3. UK	46.11
4. US	38.24
5. The Netherlands	20.59

Source: OECD, DAC

²⁰³ This is because I found that documents contain (i) detailed, accurate (including quantitative, i.e. budgetary) information and (ii) the official position(s) of the donor – as opposed to individuals, who often mixed in their own (often insightful, but unofficial) interpretations of mandates, motives and history. The documentary evidence also offered a much more reliable (iii) long-term view of donor involvement in Rwanda (“institutional memory”) than individual respondents, who rotate in and out, were typically able to provide.

²⁰⁴ Out of all donors, I know only of Sweden having also signed a MoU with Rwanda.

²⁰⁵ DFID justifies the use of DBS as follows: “where adequate structures and systems are in place, such support can have the greatest impact on poverty.” (DFID, 2004)

Table 16: Interviews with “Top Five” Representatives

Donor	No of interviewees	Date and location
1. EC	2	21 June, Kigali 8 July 2005, Kigali 21 April 2006, phone interview
2. World Bank	1	17 April 2006, phone interview (with in-country staff member)
3. UK	2	26 July 2005, Kigali 27 April 2006, phone interview
4. US	2	12 July 2005, Kigali 20 July 2005, Kigali
5. The Netherlands	1	10 April 2006, phone interview

Reconciliation: A Self-proclaimed Priority

As Chapter 2 discusses, donors have begun looking at reconciliation after violent conflict as something that falls within their “development” remit (Uvin, 2001b). Indeed, it was to a large extent the International Community’s record in Rwanda (i.e. their pursuit of “a-political” development projects before 1994) and their reactions (or lack thereof) to events unfolding in the years and months leading up to April 1994 that acted as a catalyst for the introduction of a “new post-conflict agenda”. Accordingly, the PRSP, the main framework for donor assistance to Rwanda, speaks of the necessity to “mainstream reconciliation into all Government policies” (Republic of Rwanda, 2002b, p. 60). The UN agencies’ main planning document, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2002-2006, states that the UN wishes to interweave peace-building and reconciliation throughout its work in Rwanda (UN Rwanda Country Team, 2002, iii). The sheer number of times the word “reconciliation” is used in the Top Five’s planning documents for Rwanda – DFID’s Country Assistance Plan, the World Bank’s Country Assistance Strategy Paper, USAID’s Integrated Strategic Plan, and the EU’s Country Strategy Paper – is perhaps in itself telling.²⁰⁶ Excluding stock phrases, such as for example “National Unity and Reconciliation Commission”, the EU uses the word reconciliation 26 times, USAID, 24 times, the World Bank 15 times, and DFID, ten times. All of these documents laud the RPF government’s commitment to reconciliation and state the respective donor’s commitment to support the government toward that end.

²⁰⁶ The Dutch did not have a country planning document at the time of fieldwork.

Repackaging Poverty Alleviation as an Engine for Reconciliation

Beyond this reconciliation rhetoric, usually found in “Introduction” and “Context” sections, what are the Top Five’s programme priorities in Rwanda and how do they actually spend their money? All five donors’ stated programme priorities focus on an important poverty alleviation component, usually with an emphasis on the rural economy. Accordingly, the World Bank’s “first priority” is the “revitalization of the rural economy” (World Bank, 2002), the European Commission’s (EC) “focal sector” is “rural economic development” and “infrastructure development” (Communauté européenne et République rwandaise, 2003), and the Dutch focus on “rural economic transformation” (Royal Netherlands Embassy, 2006). As Appendix 9 shows in more detail, the great bulk of Top Five programme budgets also go towards this goal.²⁰⁷

This emphasis on poverty alleviation and on rural poverty in particular, is not surprising. The percentage of Rwandans living in rural areas is usually cited at 90% (Republic of Rwanda, 2002b). Moreover, in 2004, an estimated 60% of Rwanda’s population was living under the poverty line (defined as US \$1 per day, cf. World Bank Rwanda Country Unit, 2005); as we saw in Chapter 1, this had gone up in 2006 (though by how much was not clear at the time of writing) as 56.9% of Rwandans were living on less than \$0.45 per day (Ansoms, 2007). The surveys conducted in preparation for Rwanda’s PRSP confirm that poverty is overwhelmingly rural and that, with demographic trends and the severe degradation of scarce land, there is no future for the rural world in subsistence agriculture (World Bank, 2002). This emphasis falls in line with the traditional donor focus on poverty reduction in Rwanda, fits with the Millennium Development Goals and with Rwanda’s PRSP, which was received with much acclaim by donors in 2002 (Republic of Rwanda, 2005a).

What is interesting for our purposes is that support to poverty reduction activities has been repackaged as “good for reconciliation” as well as good for the poor. This is perhaps most obvious in the statements and documents of the World Bank: “[e]ven though the causes of the genocide are perhaps not known definitively, there was an economic

²⁰⁷ With the exception of the UK: as we have seen, 2/3rds of its aid budget is delivered as DBS.

component for sure [...] Helping people have gainful employment decreases tensions” (World Bank official, 17 April 2006, Kigali) and “[p]overty reduction is regarded as a crucial element for social reconciliation and stability.” (World Bank, 2002) Indeed, since 1999 the World Bank as a whole has been gradually reconceptualising and expanding its poverty reduction mandate to encompass conflict prevention and resolution. Particularly influenced by the work of the then Director of their Development Research Group, Paul Collier, the idea is that poor countries – the Bank’s clientele in other words – are particularly vulnerable to conflict.²⁰⁸ Lifting these countries out of poverty is by extension removing the root causes of conflict. This is not only desirable on moral humanitarian grounds, it also represents a much more efficient way to fulfil the Bank’s mandate. Indeed, violent conflict destroys all the work, and wastes all the money the Bank may have invested in a country’s development. On the other hand, working to promote economic development will make these same countries less prone to violent conflict. In summary: “[w]ar retards development, but conversely, development retards war” (Collier and al., 2003).

This thinking – what some have argued is the practical and theoretical merger of the fields of development and security, where poverty is reconceptualised as the major source of international instability in our contemporary world (Duffield, 2001) – is not confined to the corridors of the World Bank. All Top Five donors expressed a similar logic. Accordingly, one Top Five representative said that: “[a]lmost everything we do [in Rwanda] is related to reconciliation” (USAID official, 12 July 2005, Kigali). Another explained that “[r]econciliation cuts through all development projects, including [our] contributions to local community financing [...]; all infrastructure projects, by definition, benefit the entire population, too.” (European Commission representative no 2, 21 April 2006, Kigali) Similar ideas are found in donors’ programme planning documents as well. The USAID “Integrated Strategic Plan for Rwanda (2004-2009)” notes that: “[p]roviding economic opportunities that allow diverse groups of victims, ex-prisoners, and ex-

²⁰⁸ Collier and his colleagues designed a conflict vulnerability model with a set of ‘risk factors’ all of which have different explanatory power. The most potent risk factor is the first one: (i) dependency on a primary commodity export, but there is also (ii) economic decline, (iii) low per capita income, particularly if it is unequally distributed, (iv) one ethnically dominant group or an ethnically polarised population, (v) a high rate of population growth, and (vi) a previous civil war. The model has evolved and at times brings in other risk factors. Rwanda appears to have at least five of the six risk factors listed here – as do many other poor countries (Collier, 2000; Collier, Elliott, et al., 2003).

combatants to come together to raise rural incomes will also be a powerful tool for fostering unity and reducing conflict.” (USAID/Rwanda, 2004, p. 21)²⁰⁹ The EC’s Country Strategy Paper for Rwanda observes in its executive summary that “[t]he programme of economic growth stimulation and poverty reduction is the instrument that will help Rwanda overcome this [national reconciliation] challenge.” (Communauté européenne et République rwandaise, 2003, p. 6)²¹⁰ Here we see the clearest hints that the concept of reconciliation is being tacked-on to every poverty reduction and economic development initiative. Not being analysed and discussed on its own, I argue that it loses its substantive meaning and has become a “buzz word” in the Rwandan context.

“Good Governance” and Reconciliation

The second element in the Top Five’s reconciliation formula is “good governance”. Based on a review of donor planning documents, good governance in the Rwandan context seems to group the following ideas: accountability of leaders to their local constituencies, transparent management of public finances, capacity building and training for civil servants, rule of law and respect for human rights, and empowerment of citizens by including them in decision-making bodies (i.e. decentralization). In other words, good governance includes quite a large variety of concepts, types of funding and project activities, as Appendix 9 shows in further detail. Direct Budget Support, provided by the EC and the UK, both contributes to and is a result of good governance.

The relationship between reconciliation and good governance is more often than not explained in terms of service delivery and transparency. Indeed, “good” or disciplined government institutions lead to reconciliation it is claimed, because they design and implement “good policies” which benefit the population. Supporting these good institutions enhances the poverty reduction and economic development strategies mentioned above, but importantly, these institutions also phase out discrimination and build a sense of citizenship among Rwandans, of being equal before the law. Accordingly, the World Bank explains that “[n]ational reconciliation and good governance are inextricably related.” (World Bank,

²⁰⁹ Chapter 6 discusses this claim, which is sometimes referred to as the “Contact Hypothesis” in more detail.

²¹⁰ My translation from the French: “Le programme de stimulation de la croissance et de réduction de la pauvreté est l’instrument qui va aider le Rwanda à relever ce défi [de la réconciliation nationale].”

2002, p. 9) The link between “improved governance” and “enhanced opportunities for reconciliation” is also made directly by USAID, which labels the former a Strategic Objective (one of three for Rwanda) and the latter an expected (Intermediate) Result (USAID/Rwanda, 2004). To take the EC’s support to the justice sector in Rwanda as an example, and to rejoin a concern the Rwandan non-government elite respondents voiced, progress is assessed in terms of outcome, i.e. how many *gacaca* judges were trained. Process, i.e. who is tried, how are these trials perceived, appears to be overlooked (Domasik, Bizimana et al., 2005, inter alia p. 98, point g).²¹¹ Moreover, staff and international consultants seconded by the Top Five (and others) to various ministries and government departments (the Ministry of Justice, the MINALOC, the SNJG) were considered to be providing “technical assistance” and were referred to as technical advisors (Oomen, 2005, p. 899).

This focus on the technical (capacity-building, training) as well as economic aspects (local community development, decentralisation) of good governance is perhaps due to an extent to different understandings of the concept. One governance study found differences across donors with, for example, the UK apparently seeing good governance primarily as a means for reducing poverty whereas Scandinavian countries tending to focus the concept of good governance on the promotion of human rights (Hout, 2002, p. 513). Nonetheless, in the Rwandan context, it has become clear that governance activities are “focused too much only on the institutions of the state in isolation of [civil] society.” (Uvin, 2003a) For example, though Top Five support to government bodies such as the NURC, the Ombudsman, and the National Human Rights Commission has proceeded in an uncontroversial way, Top Five projects involving CSOs, particularly human-rights organisations and independent media, has been fraught with difficulty – though this has not affected the flow of donor monies.²¹²

²¹¹ Practically, in terms of “verifiable indicators” – used in the development field to assess progress towards objectives – the number of judges trained is more easily and objectively measured than how the trials are perceived, for example.

²¹² Until December 2004 for example, USAID supported a CARE International project on civil society development and civic education. According to a USAID representative, the project “ran into many problems” mostly because “MINALOC [the Ministry for Social Affairs] was controlling of what ‘civic education’ meant.” (USAID official, 12 July 2005, Kigali) Of course, what happened was much larger than that, amounting to the “intimidation and co-optation of human rights defenders” according to some critics

The above foreshadows the argument, developed in the following section, that the Five consider Rwanda to be an extraordinary case, facing extraordinary challenges and therefore deserving extraordinary treatment. It also foreshadows the argument with which this second half of the chapter will close, i.e. that the insertion of the word “reconciliation” into the Top Five donors’ discourse on Rwanda has not translated into meaningful change in terms of the kinds of interventions and programmes they favour on the ground.

Rwandan Exceptionality (Take 2)

The tendency to “stick by Rwanda” is acknowledged and even justified by the Top Five. Indeed, there is much evidence to substantiate the case that, similarly to the Rwandan non-government elites, the Five share the view that Rwanda is a unique case. On the size of the UK’s aid budget for Rwanda, DFID admits that “these figures are higher than Rwanda’s population and level of poverty might suggest.” (DFID, 2004)²¹³ In the case of the Netherlands, Rwanda was added to its “partner countries” list despite “some governance systems that were not up to scratch and that would usually not have allowed Rwanda to access ‘partner country’ status. [...] Rwanda is considered a special case.” (Dutch Embassy official, 10 April 2006, Kigali)²¹⁴ The USAID report states that “Rwanda cannot be considered an ordinary country. It must be considered as, in effect, a society in post-traumatic convalescence [...] ordinary rules of state-building and democracy cannot be applied by the government, or by the international community, in the ordinary ways.”

(Frontline, 2005). Indeed, another Parliamentary commission report (this one dated 2004 – the report which led to the dissolution of the MDR is dated 2003, cf. Chapter 1) once again named several CSOs and individuals and recommending they be investigated, prosecuted and the organisations be dissolved for alleged “divisionism”. The report named among others, CARE for its divisionist ideology (République Rwandaise, 2004a). Here, the Top Five’s responses were muted. The EU issued “mildly critical letters concerning [...] the attack on civil society for ‘genocidal ideology’” (HRW, 2003b) and requested clarification on what constitutes “divisionism” (cf. Chapter 1).

²¹³ These large aid flows are at times referred to as the “genocide credit” (Reyntjens, 2004). In 2001, after the end of what most donors qualify as Rwanda’s “emergency” phase, the country still received 60% more ODA than the Sub-Saharan average. More recent figures indicate that this “preferential treatment” may be petering out (Ansoms and Marysse, 2004).

²¹⁴ As of 1998, the Netherlands had chosen to focus its bilateral development relationships on a smaller number of “partner countries”: [a]fter decades of zealous commitment to development assistance on a project basis, which led to an involvement with almost 120 developing countries, the Netherlands’ government in 1998 decided to reduce the number of aid-receiving countries. The primary criteria for the revamped Dutch development assistance would be the average level of income and the *quality of governance in potential recipient countries*. (Emphasis added, Hout, 2002. See also <http://www.minbuza.nl>, last accessed on 19 April 2006.)

(USAID/Rwanda, 2004, p. 32) There is thus a propensity to be both more generous, and more lenient with Rwanda.

The Five further accept many of the RPF's assertions on security concerns as valid: "[i]n the centre [of countries fighting civil wars such as DRC, Uganda, Burundi] you have Rwanda, which appears to be an oasis of stability but it does have 15,000 [FDLR] rebels right across the border and obviously the Rwandan government is paying a high price for security." (US Embassy official, 20 July 2005, Kigali) "I'd say 80% of the FDLR rank and file are too young to have participated in the genocide. They were recruited afterwards. This is proof that the ideology [of genocide] still persists", and "[a]nywhere you go [abroad, among the Rwandan Diaspora], you'll find génocidaires." (World Bank official, 17 April 2006, Kigali) Similarly to the Rwandan non-government elites (see above), the Top Five therefore conclude that RPF distrust of "the majority" and of "unbridled" democracy is understandable.²¹⁵

Moreover, there is recognition – echoed in the Presidential statements analysed in Chapter 3 – that the RPF government is not to be pushed around. There is "an element of 'we know better' and 'you have no moral authority'. And it is hard to disagree with them." (Dutch Embassy official, 10 April 2006, Kigali) A study on donor assistance to reconciliation programmes in Rwanda and Guatamala over the 1995-2005 period similarly concluded that (in contrast to the Guatamalan case) "donors were inclined to allocate their money in line with the political interests of the Government of Rwanda." (Samset, Petersen et al., 2007, p. 24) Even the advice of highly influential organisations such as the IMF was not always heeded: after it strongly objected to the substantial debt the government of Rwanda was planning to incur to build the controversial Hotel Intercontinental in Kigali

²¹⁵ Here, the Dutch are one interesting, partial exception. The Netherlands was the only country to react to the technically flawless but politically problematic 2003 elections (legislative and Presidential): it cut by half its planned support for the Electoral Commission. However, this cut was not so much a reaction to developments on the ground in Rwanda as it was a reaction to political pressure from the Dutch Parliament, compounded by a lobby group of five Dutch NGOs known as the 'Rwanda Monitoring Group'. There is a feeling that the Embassy was pushed into action: "Rwanda is heavily debated in the Netherlands [...] Our Parliament is more interested in Rwanda than any other donor country." (Dutch Embassy official, 10 April 2006, Kigali) By contrast, the EU, whose electoral observer mission published a fairly critical report, took no concrete action as a result (Mission d'observation électorale de l'Union Européenne, 2003).

(Economist Intelligence Unit, 2005), the Rwandans went ahead anyway. In the words of one respondent: “when they [the Rwandan delegation] went to Washington DC to talk to IMF, it was already a *fait-accompli*. [...] The IMF staff stay in the hotel now, even though they had originally said they wouldn’t.” (World Bank official, 17 April 2006, Kigali) A DFID official confirmed this: “there are no paternalistic attitudes from donors towards the government because the government is very clear on where it’s going and what it wants.” (DFID official, 6 July 2005, Kigali)

The attitudes and opinions described above can perhaps in part be traced back to the relative newness of Rwanda’s top bilateral relationships. Indeed, whereas the two multilateral donors, the World Bank and the EC, had an important presence in Rwanda before 1994 and continued to steadily increase their presence in the post-94 period, it is illuminating that all three “Top Five” bilateral donors can be considered newcomers, i.e. with an almost exclusively post-1994 (UK) or a much increased post-1994 (US and The Netherlands) development relationship (cf. Appendix 10). This means not only that “new” donors have a different experience and knowledge of the country than say, more traditional donors such as France and Belgium do, but also, significantly, that they have a clearly different approach to – and perception of – the RPF, particularly in terms of its legitimacy. As Piron concludes in the case of Rwanda, the “link between political ties and bilateral aid flows” is especially clear (Piron and McKay, 2004).

But there is also quite considerable and clear admiration for the RPF by the Top Five. There is a sense that the RPF leadership is hard-working and ambitious, even if the country is hobbled by some important capacity-shortages (part of the legacy of the genocide). “It [Rwanda] has a very determined, very capable elite which is very determined and you can see this as a good thing – they’ve basically created a modern state from nothing.” (Dutch Embassy official, 10 April 2006, Kigali) The RPF’s emphasis on the use of ICT as a way to ensure long-term economic growth by transforming the Rwandan economy (Republic of Rwanda, 2002a) is also admired. Accordingly, donors are supporting a gamut of ICT-related projects. USAID has set up “community internet centers (CICs)” (USAID/Rwanda, 2004), the World Bank is funding “an intra-net initiative in 10 pilot

districts, with plans to roll it out across the country.” (World Bank official, 17 April 2006, Kigali)²¹⁶ Lastly, the government’s commitment to reconciliation is itself repeatedly lauded: DFID describes the government reconciliation programme as “ambitious” and “progressive” (DFID, 2004, p. 12) and the government is “resolutely committed” to reconciliation according to the European Commission (Communauté européenne et République rwandaise, 2003, p. 5).

There are also rare, candid but alarming admissions by Top Five donors that they simply do not know how to decode the Rwandan socio-political context, let alone figure out what impact their development programmes are having and whether these are contributing to reconciliation, or to the “structural violence” described by Uvin as pervasive in the pre-1994 period. “Reconciliation is so complex and it is difficult for us to know what is going on, it’s difficult for us to distinguish ethnic groups or even socio-economic groups!” (Dutch Embassy official, 10 April 2006, Kigali) Uvin, in a 2003 memo on development assistance in Rwanda, concurs: “the large majority of the international community has not the faintest idea what really happens in Rwanda outside of the top level of the state.” (Uvin, 2003a)

Given all of the above – the exceptional, post-genocide context, the fragile political, social and security situation in the country and in the region, an admiration of the RPF government’s achievements – there seems to have been a common conclusion reached by the Top Five that the best reconciliation tool they have at their disposal is to support the government, financially and politically. This support is crucial, particularly when the government is being criticised – justifiably or not. Some examples of parties that have been highly critical of the RPF government were cited in Chapter 1 and again in Chapter 3: international (human rights) advocacy groups, Rwandan Diaspora groups, and (to a much lesser degree), the Rwandan (in-country) non-government elites whose thoughts I reviewed in the first half of this chapter. The criticisms concerning the RPF’s imposition of victors’ justice, the neutering of CSOs, the neglect of a reparations scheme for survivors (to use only the examples discussed by non-government elites) – are not echoed by the Top Five

²¹⁶ Apparently, there are also classes in small Rwandan towns connected via the internet to course resources (distance learning), and the Rwandan Parliament, which functions completely electronically, is showcased to regional Parliamentarians as a model (World Bank official, 17 April 2006, Kigali).

donors despite the fact that they are both aware of these issues, and aware of the influence they would probably have over the RPF government in having them heard.²¹⁷ A US diplomat explained this strategy of “critical friendship” most explicitly: “totalitarian societies [can] not be engaged or should be rolled back or defeated or somehow contained. On the other hand, authoritarian countries [...] can be engaged and, with economic development, they would also develop politically. [...] So, that may be a way of reconciling US policy here – clearly we are concerned about human rights and say so publicly. But we are also a major donor. And it’s not necessarily a contradiction.” (US Embassy official, 20 July 2005, Kigali)²¹⁸ The UK government, which also describes itself as a “critical friend” and advocate for Rwanda on the international stage recognises the fine balance it must strike as a lead donor most clearly. In the DFID “Country Assistance Plan” (2004), “the continuing social fragility in Rwanda, the commitment of the Government to reconciliation and nation building [and] the concern within Government that rapid change could risk derailing what has so far been achieved” are recognised. The document further states: “[w]e believe that the Government [of Rwanda] as a whole is committed to establishing a democratic and inclusive state” and concludes that its “critical but supportive dialogue” and “significant amounts of budgetary support and technical assistance” is integral for the government “to develop and implement strategy, to stabilize the economy, to deliver services, to promote reconciliation and democratization” (DFID, 2004, p. 6 and p. 15). Overall, though they would not explicitly say so, the Top Five consider the RPF’s authoritarian leanings, of which they are fully aware, as the lesser of two evils. A “strong state is a blessing” for Rwanda (World Bank official, 17 April 2006, Kigali), and perhaps even justifiable and beneficial to the reconciliation process in the long-term.

Reconciliation and “Business as Usual” in Rwanda

It has been argued elsewhere that the biggest lesson for the international community in the wake of the Rwandan genocide is that development is not a-political, that it can in fact

²¹⁷ What is striking here however is that the DRC appears to be donors’ “red line”: the only issue over which they are willing to use, or threaten to use, negative conditionalities. Even the UK, that both in rhetoric and in action has been Rwanda’s most dependable ally, is reported to have suspended or threatened to suspend its aid programme twice in 2004 as a result of President Kagame’s threats to redeploy the Rwandan Army into DRC (HRW, 2004a).

²¹⁸ The official was paraphrasing Jean Kirkpatrick, a former US Ambassador to the UN who wrote a book entitled *Dictatorships and Double Standards*.

tacitly contribute to dynamics that exacerbate social tensions, and eventually, facilitate the recourse to violence (Uvin, 1998). There have also been calls, reviewed in Chapter 2, to streamline “reconciliation” into all post-war interventions: the concept must be “a guiding principle for international interveners.” (Chayes and Minow, 2003) Based on this review of the Top Five’s priorities and programmes in Rwanda, there is no evidence that these lessons and these calls have translated into meaningful “deep” change in the way development is practiced in Rwanda.²¹⁹ It is not the case that the Top Five donors to the country are unaware of the potential ramifications of their financial and political solidarity with the RPF government, but rather that they have concluded that this government is their best bet. From a more strategic perspective, donors “engagement” with an authoritarian government is better than (being perceived as) being left out of the discussion all together. A DFID official, speaking in 2001, put it this way: “[t]he decision for the donors is whether they should support the government in what it is trying to do, or say that they won’t get involved and criticise what they’re not going to change anyway.” (quoted in Marriage, 2006, p. 484)

As an offshoot, the government’s (and their own) poverty reduction efforts have been repackaged as contributing to reconciliation, with donors maintaining a very linear and technical view of what constitutes progress. Similarly, “good governance”, another development buzz word, has also tended to focus on economic and technical “service

²¹⁹ The remit of this chapter – to provide a snapshot in time of “alternative” non-RPF elite discourses on reconciliation – does not allow for a retracing of the important, varied donor record in Rwanda since 1994. Though I conclude that, as of 2005, the Top Five’s funding patterns and programmes in Rwanda amount to “business as usual”, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that, over the past decade, an important evolution of donor discourses and programmes had occurred, and that 2005’s “reduced” or “technical” international role came as the result of RPF political will to “take the lead” on all reconstruction and post-genocide projects. Indeed in the early post-1994 years for example, the international community itself played a much less docile, more political role, generously funding a UN Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda and allowing it to “totally ignore the [investigation of crimes of] genocide and its survivors to focus on human rights violations that were being committed at the time [chiefly by the RPA and some genocide survivors].” Predictably, the Rwandan government did not “tolerate being monitored” and suspended its activities in 1998 (Kimonyo et al., 2004, p. xviii). Different donors, including many Top Five donors whose discourses are documented and analysed here, also funded much “less technical” (and more contentious) reconciliation initiatives in very varied fields, including in particular in the human rights, media, elections, and justice sectors (Kimonyo et al., 2004; Baaré, Shearer et al., 1999, p. 26-7). Moreover, there was a sustained push by various actors in the international community for the establishment of a South African style truth and reconciliation commission, which the RPF consistently roundly rejected as “allowing impunity, which was blamed in the first place for the events leading up to the paroxysm in 1994” (Fierens, 2005, p. 898; see also Uvin, 2003b, p. 116). A watered-down (and under-funded, by 2005) NURC was settled on instead (Oomen, 2005, p. 897).

delivery” matters, side-stepping issues of political and social rights. The point here is neither to bedevil nor to praise the Top Five’s propensity for leniency and generosity towards Rwanda but rather to point out that this propensity seems to be the donor’s most substantive contribution to the reconciliation process.

Preliminary Conclusions

Despite new latitude to talk about, and implement projects to promote reconciliation, peace-building and social cohesion, as part of their new, and in many ways more intrusive, post-conflict agenda, the Top Five donors appear to have settled on a “backseat” strategy where their most substantial contribution to reconciliation is their public commitment to support the government, financially and diplomatically. Indeed, on the whole, the Top Five abstained from commenting publicly on the substance of the government’s reconciliation initiatives. So, for example, whereas the non-government elites discussed definitions of justice and what forms of punishments would be appropriate for different genocide perpetrators, or speculated on perceived inequalities and economic exclusion in society, the Top Five donors commented “quietly”, if at all.²²⁰ This makes good sense on several fronts. It complies with long-standing attempts to move away from “traditional” donor-recipient relations characterised by paternalism and conditionalities; for those donors who have moved towards DBS, this also reinforces that particular rationale.

In terms of what programmes and projects the Top Five funded, and how they justified these, the emphasis on tackling poverty remained, but had been repackaged not only as a humanitarian imperative, but also as a conflict prevention tool. The fact that the RPF government shared this poverty reduction priority is not in dispute. However, interestingly, the government tended to de-link poverty (and economic development) from reconciliation, whereas the Top Five bundled the two.²²¹ Good governance, a large and

²²⁰ By “quietly” commenting, I mean that donor representatives at on-the-record, high-level meetings, or in donor-produced development cooperation documents tended to side-step sensitive and/or domestic issues related to reconciliation, while other branches of their same governments may have been publicly commenting on these very topics at the same time. This is the case with the US State Department for example, which publishes an annual human rights report on Rwanda that discusses issues related to justice, the harassment of members of the political opposition, etc. The representatives of the Top Five donors I interviewed were very well informed about the political and social situation in Rwanda and did broach most of these sensitive “domestic” topics, but made clear that they did so in their personal capacity.

²²¹ As Chapter 5 will show, my grassroots respondents appear to consider the two as distinct as well.

capacious label, appeared to be applied in its “barebones” service-delivery/professionalisation sense in the Rwandan context.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there is more agreement among my “elite” constituencies – both Rwandan (non-government opinion leaders) and international (the Top Five donors) – on how to bring about reconciliation and on the RPF’s track-record to date than might have been expected. In terms of what “mode of government” respondents considered most appropriate for Rwanda for example, and for a post-genocide context, both the non-government Rwandan elites I interviewed and the Top Five donors share the view that a strong state was required and that “unbridled” democracy was premature, while they also express a degree of confidence in the RPF government, but with open eyes.

The recourse to Rwandan pride and nationalism, an integral part of the RPF discourse on reconciliation, is shown to be relevant and effective. Rwandan non-government elites also ascribed to the RPF vision of a glorious Rwandan nation and this appears to bring inspiration, courage and strength for the difficult – often personal – compromises they are being asked to accept. On the other hand, donors showed a respect towards the Rwandan ruling class, and the RPF more specifically, refraining from (openly) paternalistic attitudes. Partly this reflected current “best practices” for donors, partly perhaps this reflected international guilt related to 1994, and partly this also reflected genuine admiration for what the RPF had achieved.

However, some of the findings presented here are grounds for serious concern. What I have alternatively referred to as an RPF top-down *style*, or inattention to programme design and implementation (*process*) represent one major obstacle to the reconciliation process, as will be followed-up on in Chapter 7 in particular. The lack of space for a civil society to develop and the superficial nature of the grassroots consultations the government periodically conducted, meant that Rwandans did not “own” the reconciliation process. As Chapter 5 will echo, Rwandans were told who was forgiven, were told how the guilty would be punished, were told what their history was, and who their national heroes were.

They were also told that some of their dead were more important than others. The top donors to Rwanda had to date chosen to side-step these explosive issues but the Rwandan elites I interviewed spoke about the “stage-managed” approach to reconciliation with great scepticism, particularly regarding public expressions of remorse.

Chapter 5: Grassroots Discourses on Reconciliation: A Study of Two Rural Communities in Southern Rwanda

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I examined what the nebulous term “reconciliation” has meant to the RPF government (Chapter 3) and to some of its elite counterparts, namely the non-government elite within Rwanda and the “Top Five” donors to the country (Chapter 4).²²² Much of the literature on reconciliation (reviewed in Chapter 2) finds resonance here. All three reconciliation paradigms I identify – reconciliation as justice,²²³ reconciliation as revising historical memories, and reconciliation as forgiveness – are useful, sometimes in combination, to pin down the different ways in which these groups conceive of reconciliation.

In this chapter, I undertake the same exercise – defining reconciliation – for two “grassroots” communities, the sectors of Sovu and Bunzazi, in the southern district of Maraba. As before, I look for overlaps and divergences, this time between the “elite” discourses – the RPF, non-government elite, top donor discourses – and those of my grassroots respondents. For example, the considerable consensus on notions of responsibility I found among the RPF and non-government elites also extends to the grassroots respondents: they all show recognition of a hierarchy of responsibility, and therefore of different tiers of criminal liability for the genocide.²²⁴ Moreover, all Rwandan respondents – from the elite to the grassroots, from survivors to confessed genocide perpetrators – show a strong patriotism, and donors show much regard for what the government has achieved since 1994. However, unlike the RPF and the non-government elites who speak of the deterioration of Rwandan culture and the need to “improve the Rwandan masses”, grassroots respondents tend to see reconciliation as a return to the way things were *before*; they do not conceive of reconciliation as a transformative process. Lastly, at the end of the second week of fieldwork in Maraba, on 29 August 2005, 20,336 confessed prisoners were released conditionally (pending trial) nation-wide, including 27 in

²²² Note on style: I use “RPF”, “authorities”, “government”, “State” and a combination thereof interchangeably throughout this chapter, as my respondents do.

²²³ “Justice” with the large range of possible definitions this entails, from restorative to retributive (cf. Chapter 2).

²²⁴ Donors do not comment.

Sovu and 24 in Bunzazi; 430 were released in all of Maraba (République Rwandaise, 2005).²²⁵ Perhaps partly because of this and partly because of an increase in the official, government use of the term (cf. Chapter 3), the concept of forgiveness was discussed frequently by my grassroots respondents. As a result of these discussions, several things became clear. First, similarly to the non-government elites I spoke to, my grassroots respondents shared an aversion to the word. Moreover, my interlocutors in Sovu and Bunzazi did not see forgiveness as necessary for reconciliation on the one hand, and did not divorce the concept from sanction on the other. This will be discussed in the closing section.

Methodology

From late August to December 2005, a period of just over three months, I travelled daily to Maraba District where I conducted in-depth interviews with 37 “ordinary” Rwandans from the sectors of Sovu and Bunzazi a total of 69 times.²²⁶ We met in their homes, in secluded outdoor locations, and sometimes in Butare-town, for added privacy. For prisoners and soon-to-be released prisoners in *ingando*, our conversations took place in prison offices or a private spot in the *ingando* facility that I negotiated with the relevant authorities for the occasion.

I further interviewed or met with a number of district-level authorities and other individuals from the Maraba area such as a high school teacher, a police officer, and an international NGO Rwandan employee with oversight of projects in Maraba. I was a participant observer of my respondents’ daily lives for that period, getting to know and socialising with them and their family members, neighbours and their local (cell and sector-level) authorities. I attended most of the same meetings they attended, twenty meetings in all, including weekly *gacaca* meetings, weekly *abunzi* (conciliators) meetings, and meetings called by district and sector-level authorities. In my semi-structured interviews, I

²²⁵ All released prisoners attended a month-long *ingando* (civic education camp) from 27 July to 29 August 2005. The figure 20,336 falls short of the 30,000 + figures reported by authorities to major international and local media outlets prior to the 29 August release date (Matsiko, 2005; Thibodeaux, 2005; Walker, 2005). The difference is due to thousands of prisoners’ confessions being rejected as incomplete as new information/new crimes were brought to light by the hill *gacaca* courts (as opposed to the prison *gacaca* courts). The 2003 mass release figures were reduced by several thousand for similar reasons.

²²⁶ See Appendix 6 for summary and breakdown of interviews. As a reminder, the provincial authorities of Butare had suggested Sovu as an example of a community where reconciliation was going “badly” and Bunzazi as an example of a “successful reconciliation”.

did not use a questionnaire but an interview guide which included approximately forty suggested questions; I frequently asked many more in the course of our conversations (see Appendix 7). I worked with a Rwandan translator I hired in Kigali, who translated from Kinyarwanda into French.

Lastly, I organised two group discussions towards the end of my stay in Maraba – one in Sovu and one in Bunzazi. Ten people participated in the Sovu group discussion, which took place outdoors in an out of the way spot; I had interviewed five of the respondents individually before and had met the other five socially. Six people participated in the Bunzazi group discussion. This debate took place in the sector’s former office (a one-room building) and I had interviewed three of the participants before and knew all of them from previous social contact. A mix of survivors, released prisoners, people with immediate family members in jail and “neutral” people were sought out for each group discussion. The group discussions were structured by the following rules: each respondent chose, out of a list of ten concepts, (i) the three most important for reconciliation, and (ii) one element they could do without. They were then asked to justify their choices. To keep the flow of discussions smooth, the debate was facilitated by my research assistant in Kinyarwanda, taped and then transcribed by him into French. The group discussions were very animated and lasted approximately two hours.

5.1 Punishing According to Responsibility: The First RPF Reconciliation Pillar

A key element of reconciliation for respondents in the two villages – emphasised across all categories of interviews – was punishment. To the question “what does reconciliation mean to you?” a genocide survivor and a prisoner, for example, answered very similarly: “[t]o me, what’s important is that those that must be punished be punished” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor), and “[w]e should punish all those who are guilty.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 34, prisoner)

Punishment to Deter and to Educate

The importance attached to punishment does not stem from an abstract notion of justice being done. Rather, it stems from a concrete concern to dissuade future potential criminals. One participant in a group interview observed: “[t]he genocide was only possible because

before it, every time that there were massacres, like in 1959, the criminals stayed unpunished.” (Sovu, Group interview) A prisoner, originally from Bunzazi, echoed these thoughts: “[f]or me, all those who committed crimes, Hutu or Tutsi, peasants or authorities, all should be sanctioned. It’s the only way to discourage other potential criminals.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 19, prisoner) Punishment was also described in terms of its educational function: “[w]hen a criminal is punished, this serves as a lesson to other potential criminals.” (Sovu, Group interview) “For the ‘executioners’, we should find them a form of re-education like these TIG.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral") “The ‘bas people’ learned that killing is bad and that the consequences turn against them. The leaders who caused the genocide suffered no consequences. They took planes and left.” (Sovu, Group interview)

Table 17: Three Pre-conditions for Reconciliation

Choices	Sovu	Bunzazi	Total	Cumulative Percentage
	n = 10	n = 6		
1. Security: <i>general consensus that this element has been attained</i>	7	5	12	25%
2. Punishing the guilty, ending impunity	7	4	11	47.92%
3. Cordial relations	3	3	6	60.42%
4. Good governance, no corruption	3	2	5	70.83%
5. Forgiveness	3	2	5	81.25%
6. Truth (mostly linked to <i>gacaca</i> process)	3	1	4	89.58%
7. Economic well-being	2	0	2	93.75%
8. Reparations (to survivors specifically)	1	1	2	97.92%
9. Sharing and mutual help	1	0	1	100%
10. Time (too soon – need more)	0	0	0	100%
Total	30	18	48	

Source: Results culled from group debates in Bunzazi and Sovu (Sovu, Group interview, 27 October 2005; Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005).

The logic behind these statements is that the deterrence and education functions of punishment bring about and sustain security in respondents’ communities, now and in the future. In the group interviews I conducted in Sovu and Bunzazi, security was by far people’s top pre-condition for reconciliation: 70% of respondents from Sovu and 83% of

respondents from Bunzazi chose security (see Table 17: Three Pre-conditions for Reconciliation). But security is closely intertwined with punishing the guilty (70% of respondents from Sovu and 66% of respondents from Bunzazi), and to a lesser extent, cordial relations (30% of respondents from Sovu, 50% of respondents from Bunzazi). Reparations, good governance, forgiveness, mutual help, time, truth, socio-economic wellbeing – all are in distant fourth and fifth positions in terms of priorities for reconciliation. This reinforces the argument presented in Chapter 4 that even though donors' poverty reduction priority, and Rwandan elites' concern with poverty and inequality, are certainly well-founded in a country where poverty and disparity are so acute, it may in fact have little impact on "reconciliation", or perceptions of reconciliation, at the grassroots level. This will be discussed more extensively in Chapter 8.

Ranking Responsibility

Much creativity and pragmatism is shown in descriptions of what constitutes sufficient or desirable punishment and *who* deserves to be punished, and by consequence, who is truly guilty. On this point, there is a close resemblance with RPF and non-government elite discourses. "Sanctions are necessary but we do not want punishments that are too severe such as the ones genocide crimes would normally merit. We must lighten the punishments." (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005) "I would prefer that the 'hauts responsables' that brought us the calamity be punished. And also these people – my neighbours – who accepted to follow them. They should be punished with lighter sentences like for example, six years of prison." (Sovu, Interviewee no 31, family member recently released) "We should use *akanyafu* [a little stick, to hit children for example without hurting them]." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral") "We should punish but not too much. We shouldn't overdo it." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 2, "neutral")

Underlying this sliding scale of punishment – for the "hauts responsables" to the "bas people" – is a sliding scale of responsibility and of morality. Although the "sliding scale" concept is found in both the RPF and Rwandan non-government elite discourses, it was my grassroots respondents who expounded on this at most length. Indeed, "we must not punish the maximum possible amount of guilty people because, for the most part, for the 'bas people', these things fell on them. They had no interest in killing. Therefore, we

should punish the ‘hauts responsables’, those that are at the origin of everything.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 35, prisoner) “The people from here, they did not know what was happening, where this came from. They [the authorities] know well that the people from here are not the cause of this.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 28, family member in prison) “It’s the State. It’s the State that manipulated Rwandans so that they would kill each other. Nothing else.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor) “We should punish the ‘hauts responsables’. The others were only followers.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor) “The population is innocent.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 16, released prisoner)

Table 18: Causes of the Rwandan Genocide

Primary Cause	Number Responses
“The State”, “the intellectuals” who manipulated us/our ignorance	13
RPF invasion / fear of the RPF	4
I don’t know	3
Introduction of multiparty system	3
Conformism, obedience	2
“Le mauvais ventre” (greed)	2
Hatred	2
The Devil	1
Impunity (past massacres)	1
Total	31

Intelligence and ignorance – defined as the lack of formal education – was frequently used by the “ignorant” themselves as an explanation of who was guilty and who was not: “I am as dumb as a cow, I’ve never been to school and I don’t know how to read or write” said a confessed prisoner who was released in 2005. “I was pushed [into action] because of my ignorance.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 15, released prisoner) “We are followers. We do not know or ask where things come from. When there is noise, we run [towards it].” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 6, family member recently released) The same idea was expressed during a district-wide meeting for *gacaca* judges, during which a *gacaca* judge said: “the ‘bas people’ should not figure in the list of promoters [i.e. Category 1 crimes]. All this came from people who are educated! We had become like their pupils, who were punished if they didn’t follow.” (District of Maraba/SNJG meeting)²²⁷ At another

²²⁷ This is the answer the *gacaca* judge received from the SNJG representative: “I’ve already explained who promoters are; they are individuals. In Kanombe [sector of Kigali city where the airport is located], some

meeting, held in Sovu, one participant said: “the first category should contain two names: Bagosora and Nindiliyimana.” (Special meeting in Sovu (in lieu of gacaca))²²⁸ To the question “are there unforgivable acts”, a woman responded “[a]ll acts should be forgiven. Even those that are guilty should be forgiven because they were manipulated by intelligent people whereas they are not [intelligent].” (Sovu, Interviewee no 31, family member recently released) Of the 31 people I put the question to, 13 responded that the main cause of the genocide was the authorities taking advantage of their ignorance to persuade the “bas people” to participate in the killings (see Table 18: Causes of the Rwandan Genocide). “The ignorance of certain members of the population [is the cause]; they were manipulated by the authorities. The lack of education is definitely a factor.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 34, prisoner)

There is a consensus among academics that responsibility for the planning of the genocide rests with the regime of President Habyarimana and the interim government that took over after his assassination.²²⁹ As we see in Chapters 3 and 4, there is a similar consensus among the RPF and Rwandan (in-country) non-government elite respectively, along with recognition of a hierarchy of responsibility and (in the RPF’s case) that certain crimes, though all are horrendous, are not on par with others. However, it is quite a leap from this to the derived conclusion that “mere executioners” are innocent – legally and even *morally*. However, some grassroots respondents argued exactly that: “we the ‘bas

people said the only promoter is the plane [that was shot down killing President Habyarimana]; this is not correct. It is true that the responsibility of intellectuals is bigger than that of the ‘bas people’ but do not tell me that a person who took a machete is innocent! And neither is it true that everyone that is educated committed a crime.” (District of Maraba/SNJG meeting, Secteur Simbi, Maraba)

²²⁸ Théoneste Bagosora and Augustin Nindiliyimana were respectively the Director of Cabinet, Ministry of Defence, and the Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie Nationale at the time of the genocide; they both became important members of the interim government after President Habyarimana’s assassination. The first is widely considered the mastermind of the genocide, the second is a peculiar choice to single out as his influence during the genocide is speculated to have been a moderating one (the fact that he is from Butare may have played a role in singling him out). They are both detained at the ICTR. Their trials were on-going at the time of writing.

²²⁹ A partial list of academics who argue that responsibility for the Rwandan genocide rests primarily with the political and military elite in power at that time includes Prunier (1995), DesForges (1999) and Hintjens (1999). Scott Straus’ dissertation looks at how the order to kill Tutsi originated from the very top levels of the state apparatus and was enforced by local level elites (Straus, 2004a). This falls in line with broader scholarship on genocides, which stresses the importance of a legitimating authority: “Due to the application of massive and lethal state force and the complex organization needed to mobilize such force through institutional channels, the vast majority of scholars involved in genocide studies depict the state as the supreme author...” (Dadrian, 2004)

people', they tell us not to burn the weeds in our fields, we accept. They tell us to burn them, and we do it. And yet, these are our own fields! We do everything the authorities want. What happened, it's the authorities that decided. They are responsible. We are innocent." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 6, family member recently released)²³⁰

Nonetheless, most grassroots respondents, including survivors, had a more sophisticated analysis of the "hierarchy" of crimes committed in 1994. In the group discussion I organised in Sovu for example, the degrees of responsibility, and the punishment merited, were debated at length: "[t]he forgiveness we give to someone who steals bananas cannot be the same forgiveness given to a murderer." "Degrees of forgiveness must be given according to the severity of the crime." "Forgiveness does not preclude sanctions that also should vary according to the gravity of the crime and the [social] position of the criminal [...]. In fact, saying that the 'guilty should be punished' is not a clear statement because there are grades, the degrees of culpability are not the same." (Sovu, Group interview)

For genocide survivors, this apparent acceptance of what must amount to a major compromise of justice in their eyes was described as having evolved slowly since 1994. "Right after the war, there were survivors who said that for there to be reconciliation we had to kill everyone who was in prison. But since then, things have changed." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral") "After the war, there was a very big climate of distrust and of anger between people [...] then, some survivors started saying that what happened, happened and that we have to live together with these people. And then, even the others [the other survivors] realized that there was nothing else to do and that not everyone was guilty." (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor) This last quote contains elements of acceptance and reflection ("they realized not everyone was guilty") but also of pragmatism, of having no other choice ("there was nothing else to do") which is found in many survivors' answers. "What's the point of keeping them in prison indefinitely? It's useless. Those who are dead, are dead. We should liberate them all, right away even, and if they re-offend, then

²³⁰ I later asked this same respondent if someone from the "bas people" who used a machete to kill someone else during the genocide was innocent and she responded simply "yes".

let them be punished doubly harshly.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9, survivor) “Why should we refuse [to forgive them]? Anyway, our people will not be resuscitated. This is reconciliation, yes?” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor)²³¹

The Meaning of Forgiveness: The Case of Conditional Releases

As mentioned above, the three-month period of fieldwork in Sovu and Bunzazi began with the conditional release of genocide suspects – the second wave of a government programme that had a deep impact on both communities. In many ways, this second wave of conditional releases proved much more disruptive than the first. The disruption does not appear to be a question of numbers: the 2003 (first wave) released 8 prisoners originally from Sovu and 33 from Bunzazi according to my respondents (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba; Bunzazi, Interviewee no 1, "neutral"); the second wave included 27 prisoners in Sovu and 24 in Bunzazi according to government statistics (République Rwandaise, 2005).²³² Rather, recalling the “implementation shortcomings” or inattention to *process* reported by the Rwandan non-government elites, it is a question of what kinds of prisoners were being released, and the manner in which the release programme was implemented.

On the first point, the 2003 wave was chiefly comprised of prisoners who were elderly, 1994 minors, and/or who were ill, whereas the 2005 wave released prisoners who had confessed to genocide-related crimes, including to taking part in killings (Category 2 crimes). Respondents tended to report no problems with the 2003 releases: “in 2003 there were no problems.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 21, "neutral"); “there were 33 prisoners from Bunzazi released in 2003; they all still live here and their reintegration has been without problems.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 1, "neutral") This is how two respondents described the difference between the 2003 and 2005 releases: “[t]he 2003 released prisoners don’t say

²³¹ The acceptance and pragmatism shown by survivors vis-à-vis the mitigated responsibility of “mere executioners” is also accompanied by a recurring theme of imposition and obedience, reminiscent of discussions of coercion during the genocide. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

²³² It proved very difficult to obtain reliable statistics: these statistics, issued in September 2005, i.e. after the releases, also appeared not to be final. For example, the statistics contained the name of at least one prisoner from Sovu I knew had not been released as I had interviewed him in prison. At a meeting in Sovu held on 31 August 2005 and where all the 2005 released prisoners were asked to be present, 21 released prisoners turned up. In the last two weeks of August, as I visited *ingando* facilities housing prisoners from Sovu and Bunzazi, I received a list containing 24 names from Bunzazi and 23 from Sovu.

anything in *gacaca* [...] it is not them that have confessed [...] they were the sick ones, the old ones” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor). “The people released in 2003 had often been imprisoned arbitrarily.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor) Underlying these quotes is that 2005 saw the release of confessed killers, people that, though they had not lead the massacres – they were not “promoters” per the parlance of the *gacaca* law, describing Category 1 crimes – nonetheless had blood on their hands.

On the second point, the way in which the release programme was implemented, it soon became clear that very little information was communicated to the hills by the authorities, particularly on the rationale of these releases. “In 2003, they’d prepared people’s minds [for the releases]; this was not done in 2005” says one respondent (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor). “This [conditional release programme] was not well explained to the population” agreed another (Sovu, Interviewee no 21, “neutral”). Indeed, before the prisoners were to be released from the *ingando* facilities on 29 August, the list of their names was to be shared, and vetted, by each sector at the preceding week’s *gacaca* session – held on Wednesdays in Maraba (and throughout the province). This did not happen in Sovu for example, where the list was given directly to the Conseillère (the sector-level authority and a very divisive figure, as Chapter 6 will show) on the evening of 26 August – a Friday. She apparently tried to convene an impromptu meeting on Saturday where few people – and only one *gacaca* judge – attended. As the names of the prisoners to be released were read out, each case was discussed and at least two names were hotly debated. By the end of the meeting, which had degenerated as accusations were traded and participants dispersed by soldiers stationed in the area, one prisoner had been put into Category 1 making him ineligible for the release programme. His wife, not present at the Saturday impromptu meeting, said this, at the following week’s *gacaca* session: “[i]t’s the Conseillère that was accusing my husband. She is the only one to do so. In fact, there were two cases where there was no consensus: the case of x and of y [her husband]. My problem is that she’s the one to accuse them, she’s the one to have put them in prison in the first place, and now she’s the one who puts them in the first category. It’s too much.” The *gacaca* judge present at the impromptu meeting offered to resign “so that the Conseillère can take my place.” As a result of this lack of transparency, rumours became rampant in

Sovu in the weeks that followed the 2005 wave, particularly on the reasons surrounding why this particular prisoner was not released, and whether other prisoners who had been, would be sent back to prison. Frequent meetings were called by district-level authorities – including the meetings on 31 August, 7 September and 28 September that I attended – to attempt to quell these. One respondent explains: “[t]here are problems with these liberations. We had held meetings [before the releases] to sensitise the population to greet the released prisoners well, but we did not say who was going to be released. This is why there are tensions now.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 21, "neutral")²³³

In this context, things as mundane as logistical problems and poor management and communication skills became explosive. The responsibility to bring the list of prisoners to be released to each sector’s *gacaca* authorities falls on the “Coordinateur de *gacaca*” assigned to each district by the SNJG.²³⁴ A special meeting was organised district-wide to explain this and other related procedures; for Maraba district, it was held on 24 August in the sector of Simbi, which neighbours Bunzazi. In the case of this particular district, the Coordinateur was new (he took up his position shortly before the beginning of my own fieldwork) and unknown to the locals (he is from outside the region, from the north of Rwanda). This and other subsequent incidents revealed he did not always prioritise the following of *gacaca* protocols or public consultations/dialogue and was generally badly organised.²³⁵

On the basis on my respondents’ debates about who forgives, who deserves forgiveness and how forgiveness should be sought, three conclusions can be reached. First, forgiveness is not integral to reconciliation. As Table 18 (p. 147) shows, it was not chosen as one of the top three prerequisites. In fact, respondents tended to use much “thinner”

²³³ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from this paragraph are from the 31 August meeting (Special meeting in Sovu (in lieu of *gacaca*). The beginnings of a similar failure to share information in a timely and comprehensible manner to Rwandans “on the hills” was visible vis-à-vis the TIG (community work) programme, launched on 22 September 2005 and designed to be an alternative to prison sentences.

²³⁴ As a reminder, SNJG is the French acronym for the National Service for *Gacaca* Jurisdictions (i.e. Service National des Juridictions *Gacaca*).

²³⁵ In Bunzazi, the list of prisoners to be released was also given late. Two released prisoners were sent back to prison during the 12 October 2005 *gacaca* session as a consequence of new crimes being brought against them.

language, like security, punishment, and being cordial to one another, borrowing “thick” words like forgiveness, and the word reconciliation itself, from official slogans and discourse, as well as from the phrasing of my own questions (see Appendix 7; the way I described my project included the word “reconciliation”). One respondent summarises the inappropriateness of “thick” words as follows: “I do not understand the significance of the word [reconciliation]. [...] There are times where it [reconciliation] is not possible. We reconcile ourselves for little things. For the big things, it’s not possible.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor)

The second conclusion is that forgiveness does not mean the foregoing of punishment – i.e. amnesty. Even though differences of opinion persist on how forgiveness works (how to ask for it, who to ask, etc.), there seems to be a consensus on this, though not necessarily on how much punishment is required before one had shown enough remorse and becomes forgivable. As Chapter 7 will make clear, some released prisoners thought their confessions (which include a request for forgiveness) sufficed, judging they had already “paid enough”: “given the duration and the conditions of my detention, it should be finished now.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 32, released prisoner) As such, forgiveness seems to be something highly personal. But it also seems to be something one earns.

The third conclusion concerns who the legitimate bestowers of forgiveness are; indeed, another reason these conditional releases were so controversial is because they were interpreted as State-bestowed, or “institutional” forms of forgiveness. Survivors tend to see this as illegitimate; and some non-survivor respondents recognise this as well: “[t]he President has begun giving pardons” says one respondent (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7, family member in prison). Another respondent, a non-survivor speaking in a group discussion, says: “I am not against forgiveness. [...] But the State should not get mixed up in this. It should give its benediction to this reconciliation afterwards, but it should not give the pardon instead of the victims.” (Sovu, Group interview) Chapter 7 discusses the role of the State in the reconciliation process in Rwanda.

5.2 Re-interpreting History, Transforming Society: The Second RPF Reconciliation Pillar

Official versus Grassroots Truths

As Chapter 7 discusses in greater depth, grassroots respondents from all categories displayed deeply ambivalent attitudes toward the RPF government, and this ambivalence is also seen when discussing Rwanda's history and the version endorsed by the RPF government. In Chapter 3, I broke this official version down into four basic, recurring elements: (i) the responsibility of the previous regime for the genocide (and as a consequence, the irrelevance of who shot down the plane carrying President Habyarimana), (ii) the need for self-reliance and emancipation in light of the international community's betrayal of Rwandans in 1994, (iii) the organic unity of Rwandans, and (iv) the large popular participation by normal (Hutu) Rwandans in the massacres, with the later addition that this was due to their manipulation by the previous regime. In this section, I will show that just as the non-government elites are convinced by parts of all four elements of the RPF Truth, so are my grassroots respondents. However, they also recognise that some of these statements are aspirational and expedient, representing convenient and partial political vision rather than historical fact.

The first element of the RPF Truth, the responsibility of the previous regime for the genocide, finds significant support from respondents, as shown in Table 19 (p. 149).²³⁶ However, as the same table further shows, respondents' understanding of the genocide also includes other causes, such as the introduction of multiparty politics in Rwanda in 1991 and, significantly, the RPF invasion in October 1990 that sparked a civil war that still raged as the genocide began in April 1994.²³⁷ "The origins of the genocide lie with all those that were fighting for power, I mean the political parties and the [Tutsi] refugees that were fighting to return to the country. All these people created the chaos that led to the genocide." (Sovu, Interviewee no 36, prisoner) "We were all very scared of the RPF."

²³⁶ Partly, this is because this conveniently minimizes many respondents' own (or their families') actions during the genocide, whether as perpetrators or bystanders. But to rely on solely this explanation is too cynical, as it does not take into account the genocide survivors who also believe that the genocide was masterminded by the previous regime.

²³⁷ This view is broadly buttressed by genocide scholars who concur that "some form of war, often ethnic or revolutionary in character", as the one the RPF was engaged in starting with its October 1990 incursion on Rwandan soil, is an important element contributing to genocidal projects (Staub, 2000).

(Sovu, Interviewee no 29, family member in prison) “The authorities of that time thought that the Tutsi from the inside [inside the country] would support the RPF. If they were eliminated, the RPF would have no more [power] base.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 4, "neutral") “They were saying that the children of Tutsi were leaving to join the ranks of the RPF.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor) One respondent linked the assassination of President Habyarimana with the genocide, a link that the RPF tries hard to downplay (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 1, "neutral").²³⁸

Even though the view that the previous regime is primarily responsible for the genocide is widely shared among grassroots respondents, as is the recognition that RPF troops stopped the genocide, this does not exculpate the latter. Just like their “elite” counterparts, grassroots respondents have not forgotten RPF abuses, both within Rwanda and in neighbouring DRC during the two Congo wars (1996 and 1998). “Why are the victims of the RPF not talked about? Entire families were decimated by the RPF.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 19, prisoner) Another respondent, recounting what happened in Sovu in 1994, finished his story like this: “then the *Inkotanyi* came. And people fled. Many many people died in the fighting. Many Hutu died.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 35, prisoner) Again, this explosive topic was sometimes spoken of using euphemisms or “code”: “[m]y family members are not dead from the genocide, there are dead [...] *from the consequences of the war.*” (Sovu, Interviewee no 30, family member in prison, emphasis added) As foreshadowed in Chapter 1 and as Chapter 6 confirms, many respondents lost direct family members (children, spouses) during forced repatriations from refugee camps in DRC or violent closures of IDP camps such as the one in Kibeho (in neighbouring Gikongoro province); several respondents suffered from bullet wounds and one lost an arm.

The second element of the RPF Truth, the need for Rwandan emancipation and self-reliance, finds some resonance with grassroots respondents in that the condemnation of the International Community is shared to some extent: “[t]he UN did nothing for us, they let us down”, and “what happened in 1959 [...], the first violence was caused by the white

²³⁸ They have had mixed success, as an earlier quote from a SNJG representative, on how some people believe “the only promoter [of the genocide] is the plane”, attests to (District of Maraba/SNJG meeting, Secteur Simbi, Maraba).

people. Before the white people came to colonise us [...] there were no problems between Rwandans. There was the king and his subjects; there was neither Hutu nor Tutsi.” (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005) The idea that Rwandans must stand on their own two feet and work hard also feeds into a still prevalent patriotism. One respondent, a demobilized RPF soldier, compared Rwandans to Congolese for example: “if you take the Congo, that I know, their army is different then ours – in terms of discipline specifically. The military men from there are thieves. And in Congo, the women do all the work and the men are lazy. Here in Rwanda, we are disciplined and we work hard.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 1, "neutral") There is therefore desire and openness toward government messages of emancipation and calls to hard work to better their collective future. One respondent explained that he is already seeing the fruits of this labour: “Actually, the country is progressing. [...] There is the Vision 2020. This vision, we have begun to see its fruits. Before, there were regular famines. Now, we are being sensitised [encouraged] to join associations. The CRS [Catholic Relief Services] has sent agronomists, and has organised study trips. I was sent to Ruhengeri and Kibuye by the CRS for a study-visit. We grow potatoes here now; we didn’t before.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral")

However, the frequency and stridency with which the RPF criticises the United Nations, individual members of the Security Council (the French in particular), the ICTR and other international bodies finds no equivalent in Sovu and Bunzazi. Table 20 (a & b) summarises the decidedly mixed perceptions of the “International Community” generally, and of the ICTR more specifically in Sovu and Bunzazi. This fourth element of the RPF Truth thus did not appear to be a real priority for grassroots respondents, who did not share the RPF’s rampant distrust and scorn for the International Community, perhaps partly because many had not had any direct experience with it.²³⁹

²³⁹ During the fieldwork, the only international NGO with projects in Maraba district was the Irish NGO, Concern (Concern representative, 18 October 2005, Butare-town). Though I prefaced each interview with an opening statement explaining my project and how I was not affiliated with a NGO, an Embassy, a United Nations agency or a government development project, at least two respondents appeared to equate me with “the International Community”. Some respondents had radios with which they listened to news about how foreigners were helping Rwandans (or not) but most culled their impressions of the International Community from hearsay.

Table 19 (a, b): Grassroots Attitudes towards the International Community

Table 20a	Responses	Number of respondents
Perceptions of International Community	Positive	11
	Negative	0
	Don't know / mixed role	5
	No role	5
Total		21

Table 20b	Responses	Number of respondents	
Perceptions of the ICTR ("Arusha")	Know it / can name at least one trial	Positive role	7
		Negative role	2
		Irrelevant	4
	Don't know it	8	
Total		21	

On the third element, though respondents pay lip service to the RPF language of “unity”, they know their own and most neighbours’ ethnicity, and continue to explain some (though not all, cf. Chapter 6) behaviours and attitudes with reference to ethnicity.²⁴⁰ Just as frequent as the outright use of the terms Hutu and Tutsi, which had for some time after 1994 been suppressed at least in public, is an alternative, post-genocide coded vocabulary (cf. Chapter 1). Mamdani labels this a “genocide framework” where for example “survivor” is synonymous with Tutsi and “perpetrator” with Hutu.²⁴¹ My respondents use a range of words and expressions, including but not limited to the ones identified by Mamdani, to substitute for Hutu and Tutsi: “during the genocide, one group was targeted, and afterwards, another was put in prison.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 29, family member in prison); “after the war, there were two groups, one that killed and one whose family was killed.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 26, family member in prison); “there are two parties now:

²⁴⁰ I only interviewed three people who were under 27 years old (so would have been 16 or younger during the genocide); there is therefore limited evidence from them, supplemented by interviewees who are parents and/or teachers that children are aware of their ethnicity though they do not always find it out from their parents.

²⁴¹ My respondents used “survivor” for widowed Hutu women whose husbands were Tutsi and killed during the genocide. “A survivor can be a Hutu if her people (family) were killed because of the war. *In Congo?* No, in Rwanda.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9, survivor) Hutu genocide widows told me they were Hutu, but belonged to their (deceased) Tutsi husband’s family (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor). As we saw earlier, and as Mamdani also adds, “Old Caseload returnees” is used for Tutsi and “New Caseload returnees” for Hutu (Mamdani, 2001, p. 267).

those who say ‘you are not letting our people get out [of jail]’ and the other that says ‘we don’t want to see these murderers’.”(Sovu, Interviewee no 30, family member in prison)

On the one hand, respondents tend to acknowledge at least in passing the unity of Rwandans: “if we started teaching the good, the true history that says that Rwandans are brothers, not enemies, that would be good.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 30, family member in prison) On the other, it is clear that the RPF discourse on the artificialness of ethnicity is not convincing: “[e]ven though the Hutu/Tutsi question is not relevant [to daily life] [...] often [historically] it was the Tutsi that were in power and the Hutu that became rich were assimilated to the Tutsi. Also, Tutsi who had modest means were closer to the Hutu, intermarried, and gave them cows – not for patronage but out of friendship.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 19, prisoner) “Before 1959, the Tutsi had all the good fields and the livestock, which provide fertilizers.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral") A primary school teacher even makes reference to the Hamitic hypothesis, which she incidentally still teaches her pupils: “I teach them the history of ancient Rwanda and how Independence was reached, also how Rwanda was populated in waves – the Batwa potters came first, then the Bahutu farmers, and then the Batutsi cattle breeders who came from Ethiopia ...” (Sovu, Interviewee no 26, family member in prison)²⁴² The consensus that emerges from my interviews is that Rwandans (mostly) live in unity, like brothers, but that they are concurrently different in some respects, including in terms of Hutu/Tutsi, and this is not necessarily contradictory. It is noteworthy that at the time of fieldwork, there was some evidence of an emerging shift among RPF ideologues, moving closer to this *defacto* grassroots position by acknowledging multiple layers of identity (see Chapter 3).

Lastly, the fourth element of the RPF Truth, that the Hutu masses participated to an overwhelmingly large extent in the genocide, even with the mitigating argument that they were manipulated to do so, is a contested reading of events for my grassroots respondents. The idea that the killers were manipulated is accepted (cf. Table 19, p. 149), but the

²⁴² The RPF has vehemently tried to discredit the Hamitic hypothesis as it gives credence to the reading of the Tutsi as foreign invaders who are ethnically/racially distinct from the native Hutu and Twa. A now infamous speech delivered in 1992 by a Rwandan linguist educated in Canada, Léon Mugesera, makes explicit reference to the Hamitic hypothesis, exulting the audience (the speech was later broadcast on national radio) to send the Tutsi back to Ethiopia via a shortcut, the Nyabarongo river (Fujii, 2004, p. 103).

contention that the majority of Hutu participated is not. One prisoner I interviewed, a Hutu man accused of genocide-related crimes who maintains that he is innocent, explained that the government's ascription of collective guilt to all Hutu is nowhere more visible than in the *gacaca* law: "the booklets containing the rules of *gacaca* do not say anything anywhere about the people who are innocent, the people who do not plead guilty and confess. In fact, people who plan to plead not-guilty risk prison sentences of 30 years without any consideration of the acts they actually did or did not commit." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 18, prisoner)²⁴³ This ascription of collective Hutu guilt by the RPF authorities, and how it is visible in the confession and guilty plea procedures of subsequent *gacaca* laws, is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 20 (a, b, c): Estimates of Number and Motives of "Justes"

Table 21a	Responses	Number of respondents
Do you know any "justes"/ can you name one or more?	No	5
	Yes	7
	Yes: I myself am one (<i>N.B.: Not necessarily recognised by others</i>)	3
Total		15

Table 21b	Responses	Number of respondents
How many people helped?	Some, but not many	13
	Many: most who survived were helped	3
Total		16

Table 21c	Responses	Number of respondents
What led people to help?	Sense of obligation due to family/friendship ties (<i>N.B.: may have killed others</i>)	5
	A good heart, morality	2
Total		7

²⁴³ The booklets he refers to are distributed to all *gacaca* judges. At the time of the fieldwork, 30 years was the highest sentence a *gacaca* court was able to hand down. Another prisoner reported feeling that the International Community was also collectively blaming all Hutu for the genocide: "the international community accuses only one side and stays blind to the bad acts of the government in place. Foreign countries are partial, they favour the winners." (Sovu, Interviewee no 36, prisoner)

An indirect, and more delicate way to approach the issue of the perceived extent of Hutu participation in the genocide with my respondents, is to discuss the number of “justes” – people who tried to save persecuted Tutsi during the genocide.²⁴⁴ Understandings of what actions qualify one as “un juste”, a righteous person, at times varied. A distinction was drawn between those who tried and failed versus those who tried and succeeded to protect persecuted Tutsi for example. For others, the defining criteria was whether those trying to help persecuted Tutsi killed others – and if so, was it willingly, under duress, or to keep suspicion at bay?²⁴⁵ When looking at the overall responses from Sovu and Bunzazi, the collective perception is that some people did try to help Tutsi escape, at times at considerable risk to themselves, though the numbers are rather low (cf. Table 21b). Moreover, 10 of the 15 respondents I put the question to were able to name one or more “justes” (though usually no more than four) – with three explaining how they themselves had saved (or tried to save) up to eleven people in one case (cf. Table 21a).²⁴⁶

Here again, by the time of fieldwork (i.e. the second half of 2005), some limited evidence of a shift in the RPF’s thinking on this matter was emerging: in the only reference to “justes” in all the Presidential statements surveyed (cf. Chapter 3), Paul Kagame said, during his speech commemorating the Tenth Anniversary of the Genocide:

“A very special tribute to those men and women who showed enormous courage, risked their lives to rescue their neighbours and friends. You showed the greatest act of human kindness – you risked your own lives to save another. You could have chosen not to do that. But still you did so. You are our reason for hope.” (Kagame, 2004)

Moreover, the exhibition at the Gisozi genocide memorial in Kigali includes a small section on Rwandans who saved others during the genocide (Government of Rwanda/Aegis Trust). And finally, as part of their pre-trial phase, *gacaca* jurisdictions were tasked with compiling lists of all the “justes” in each cell. However, it is still unclear to what extent this

²⁴⁴ I borrow the term “justes”, in Kinyarwanda *intwali mu butabazi*, from a Penal Reform International report (PRI) report, incidentally the only one I am aware of on this issue. PRI explains that the term originates from Rabbinic (more specifically, Talmudic) literature, but more recently came to designate “the non-Jewish people that, during the Second World War and Shoah, saved Jews in peril at the risk of their own lives and without regard to material or other gains.” (PRI, 2004b - my translation)

²⁴⁵ I am not aware that the government has provided a definition for “un juste”, even though, as part of their pre-trial phase, *gacaca* jurisdictions were tasked with compiling lists of all the “justes” in each cell.

²⁴⁶ A clearer picture of numbers of “justes” may emerge if and when data collected during *gacaca* are made available to researchers (see Footnote 3).

recognition of “justes” will continue, or have an impact on the perception that Hutu are being collectively stigmatized as génocidaires. Indeed, a survivor who was herself saved by a Hutu gives the following estimates in a video-taped testimonial, part of the main exhibition at Gisozi: “during the genocide, about 5% of Hutu were good, 5% neutral and 90% were evil.” (Government of Rwanda/Aegis Trust) Moreover, by 2005, the government was releasing figures of people to be tried by *gacaca* courts reaching 700,000 people – almost one tenth of Rwanda’s current population – with approximately 50,000 people expected to be tried for Category 1 (highest) crimes (cf. Chapter 1).

5.3 To Live Like We Lived Before: The “Rosy Past” Syndrome

Linked to the second element of the RPF Truth – the need for Rwandan emancipation – is the desire to improve Rwandan culture and the Rwandan masses. As discussed in Chapter 3, the RPF have an ambition to improve Rwandan society and as a result, see reconciliation as an educational and transformative exercise. The desirability for this transformative exercise was implicitly present in my interviews with non-government elite, who cast Rwandan culture in an overwhelmingly negative light (cf. Chapter 4). However, even though some Sovu and Bunzazi interviewees underlined their own ignorance and malleability (see above), the RPF ambition to change and improve the Rwandan everyman stands in marked contrast to their responses.

Indeed, when discussing what a reconciled community would look like, respondents invariably emphasised the past, painting what we know from historical accounts to be a highly partial, idyllic picture of life before the genocide – emphasising only the positive and overlooking, for example, successive anti-Tutsi pogroms starting from 1959. “In Rwanda, before the genocide, we were like one same family. [...] before, we helped each other, we carried each other’s ill to the hospital, we intermarried, there were no problems.” (Sovu, Group interview) “Before 1994, people lived in peace and on good terms. There were mixed marriages...” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 2, "neutral") “Life was good, before. There were no problems in our community. [...] Relations between members of our community were normal, before. We would pay each other visits. There were no problems before the war.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 18, prisoner) In fact, one respondent, a genocide

survivor, defined reconciliation in terms of a return to the pre-1994 state of affairs: “[r]econciliation is living in peace with everyone, not to hold grudges in one’s heart, share everything, work together with everyone. It’s to live like we lived before.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor) Among other things, what these accounts leave aside is that: “between 40 and 70 percent of Rwanda’s Tutsi fled [to Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and elsewhere] between 1959 and 1964. That would put between 400,000 and 700,000 Tutsi outside the country.” (Watson, 1991, p. 6)²⁴⁷

Indeed, respondents succumbing to this “rosy past” syndrome seemed to forget the very problems they had at times themselves highlighted in other parts of the interview. For example, the same respondent who mentioned the massacres of Tutsi of 1959 – “in 1959, those who burned Tutsi’s houses were rewarded for their work, not punished.” – glossed these over in his description of community life before the genocide – “we lived well together before, we had mixed marriages, we helped carry each other’s sick, we shared beer. Whatever conflicts we had were usually little conflicts about land, or between families, or between [married] couples.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 29, family member in prison) According to one respondent, even the local economic situation before 1994 was better: “there were no serious problems of poverty, it was a life where everyone could pay the MINERVAL [State school fees] for their children. We weren’t rich, but we could meet our daily needs.” However another respondent reported that in 1994, for example, there were fairly serious food shortages in Maraba (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor). A 1991 report on the state of the commune of Huye, which at the time included Sovu, spoke of harvests being “seriously compromised” due to an early onset of the dry season, and damaged again by excessive rains – this apparently hit Sovu’s crops particularly hard (District de Huye, 1991, p. 3). We also know that Maraba district more generally was among the poorest in Rwanda as a whole – among the three poorest more specifically (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba).

²⁴⁷ The latter figures of between 400,000 and 700,000 presumably, though it is not clear, refer to the Tutsi refugee population at the time of writing of the report, i.e. 1990-91.

As a consequence of this syndrome of the partial, rosy past, respondents gauged the state of progress of reconciliation using the pre-1994 period as a benchmark. One respondent, using the number of mixed marriages as a proxy for reconciliation, estimated that “it’s not like before yet, mixed marriages are less frequent, but they are increasing, more and more.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 28, family member in prison) Another, using the frequency of social visits as a proxy, and again comparing post-1994 with pre-1994, said: “it’s not exactly like before 1994. But when there is beer, we invite neighbours and they too invite us.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor) Another still commented more generally on community life in Bunzazi and concluded: “[i]t’s not like before 1994. There is a wall between people that have loved ones who died during the genocide and others, who have their people in jail.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 2, “neutral”) Some respondents emphasised the difference between “the Rwandan before the war and the Rwandan after the war” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7, family member in prison). This same respondent explained that “most if not all [Rwandans] lost family members, others experienced exile. All this changed the hearts of people. There is no more love. There is no more trust.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7, family member in prison) Another respondent further exclaimed that: “[b]efore, you could ask someone for a basket of sweet potatoes and in return, you agreed to work for him for a day. But now, I find no one [to help me].” (Sovu, Interviewee no 32, released prisoner) These views perhaps tacitly partially endorse the RPF view that Rwandan society must be “changed”, but not that it must be changed to something new.

Conclusion

This chapter dissects how the ubiquitous term “reconciliation” was understood in two grassroots communities in Maraba, Butare Province. Reconciliation was overwhelmingly described as requiring justice through punishment, i.e. retributive justice, but with a sliding scale varying according to one’s responsibility – itself determined according to social position, the most usual distinction being drawn between the “hauts responsables” and the “bas people”.²⁴⁸ There was remarkable overlap between the RPF discourse, the non-government elite discourse, and the grassroots respondents’ views on the appropriateness of

²⁴⁸ This distinction between the “haut” and “bas people” further hinted at strong continuities in Rwandan State-society relations, in terms of its vertical nature, which will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

a “sliding scale” of responsibility. However, there was discomfort and resistance to the concept of “forgiveness”. Discussions with my respondents showed that they did not consider forgiveness to be a necessary component of reconciliation, something which contradicts a substantial amount of literature on reconciliation, reviewed in Chapter 2.²⁴⁹ Nor did respondents understand forgiveness to mean amnesty, or the foregoing of appropriate punishment. A particularly interesting, and delicate point brought up by respondents concerned the question of who was morally entitled to bestow forgiveness, with survivors feeling that they were the sole legitimate forgivers whereas released prisoners tended to see the government authorities as such. This point is further developed in Chapter 7.

Furthermore, though my grassroots respondents were savvy enough to pay lip service to the official version of history – the RPF “Healing Truth” – they were not convinced on the veracity of all four elements, including the ones that obscure the RPF’s alleged own role in the genocide, and its collective blaming and harassing of Hutu in the months and years that immediately followed.²⁵⁰ They also tended to see reconciliation as being defined by a return to the way life was before 1994, obscuring in their accounts the very factors that led to the 1994 genocide in the first place.

* * *

Part II compared and contrasted different constituencies’ discourses on reconciliation. To return to the three reconciliation paradigms identified in Chapter 2, we can summarise the RPF government approach as relying on two paradigms: the “meaning making” and “forgiveness” paradigms. Counterintuitively, given its early and continued insistence that all

²⁴⁹ Also running counter to mainstream reconciliation literature, and the expectations of non-government elites (cf. Chapter 4), was the failure of grassroots respondents, including survivors, to systematically emphasise the importance of reparations/restitutions. This will be revisited in Chapter 8.

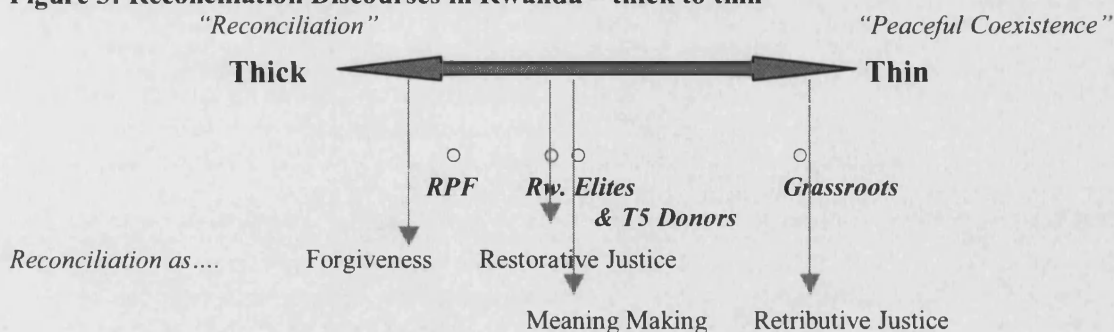
²⁵⁰ As mentioned at several earlier points in the thesis, a number of researchers (academic, human rights NGOs) as well as several of my respondents consider the RPF/A responsible for helping to create conditions that led to the genocide, by: (i) launching a military campaign against the regime of then President Habyarimana, and (ii) shooting down the plane carrying Habyarimana, an event that sparked (though did not cause) the genocide (see Footnote 1). They also consider the RPF/A responsible for widespread human rights abuses in Rwanda and DRC before, during and after the genocide (see among others, the Amnesty International and Africa Watch/Human Rights Watch annual reports, in particular for the 1992-1998 period).

genocide perpetrators must be punished (including via *gacaca* courts, which contain important retributive elements such as the power to impose lengthy prison sentences), the RPF government had, by 2005, introduced the language of apology and forgiveness, inching towards the “thick” end of the continuum in its rhetoric. This reconciliation discourse however stands in marked contrast to the RPF top-down, or authoritarian *style*, in which even highly personal processes of mourning and forgiveness are micro-managed (see Chapter 7 for more detail). In other words, even though the RPF reconciliation rhetoric is thicker than that of other constituencies, in its highly top-down implementation, the RPF government is caught in a contradiction between theory and practice, namely that “thick” reconciliation, because of its ambitious nature, cannot be imposed. This will be explored fully in the concluding chapter.

Rwandan elites also rely in part on the “meaning making” reconciliation paradigm though their revised “story” for the nation differs in key respects with the RPF Healing Truth. They were uncomfortable with the RPF’s claim that there are no ethnic groups in Rwanda for example, and with the government’s refusal to punish elements within its ranks who may be responsible for war crimes and human rights violations. They further rejected the (political) forgiveness paradigm towards which the RPF had evolved, sticking instead to a more “restorative” approach to justice in which reparations for victims and pro-poor economic development, for example, were integral – indicating that for non-government elites, reconciliation was as much about improving life conditions than it was about improving minds and mindsets. In terms of expectations of the Rwandan elites I spoke to, they can therefore be placed at the middle of the thick-thin reconciliation continuum.

Donors largely abstained from discussing reconciliation in substance, and when they did, associated the word with terms such as “good governance” – recalling Borer’s “political” or “thin” National Unity and Reconciliation (NUR) definition of reconciliation. The Top Five can thus be positioned between the middle and the thin pole of the continuum.

Figure 3: Reconciliation Discourses in Rwanda – thick to thin



Grassroots respondents also spoke of different levels of responsibility but relied most heavily on the retributive justice paradigm of reconciliation, where even the “lesser” perpetrators, the *bas peuple*, should be officially punished for education and deterrence purposes *inter alia*. Grassroots respondents thus also rejected thicker words such as healing, forgiveness, apology and even the word reconciliation itself. They also relied on the meaning making paradigm, though similar to the Rwandan non-government elites, they had their own way of explaining the past (the “hidden transcripts”), which also differed in key respects from the RPF public transcript (or Healing Truth). Most significant among these differences in transcripts is that the grassroots respondents saw the RPF as part of the *hauts responsables*, i.e. among those that merited punishment the most. They consistently used “a return to the way things were before” as the definition of what they aspired to for their communities – not reconciliation *per se*.²⁵¹ From this definition respondents derived various benchmarks such as frequency of social visits or of mixed marriages, which they used as indicators. Figure 3 summarises these findings.

Though a fairly detailed picture has emerged of where the main sources of frustration and support for this RPF public transcript lie, to get at the root of these different attitudes and expectations, a disaggregation of these constituencies is necessary. Detailed ethnographic data, individual life stories of respondents from Sovu and Bunzazi, as well as local dynamics in these two communities are therefore considered in the following section of the thesis, Part III. The aim is to unearth reconciliation (or better put, “coexistence”) trends in these two communities, and posit explanatory factors for these.

²⁵¹ This leads me to propose “coexistence” as a more appropriate word and accordingly, I devise a “Coexistence Score” in the following chapter, Chapter 6.

Part III: What Factors Promote Coexistence? A Closer Look at Two Rural Communities in Southern Rwanda

The following chapters constitute my answer to my second research question, “Which factors appear to promote, and which factors appear to impede the reconciliation process?” The findings presented in Part III are based primarily on ethnographic data collected from a relatively small number of interviews. As argued from the outset of this thesis, a strategy which deliberately privileged depth over scope was necessary, given the under-theorized and under-developed nature of the literature on reconciliation, the specificities of the Rwandan context, and the delicate nature of the topic itself. Indeed, I contend that other methods such as survey-type research for example, would glean results that are superficial at best, and inaccurate at worst.²⁵²

The following chapter (Chapter 6) looks at Sovu and Bunzazi, and different social groups within the two communities, separately; this is something I did not do in Chapter 5, where, without disaggregating responses, I presented grassroots discourses on reconciliation – or rather, on coexistence, as the findings of Chapter 5 led us to discover. Using a “coexistence score”, I now group respondents into “good” scorers (i.e. “reconciled”) and “bad” scorers (i.e. “not reconciled”) in order to discern what characteristics they respectively share; the earlier finding that ethnicity in itself is not a determining or explanatory factor of attitudes or beliefs is reinforced. Chapter 7 brings in data from participant observation, specifically meetings for the residents of Sovu and Bunzazi, which were called by central and local authorities and which I attended in order to examine the interaction of “the State” (RPF government representatives) with grassroots communities. The magnitude and contradictory nature of the RPF government’s top-down style, mentioned earlier, becomes especially stark here. For instance, the RPF’s “imposition” of a “thick” reconciliation model which *inter alia* calls on the promotion of independent thinking and the empowerment of citizens (part of the “second reconciliation pillar”) represents not only an inconsistency between RPF discourse and practice, but is an inherently self-defeating strategy.

²⁵² See Chapter 1, “Concerns with Triangulation and Robustness of Findings”, pp. 46-7.

Chapter 6: Explaining Coexistence in Sovu and Bunzazi: The Micro- and Meso-Levels

Introduction

This chapter draws out and accounts for patterns, in the two sectors of Sovu and Bunzazi (Maraba district), of “reconciliation” and “non-reconciliation”, or better of “coexistence” and “non-coexistence” to adopt, as per the findings of the previous chapter, the more appropriate vocabulary. The data collected during three months of fieldwork is rich and extensive and point us to three major conclusions. Based on this data, I find that it is only when taking into account (i) individual life stories *since* 1994 (the micro-level); as well as (ii) the depth, breadth and type of social interactions in the two communities (the meso-level), that one can explain with whom and why coexistence takes root. At the macro-level, the (iii) latitude communities feel they have in defining, or setting the tone of the “reconciliation” discourse, including by shunning forgiveness, public commemoration ceremonies, or the word “reconciliation” itself for example, represents my third finding and will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Based on these three findings, a related conclusion becomes apparent: ethnicity, though important, is *alone* not the best explanatory variable when it comes to the coexistence processes in Sovu and Bunzazi. This strikes a parallel with the literature on the genocide. The most frequently-cited and widely accepted accounts of the Rwandan genocide consider ethnicity and its evolution across historical periods and regions of the country as an important dynamic making the genocide and its popular character possible. But none of these accounts consider the presence of ethnic groups itself as causal.²⁵³ As one of my respondents explains, “[t]he problem was not ethnic. They ethnicized the problem. The problem was elsewhere.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 26, family member in prison) My premise for reconciliation is much the same. Just as the genocide is best understood as a political struggle for power that took place “at the top” (Prunier, 1995; Willame, 1995; DesForges, 1999; Hintjens, 1999), so it is that reconciliation is also a political process

²⁵³ This position constitutes a rejection of the purely “essentialist” reading of ethnicity. Most ink spilled on ethnicity and the genocide in Rwanda has not been on exploring causal links but rather on accurately defining the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa groups: are they ethnic groups, racial groups or complete fabrications? Uvin summarises this debate as one with three camps: the purely socio-constructivist view, the essentialist view and the ‘middle ground’ position – with most authors falling in the latter category (Uvin, 2001a).

designed and implemented by the new governing elite. Just as local patterns of recruitment and participation in the genocide were contingent on individual actors responding to a complex set of incentive structures “at the bottom” (Verwimp, 2003a; Mironko, 2004a; Straus, 2004a), reconciliation is also to a large degree idiosyncratic with variations from locality to locality. In other words, ethnicity alone is not a sufficient explanatory variable and the fact of being Hutu, Tutsi or of “mixed” heritage alone does not necessarily have a predictive quality.²⁵⁴ It does not automatically predispose my respondents to any particular attitude towards, or experiences of coexistence (see

Table 21: Respondents by Coexistence Score and Ethnicity). At the community-level, the more ethnically homogenous “Hutu” Bunzazi does not appear to be any further along in achieving coexistence than “Tutsi-laden” Sovu (see Table 22: Respondents by Coexistence Score and Location).

Methods

The methods used during my three-month period of fieldwork in Maraba district are described in Chapter 5, and Appendix 6 provides profiles for my 37 grassroots respondents. To help order the large array of ethnographic data thus gathered, I chose to compile the responses to several questions (see

²⁵⁴ As seen in Chapter 5, the Hutu/Tutsi language has been largely replaced by a parallel vocabulary comprised of among other things the social (and ethnic) categories of “survivors” (Tutsi), “perpetrators” (Hutu), “returnees” (old caseload, 1959-onwards Tutsi former refugees), etc. In this and other chapters, I borrow the words used by my respondents.

Table 23: Questions that comprise the “Coexistence Score”) in order to construct a rudimentary summary, or “score”, of my respondents’ answers. This is a tool I constructed to organise my data in order to discern trends and match these up against demographic and life history data (age, civil status, levels of economic well-being, ethnicity, experience during the genocide, etc.) This is how I found the beginnings of the explanatory trends I explore below.

I chose the questions in the “coexistence score” – which ranges from 0 (best possible score) for “willing to coexist/coexisting” to 100 (worst score) for “not willing to coexist/not coexisting” – for five reasons. First, I asked these questions of all 37 respondents.²⁵⁵ Second, the answers are easy to code and therefore, to quantify. Third, they call on respondents to express degrees of trust and perceptions about relations within their community – on which no one is better qualified to speak than them.²⁵⁶

The fourth reason I chose these questions is that they do not include explicit references to loaded expressions or terms closely associated with the RPF government, a precaution other studies on attitudes towards reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda have neglected to take.²⁵⁷ The term reconciliation is especially linked with the RPF government, particularly from 2000 onwards (cf. Chapter 3). As a result, the series of more

²⁵⁵ Except for the question dealing with social contact, which I did not ask of the eight prisoners I interviewed, as they were not free to interact with others.

²⁵⁶ None of my respondents had been interviewed before, let alone on questions about reconciliation, social cohesion, *gacaca*, etc., except for one who had participated in a study by University of Butare students on their life conditions.

²⁵⁷ To return to the Longman et al. (2004) study referred to earlier, several leading questions were included in the questionnaire. Two examples are a question on the RPF guilty-plea or confessions policy, and a series of question on respondents’ confidence in *gacaca*. On the former, researchers asked respondents to strongly agree, agree, disagree, etc. with the following statement: “The encouragement of confession is a good policy”, unsurprisingly 81.3% either agreed or strongly agreed (p. 216) despite what we know (see below under section 6.1 *inter alia*) are strong doubts among respondents in Sovu and Bunzazi over the incentive this guilty-plea procedure provides for false confessions to benefit from early release. On the latter, 85.5% either agreed or strongly agreed with the sentence: *gacaca* “demonstrate[s] that Rwandans can solve problems using their own traditions.” (p. 223); as we saw in Chapters 1 and 3, the reliance on Rwandan (revamped) tradition to promote the RPF government’s reconciliation programme (via *ingando*, *gacaca*, *abunzi* and *umuganda* among others) is an argument advanced consistently in presidential speeches. Lastly, 82.9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the sentence “I have confidence in the *gacaca* process.” (p. 217) in the same year that *gacaca* judges resigned because of complicity in the genocide and that authorities began compelling locals to attend *gacaca* sessions (where quorums were not being reached) by using local militia, the Local Defence Forces. This results in eliciting formulaic responses which echo the RPF line and undermines the credibility of the entire study.

straightforward questions on reconciliation I included in my interview guide, such as “Has reconciliation begun in your community?”, elicited almost formulaic responses closely mirroring the government line that reconciliation has begun and that it will be successful.²⁵⁸ The “coexistence score” thus provides a substantially more nuanced window into individuals’ feelings and perceptions of his/her community. As an upshot, and congruent with the findings in Chapter 5, I from now on mostly avoid using the word reconciliation (unless referring to the RPF programme) in favour of the word coexistence, which seems more appropriate – this is returned to in the concluding Chapter 8.

The fifth reason guiding the selection of questions in the “coexistence score” is that they correspond to the core elements of the definition(s) of reconciliation, more appropriately called coexistence, given by grassroots respondents and presented in Chapter 5, including the top three preconditions for coexistence (see Table 17: Three Pre-conditions for Reconciliation, p. 157). For memory, grassroots respondents from Sovu and Bunzazi defined coexistence as (i) requiring punishment, according to responsibility (with the important proviso that the RPF is included in this hierarchy of responsibility), and (ii) characterised by a return to “the way things were before”, with proxies including the frequency of social visits with members of the “other” group. The top three preconditions for coexistence cited by grassroots respondents were, in order of importance: (i) security, (ii) punishing the guilty, (ii) cordial relations (another way to refer to a return to the way things were “before”). Table 23 recaps the questions comprising the coexistence score and how they relate back to these three key elements.

Table 21: Respondents by Coexistence Score and Ethnicity

	Coexistence Scores	Hutu	Tutsi	Mixed
“Good scores”	0-49	70%	35%	100%
“Bad scores”	50-100	30%	65%	0%
	Totals	100%	100%	100%
	Sample sizes	n =24	n = 9	n = 4

Table 22: Respondents by Coexistence Score and Location

Coexistence Scores	Sovu	Bunzazi
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²⁵⁸ To the question “Has reconciliation begun?” six of 37 respondents replied “No” and two replied “I don’t know”; the rest answered an unqualified “yes” as per the government-line.

“Good scores”	0-49	59%	70%
“Bad scores”	50-100	42%	30%
	Totals	100%	100%
	Sample sizes	n = 17	n = 20

Table 23: Questions that comprise the “Coexistence Score”

Questions	Responses			Element of definition
1. Is another genocide possible?	“No”	“It depends” “Maybe”	“Yes”	Security (as first precondition of reconciliation/coexistence)
2. Are you optimistic, neutral, or pessimistic about the future?	“Optimistic”	“Neutral” “Undecided”	“Pessimistic”	Security
3. How would you describe relations in your community?	“Good”	“Normal”	“Tense” “Bad”	“Living like before”
4. Date of last <i>social</i> contact with member of other group? ²⁵⁹	“Today” “Almost everyday”	“It’s been a while” (over 2 months)	“Never” “I’m too busy”	“Living like before”
5. What is the role of the ICTR/Rwandan classical/ <i>gacaca</i> courts? What are their strengths/weaknesses?	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Punishing according to responsibility
6. Do you feel courts are impartial? Is the truth generally revealed in <i>gacaca</i> ?	“Yes”	“Sometimes”	“No”	Punishing according to responsibility

8

6.1 The Micro-Level: Individual Experiences since the Genocide

The “bad” coexistence scores (scores of 50 and up) were earned by one third of respondents, i.e. thirteen interviewees, eight women and five men, six from Bunzazi and seven from Sovu.²⁶⁰ What characterised these thirteen respondents’ socio-demographic profiles? First, six are genocide survivors, all women (five widows and one orphan).

²⁵⁹ I emphasise social to exclude routine contact, such as in *gacaca* or other meetings. The answers to this question were not compiled for the group of eight prisoners I interviewed.

²⁶⁰ The “coexistence score” is calculated by taking the percentage of the points earned by one respondent’s answers over the total possible points. Each question can earn a respondent 0, 1 or 2 points.

For example, Interviewee no 21 answered as follows to the seven “coexistence score” questions:

(N.B. These are composite answers, not quotes)

1. Is another genocide possible? “Under some circumstances, yes.” (1 point);
2. Are you optimistic, pessimistic or undecided about the future? “Optimistic” (0 points)
3. How would you describe relations in your community? “They are normal.” (1 point)
4. When did you last have a beer/invited/was invited to a social event with members of the other group? “This week” (0 points)
5. What is the role of the various judicial systems (ICTR/Rwandan courts/*gacaca*)? What are their strengths and weaknesses? “There were big problems at first with *gacaca*, but things are improving. Generally the people responsible for crimes are being punished.” (1 point)
6. Do you feel courts are impartial? Is the truth generally revealed in *gacaca*? “No, not always.” “The whole truth is not necessarily revealed in *gacaca*.” (1 point)

Interviewee no 21 thus scores 4 points out of possible 12, earning him a score of 33 out of 100.

However, not all nine survivors I interviewed were in this group. What accounts for this? Second, another four were prisoners. I interviewed eight prisoners (and five recently released prisoners), meaning that four individuals from the prisoner group, and none of the individuals from the released prisoner group were in this group. Again, the question is: what accounts for this? The remaining three individuals in the “worst scoring” group are part of the uncomfortable “ordinary Rwandan” category in that they are neither genocide survivors, nor OCL returnees, nor prisoners, nor released prisoners. The three are Hutu and are split between two women and one man, all from Sovu.

What brings this group of individuals to all have a “bad” coexistence score? When looking more holistically at these thirteen respondents’ life stories – and contrasting these to the other 24 respondents’ life stories – I argue that a major theme is their inability, for very different reasons, to rebuild their lives in the post-1994 period to resemble something similar to “the way things were before”, coupled with a loss of faith that this will ever change.

The “Worst Scoring” Prisoners

The group of eight prisoners I interviewed were selected at random based on lists provided by the prison administration.²⁶¹ Four respondents were originally from Bunzazi and four from Sovu. The longest any of them had been in prison at the time of fieldwork was ten years, and the shortest a few months; on average, the group had spent seven years in jail.²⁶² Of the eight interviewees who were still in prison at the time of fieldwork, four had confessed as per the plea-bargaining provisions of the 1996 genocide law and successive *gacaca* laws (République Rwandaise, 2004b, art. 58 - 63), but only one had admitted to killing in his confession. Another admitted to having witnessed a crime (and not helping the

²⁶¹ Using lists of participants to the 2005 ingando camps in the Butare area, the same procedure was used to identify four prisoners who were on the verge of being released. For the prisoners, I conducted interviews in Karubanda and Mpanga prisons, the two facilities where alleged genocide perpetrators from Maraba were being held. I made sure that each prisoner was aware that participation in my study was optional and refusal would incur no penalties; no prisoners I asked to participate refused to do so.

²⁶² The five recently released prisoners I interviewed (two from Sovu and three from Bunzazi) had spent an average of 9.2 years of incarceration.

victim), another to having buried someone who was already dead when he arrived on the scene, and the fourth admitted property crimes. The remaining four pled innocence.²⁶³

This was a fairly common pattern of behaviour nation-wide (PRI, 2003). Confessions to killing, even by prisoners, were exceedingly rare. Pre-emptive, partial, fabricated or vacuous confessions, from both prisoners and people at liberty, placing oneself at the scene of a crime but only as a witness or with admissions to property theft alone or for a crime that carries a sentence that one's time in prison already covers, was also fairly common in Sovu and Bunzazi. For prisoners, the motive appeared to be to qualify for the early, conditional release programme. Indeed, the released prisoners I interviewed, who had all been released as a result of having confessed, confessed to knowing about a crime (Interviewee no 16), being present at a scene of a crime (Interviewee no 33) or "insulting" someone during the genocide (Interviewee no 32). Only one, Interviewee no 15, confessed to "being forced by a group to hit someone" who later died.²⁶⁴

For people at liberty, pre-emption – warding off (founded and unfounded) accusations that were expected to surface during *gacaca* – appeared to be the motive of such "confessions". Local authorities in both Sovu and Bunzazi confirmed a deluge of confessions, written out on government-provided confession forms, as of March 2005 by people at liberty. These coincided with the nation-wide implementation of *gacaca* in March 2005.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ One of these prisoners reported a nickname for people like himself, who have nothing to confess: "[t]hey call us *ibyihebe* [terrorist, or someone who is not afraid of anything, even death]", presumably because they have not (yet) been intimidated into confessing to trumped up crimes in order to qualify for early release (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 19, prisoner).

²⁶⁴ Interviewee no 15's husband was allegedly also forced to hit the victim; her husband was later killed during the forceful closure of Kibeho IDP camp in 1995.

²⁶⁵ In Bunzazi, I was able to consult these confession forms ("plaidoyers de culpabilité"). Twenty nine people who were at liberty had come forth between March and June 2005; three people had filled five confession forms each. Most accounts were confusing and none of them included a confession to anything more than a property (third category) crime; many of them were admissions of having been present at the scene of a crime and appeared to be pre-emptive in character.

Such confessions point to several problems: an underlying climate of fear and distrust, the perversion of the spirit of the *gacaca* system and the strategic nature of the truth the confessions bring forth. But it also uncovers a basic assumption in the law: in creating incentives for prisoners – be they guilty or innocent – to confess, it betrays the implicit assumption of wide-spread (Hutu) guilt.²⁶⁶ In the words of one prisoner who had vehemently protested his innocence since his imprisonment in 1997: “a person who has nothing to admit, and who is even recognised by the [inhabitants on his] hill as innocent, stays [in prison] when the one who has killed is rewarded, often because of partial confessions. And the date of their trial [once they have been released] is still not known!” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 18, prisoner)²⁶⁷

Looking specifically at the four prisoners who are part of the “worst scoring” group, their life stories overlapped on several key points. Before their imprisonment, all four appeared to be somewhat, if not very well off relative to their neighbours. Two worst scoring prisoners explicitly speculated that their wealth may be part of the reason they were imprisoned. “It’s money and jealousy” said one farmer who was accused by a prisoner – since released – he claimed he did not know personally (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 17, prisoner). Another worst scoring prisoner, a former blacksmith, echoed these thoughts when he speculated on the reasons why a local authority continued to publicly conspire to keep him in jail: “perhaps because I am not a beggar; I am fairly rich.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 37, prisoner) The third, a carpenter who owned several plots of land in Sovu and had moved to Kigali after the genocide, came back to Sovu in 1997 to have an ID card issued. He was told by the Conseiller at the time that a powerful local survivor had to vet his application.²⁶⁸ This woman, who later herself became Conseillère²⁶⁹ and is responsible for respondent no 37’s continued imprisonment (mentioned above), allegedly extorted Rwf

²⁶⁶ This ascription of collective guilt is demonstrated among other things in the government’s emphasis on the sheer *number* of *génocidaires* (see Chapter 1). What is more, those who do not confess are not assumed to have nothing to confess to, but rather to have committed particularly heinous crimes. A prison administrator at Karubanda prison routinely called those prisoners who had not confessed by the nickname “real” or “big *Interahamwe*” because their crimes must have been so egregious.

²⁶⁷ Of the three prisoners who fall among the “worst scorers”, two had signed a confession, while the third vehemently pleaded his innocence.

²⁶⁸ This (former) Conseiller is now himself in Karubanda jail (Butare-town) on genocide-related charges.

²⁶⁹ This is the same Conseillère mentioned in Chapter 5. Interestingly, four respondents alluded in separate interviews that her election to the post of Conseillère was rigged.

15,000 from him to consider his request, and then had him put in jail instead.²⁷⁰ Apparently, his wife – who had stayed in Sovu – had since been allegedly terrorised by this same Conseillère, with fines and/or threatened fines for numerous fictitious infractions. The other prisoner from Sovu had a similar experience in terms of his family members: during the three-month period I spent in Maraba, his wife was summoned twice by the Prosecutor General of Butare, apparently on charges of divisionism laid by this same powerful local authority.²⁷¹

Table 24: Prisoners’ and Released Prisoners’ Coexistence Score

	Coexistence Scores	Prisoners	Released Prisoners	Overall
“Good scores”	0-49	50%	100%	50%
“Bad scores”	50-100	50%	0%	50%
	Totals	100%	100%	100%
	Sample sizes	n = 8	n = 5	n = 13

Further points shared by all four prisoners included that they were displaced by the RPF when its troops swept through Maraba in June 1994, and all lost family members during RPA military operations and massacres in Rwanda in 1994/95 or in eastern DRC (then Zaire) in 1996/97. Respondent no 17 was shot in the shoulder during the forced closure of the Kibeho camp for internally displaced people in Gikongoro and considers himself “lucky to have survived” when so many others did not. Respondent no 37 was a refugee in Kavumu refugee camp, Bukavu, eastern DRC, until an RPA-led forced repatriation campaign in 1997 during which he lost some family members (he does not know if they are dead or alive). All spoke of RPA killings with (as mentioned in Chapter 5) the use of various degrees of euphemisms, or “code”: “I lost family members too: my cousin and others were killed at the same time as the Tutsi. They are dead from the genocide but not *of* genocide.”(Sovu, Interviewee no 36, prisoner) Another was more explicit: “[a]fter [the RPF came to power] there were other deaths, from vengeance. The

²⁷⁰ The story is fairly well known locally; two separate sources recounted it to me or my interpreter during the fieldwork. Rwf 15,000 is approximately US\$ 30. An OCL returnee who lives in the Sovu *imidugudu* confirmed that “you could accuse anyone of anything you wanted. Particularly if you were from abroad (an OCL returnee); people who had been in Rwanda were scared of those who came back from abroad” (Sovu, Interviewee no 23, OCL returnee).

²⁷¹ The third prisoner, from Bunzazi, was never married and of all his family members, all are dead or in prison, except for one nephew.

military was killing the population that was leaving the displaced people's camps to look for food. They were killing them everywhere, in the fields and on the roads. This lasted for a long time, until 1995 or 1996. Some were even dying in detention from beatings with sticks. This stopped in 1998." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 17, prisoner)

However, these stories are not unique to this group alone. One prisoner I interviewed and who was not part of the "worst scoring" group was an employee of the CARITAS in 1994, and later the UNHCR, which meant that he was both well paid and highly visibly so. In a separate interview, his mother reported being asked for bribes by genocide survivors who live in the *umudugudu* of Sovu, as a result of her son's good salary. She alleged that it was when her son refused to pay that he was imprisoned (Sovu, Interviewee no 27, family member in prison). Moreover, all eight prisoners bar one (the one who confessed to killings) said they had been falsely accused or had been accused of crimes that far superseded what they are actually guilty of. Lastly, all prisoners, and indeed many respondents who were not in prison, reported losing family members during the period immediately following the end of the genocide. Of these, all made direct or indirect allusions to RPA massacres or reprisal killings. For example, one prisoner lost his wife, two children and an arm during a forced repatriation campaign from eastern DRC in 1996 (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 18, prisoner). Another respondent, a released prisoner, lost his wife and four of his children in another forced repatriation campaign from the DRC in 1997 (Sovu, Interviewee no 33, released prisoner). Another respondent said he lost his family members "from the consequences of the genocide" – a frequent euphemism. They died "not far from here, not far from Gako [one of Sovu's three cells]. They did not have time to get very far. They died from being shot at." (Sovu, Interviewee no 30, family member in prison)

I argue that what is really unique to these four "worst scoring" prisoners is that the ones responsible for their imprisonment are known and, more importantly, are believed to be vindictive and powerful. One worst scoring prisoner got as far as being chosen to participate in the August 2005 *ingando* session with a view to being liberated on 29/30 August, before he was sent back to jail by the Conseillère of Sovu, who accused him of

Category 1 crimes two days before his expected liberation. “The Conseillère has influence over *gacaca* and even with the Prosecutor [of Butare]. When you see a person like this, to whom everyone obeys, everything she wants, she gets... Now she says that I must be put in the first category. This is why I was not released. She prevented my father from being released too, he did not even make it to the *ingando*. [...] She is an authority and on top of that, one that has lost members of her family. People are scared of her because she can easily accuse you of being a *génocidaire*.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 37, prisoner)²⁷² The Conseillère was known to come from a “big” Tutsi family with members of her family in the diaspora (a source of wealth) and in the military and security forces (a source of intimidation and impunity)²⁷³; she also apparently had easy access to the district mayor, the Karubanda prison director and the prosecutor of Butare, all of whom were either genocide survivors or Tutsi who returned after the genocide (“OCL returnees”).

A second worst scoring prisoner, who blamed this same Conseillère for his imprisonment, also considered her to be extremely powerful: “[d]o you think the Conseillère does not have influence over *gacaca*? I will tell you one thing: when they were going to bring the confessed prisoners to the *ingando*, [she] came here [to the prison], and ten of them were brought back”, so far, “she refuses to have me liberated” (Sovu, Interviewee no 36, prisoner). The third worst scoring prisoner (Interviewee no 19), a 68 year old Hutu who had spent ten years in prison at the time of fieldwork, explained that he had been imprisoned by a close family friend, a genocide survivor currently the President of the *gacaca* court of his cellule; when the latter had finally been convinced of Interviewee no 19’s innocence three years ago, another prisoner had come forward and implicated him in another crime. This other prisoner had implicated many prisoners in his confession, earning himself according to Interviewee no 19 (and other sources on the hill) an early conditional release in the process. The fourth worst scoring prisoner was denounced by another inmate who had since been released and significantly, had gone on to have several people at liberty imprisoned as well as prevented other prisoners from qualifying for the

²⁷² This incident is described in more detail in Chapter 5.

²⁷³ I personally met her cousin who is a policeman and several military men who frequent her cabaret regularly.

early prisoner release programme.²⁷⁴ For all “worst scoring” prisoners then, this translated into their interpretation of their imprisonment as not only a huge personal injustice – something which they share with the bulk of the rest of the prisoner sample – but one inflicted on them by a known third party who was willing and able to keep them in jail indefinitely.

The “Worst Scoring” Genocide Survivors

In terms of the “worst scoring” genocide survivors, the case may seem misleadingly straightforward: their ordeals are the subject of a growing body of journalistic accounts, (Hatzfeld, 2000; Mujawayo and Belhaddad, 2004), NGO reports (African Rights, 1995a; Ibuka, undated), films (Aghion, 2004; George, 2004; Peck, 2005; Favreau, 2006), and museum exhibitions (Government of Rwanda/Aegis Trust; US Holocaust Memorial Museum). But the relevant question here is not “why are these survivors scoring poorly”. Rather it is “what distinguishes them from other survivors, who score well?” In other words, what factors have led some survivors to report more optimism, more security, more confidence, more cross-group social contacts, more propensity to “coexist” than others? As stated in the introduction, I argue that it is not by simple virtue of the fact that they are genocide survivors that these six respondents score poorly. It is rather what has happened to them *since* the genocide.

A first important element is that, in my small sample of poor scorers, all the survivors were women and what is more, five were widowed during the genocide and had not remarried; the last one was a school-aged orphan who lived with her grandmother.²⁷⁵ All four widows had several children in their care and one woman openly spoke about being raped multiple times during the genocide.²⁷⁶ The RPF government has made repeated

²⁷⁴ This newly released prisoner is notorious in Buzazi for his prolific denunciations, which are what is assumed to have secured his release in 2004, a year during which no provisional releases of suspected génocidaire occurred.

²⁷⁵ I only interviewed one male genocide survivor, Interviewee no 9, largely because he is among the few male survivors I met during my stay in Rwanda. Though I am not aware of any hard figures, well over half (over 65%) of people identifying themselves as survivors in Rwanda are thought to be female.

²⁷⁶ The plight of female genocide survivors in and since 1994, as well as that of female-headed households and rape victims in Rwanda more generally, has been documented (HRW, 1996; Hamilton, 2000; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2000; African Rights, 2004; Amnesty International, 2004b; HRW, 2004b; Whitman, 2005).

public statements in favour of gender equality²⁷⁷ and has achieved notable progress in passing relevant legislation and increasing female representation in the organs of government.²⁷⁸ However “on the hills”, Rwandan society and culture remain extremely patriarchal. To use the example of land, of crucial importance in an agrarian economy, Human Rights Watch claims that “[d]espite the adoption of inheritance law reform in 1999, women and girls are denied equal rights to land under strongly rooted Rwandan customary law, which privileges the male head of household.” (HRW, 2003a, p. 11-2) A USAID report confirms this: “[o]n average, female-headed households have access to 30% less land than male-headed households and own 50% less livestock.” (USAID/Rwanda, 2004, p. 28) This is also buttressed by the words of my respondents. The absence of male partners was an important and recurring theme. To the question “what worries you most about your future and that of your family” one respondent replies “[m]any things! Poverty [...] [nervous laugh] Not having a husband! Yes, it’s very serious. Where am I going to find one?” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor)

Table 25: Genocide Survivors’ Coexistence Score

	Coexistence Scores	Survivors
“Good scores”	0-49	35%
“Bad scores”	50-100	65%
	Total	100%
	Sample size	n = 9

Violence against women, particularly rape, was described as fairly widespread in Sovu and Bunzazi.²⁷⁹ “The problems we find most often [in Maraba] are related to alcohol and rape.” (District authority, 26 September 2005, Maraba) Although married women were not immune to these threats, women alone were perceived to be more vulnerable and reported feelings of insecurity due to the lack of a male protective figure. Numerous security reports I obtained from the district backed this up. A 2000 report for example

²⁷⁷ This is part of their campaign to “improve Rwandan culture”, cf. Chapter 3.

²⁷⁸ The 2003 Constitution includes an article that stipulates that at least 30% of all decision-making bodies be comprised of women. After 2003 legislative elections, Rwanda became the country with the highest proportion of women parliamentarians in the world: 48.8% of MPs are women (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2003). Lastly, “women’s councils” were created and are operational at all administrative levels.

²⁷⁹ The weekly security reports I obtained for Maraba district included details of 12 rapes, mostly of minors, for the January to November 2005 period. Rape is under-reported in Rwanda for social and cultural reasons.

detailed two attacks on a woman in her home during the month of January; as it was known that she lived alone, this prompted the decision to station a night watch to her area because she was vulnerable (District de Maraba, 2000).²⁸⁰ The social costs of being a female survivor were also relevant. The insinuation is often that if they were spared in 1994, they must have been raped or have willingly extended sexual favours to the killers.²⁸¹ The societal tendency to blame the victim in cases of rape is still very prevalent in Rwanda (HRW, 2004b, p. 29).

Added to the physical insecurity and social stigmatisation endured by these women was economic hardship. Indeed, even though five of the six women in the “worst scoring” group were widowed and had not remarried, this did not account for all respondents who fit this profile (widowed, female, survivor). It is only when we also take into account the fact that these women live in extremely precarious economic conditions that we come closer to capturing what these respondents have in common. There is an important economic component at play here. In rural Rwanda, sheer survival for any household relying on the labour of one person is extremely difficult, particularly when subsistence farming is the sole bread-winner.²⁸² For women-headed households, this often translates into a perpetual poverty trap out of which it is nearly impossible to dig one’s self out.²⁸³ The government Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) notes that female widows’ households are “often among the poorest” and profiles one widow’s household coping strategies which include “selling labour, eating little or eating nothing.”²⁸⁴ The PRSP also notes that in some cases,

²⁸⁰ In rural Rwanda, adult men (18 to 50 years) in each cell are required to take part in night watches (“rondes nocturnes”) to help ensure the security of their neighbours mostly against petty theft. Households where there are no adult men contribute Rwf 100 for batteries to power flashlights. These night watches existed before the genocide as well. Incidents are reported to the district which in turns reports them to the provincial authorities on a monthly basis in the crime and security reports described in Chapter 3.

²⁸¹ This concerns Tutsi female genocide survivors. It tends to be assumed that Hutu female genocide survivors were saved by brothers and fathers.

²⁸² According to HRW (quoting World Bank figures), “97 percent of Rwandan women provide for themselves and their families through subsistence agriculture.” (HRW, 2004b, p. 11)

²⁸³ Here, widowed female genocide survivors share much in common with those women whose husbands have been in jail for a number of years. On top of struggling for their own survival, these women must also provide sustenance for their jailed family members. In recognition of this, several reconciliation initiatives are premised on bringing together widowed survivors and women whose husbands are in prison. The women of Karama are one example. See Footnote 196.

²⁸⁴ People who manage to sell their labour working on someone else’s field get on average Rwf 300 (less than US\$ 1) per day. “But a kilo of beans alone costs Rwf 300, and this person (worker) has seven or eight people to feed.” (Sovu, Group interview)

“widows have plots of land which they cannot adequately farm” because of “lack of labour power and lack of financial means to employ wage labour” and reports a high reliance on food credit, usually during the months of higher food prices (Republic of Rwanda, 2002b, para. 48, 338, 339, 341). However, one of my respondents refined the argument further when she added: “[w]hat is important is not being rich. What is important is helping each other, mutual help.” (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005) I return to this topic in Section 6.2.

This contrasts starkly with what another female genocide survivor I interviewed, who struck me as among the most up-beat of all 37 respondents, had to say. During the genocide, she was hunted for months, was stopped at barricades and only saved by her (Hutu) husband’s ability to pay off the killers. She lost a significant number of family members including four siblings who were killed at the infamous massacre at the Sovu convent. She still does not know how her family members died or who killed them. And she comes from a powerful Sovu Tutsi family – the Conseillère mentioned above is her sister. Yet she repeatedly stated that reconciliation had occurred and that she was ready to extend forgiveness: “in the country-side, there are many parties, when mothers give birth for example. Yesterday, there was a party for a new mother. Everyone was there, rich, poor, all ethnic groups, released prisoners, and we shared everything! Vestine, the mother, is not a survivor. In our daily lives we do not ask ourselves if this person is a survivor or not.” And “[a]nother genocide is not possible. People’s hearts have changed. [...] If everyone, inside and outside [of prison] confessed and asked for forgiveness, as a survivor, I would be truly ready to forgive.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 22, survivor) The “worst scoring” survivors on the other hand, expressed no propensity for forgiveness: “[e]very single person who is guilty should be punished and made examples of. They should all be killed!” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor) “You want to know how our relations are with the people of the other ethnicity? It’s like this: we pay visits, but we hide things from each other.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9, survivor) “When we [survivors] walk into a bar, people fall quiet.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 10, survivor) And “I cannot have confidence in my neighbours anymore [...] It’s not like before [1994].” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor) Part of the explanation I posit for this sharp contrast is that respondent no 22 had a

husband, had had children with him since the genocide, and had a relatively prosperous household.

Another part of the explanation I posit is that respondent no 22, as well as twelve of the other “high scorers” have been elected into local representative bodies or positions of authority. The Rwandan administrative structure, which leads from the Presidency all the way down to the *nyumbakumi* (traditionally the head of ten households though this number varies) is famously complex – even more so since a 2001 administrative reform.²⁸⁵ I soon discovered that thirteen of my respondents were *gacaca* judges (*inyamugayo*, or “people of integrity”), conciliators (*abunzi*), representatives on the *ndjanama* (sector governing committee) or *nyobozi* (district governing committee), presidents of associations, and sometimes wore several of these hats at once.

The empowerment and pride that came with these new functions, even though many clamour for remuneration, was apparent.²⁸⁶ One respondent explained: “[e]ven before the committee [of conciliators] was set up, people would call me often. I was first elected *inyangamugayo* [*gacaca* judge] but then the population said they’d prefer me to go to the conciliators. I mostly settle conflicts related to land disputes and debts.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 4, “neutral”) Another respondent, an *inyagamugayo*, during our interview cited passages from the *gacaca* law, which he knew by heart (Sovu, Interviewee no 30, family member in prison). Another *gacaca* judge explained how seriously she takes her job: “[w]hen I am at *gacaca*, I am no longer a survivor, but an *inyagamugayo*. I have to be impartial.” And “[e]verytime *gacaca* starts, there is a minute of silence and a little prayer to the memory of the dead of the genocide [...] There is a little book that says that after the minute of silence, we should read the rules out loud and the agenda for the session. But

²⁸⁵ A 2001 reform, part of the RPF decentralisation platform, created even more “authorities” and “representative bodies” (cf. Chapter 1).

²⁸⁶ In terms of remuneration, *gacaca* judges are entitled to have their annual health insurance fees (approx. Rwf 2,500 or US\$5 per year) paid by the government. At the time of fieldwork, this had not been paid and was a point raised at every *gacaca* and district meeting I attended. A project by the Belgian Technical Cooperation to compensate the *inyagamugayo* for their work was in its first stages during my time in Maraba. Suggested ideas for improving the livelihood of the judges included giving them livestock (small animals), bicycles or radios.

when you love *gacaca*, and when you have been trained, you can improvise it.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 22, survivor)

The “Worst Scoring Ordinary Rwandans”

Three “normal” respondents, i.e. belonging to neither easy category of survivor (victim) or prisoners (perpetrator), also scored badly on the coexistence score. They are all of Hutu ethnic origin and all from Sovu. As above for the prisoner and survivor “bad scoring” groups, their interviews revealed similar themes of a known powerful and vindictive third party, and of a lack of hope that their living conditions (economic hardship in particular) will improve.

In terms of a vindictive “enemy”, Interviewee no 26, whose husband had been in jail since 1997, made repeated thinly veiled references to a particular group of influential genocide widows whose (false, according to the interviewee) accusations keep her husband in jail: “the women widows cause us many problems, they were often married to Hutu men and even had children with them, but still they cause us many problems [...] there are people who lied to put people in prison and now they don’t want to let go of these lies.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 26). Interviewee no 30 (Sovu, family member in prison) is a secteur-level *gacaca* judge, and was at the time of fieldwork engaged in a fairly public battle with the Conseillère of Sovu, which he alluded to unusually directly from our first discussion: “the secteur authorities [i.e. the Conseillère] are obstructing the work of *gacaca* by not allowing prisoners to be released [...] the secteur authorities come from powerful Tutsi families and have connections with the prosecutor’s office”. In a separate encounter, the interviewee had offered publicly to resign “so that the Conseillère can take my place” when the latter in highly irregular fashion, during a *umuganda* session, had a prisoner moved from Category 2 to Category 1, disqualifying him for the forthcoming provisional releases (this episode is recounted in Chapter 5).

The last “ordinary” respondent in the worst scoring group is a young married woman of three, and among the only respondents to belong to no associations or cooperatives whatsoever: “Associations? No, I am all alone, I have no time for such things”. She further reported no social contact with anyone and even claimed to never

attend *gacaca* (this has resonance for the meso-level findings on the apparent importance of cooperative work with members of the other group – see below). Interviewee no 28 (Sovu, family member in prison)’s husband had been jailed just over two years after they were married, in 2001. She is not originally from Sovu, and similarly to the widowed genocide survivors mentioned above, suffered from being known to be a woman alone with no male relatives around her. She reported that her livestock had been stolen last year (she estimated the loss at ca. US\$80) and concluded that since her husband had been jailed, “we live in misery”; her youngest child appeared malnourished.

In this section, I reviewed evidence that points us to the conclusion that at the individual level, “the coexistence score” depends on a large array of complex and idiosyncratic factors that can include economic hardship and a perception that a person is in charge of his/her own future. In other words, at the individual level, the coexistence score depends on the degree to which respondents have been able to, or believe themselves to be able to, rebuild their lives to resemble something similar to the “way things were before”. Empowerment through being voted into a host of local level representative and decision-making bodies, also seems relevant for improving coexistence scores. Overall, the argument has been that what has happened to people since 1994 is more important than what happened to them during 1994 in explaining attitudes and behaviours today. However, these individual and idiosyncratic processes are couched in community interactions and perceptions of “the Other”, to which I now turn.

6.2 The Meso-Level: Institutionalised versus Spontaneous Community Relations **Frequent and Cordial Relations**

Given the topography and demography of Rwanda, contact on the hills with neighbours or people on their way to till fields or to tend to other chores, is inevitable, routine and daily. On the surface, this routine, even cordial contact between neighbours can seem unremarkable, or rather remarkable to the casual observer. Many respondents hinted to the fact that it would be culturally impossible for them *not* to greet a neighbour, no matter who she or he may be. All the released prisoners I interviewed, for example, confirmed how frequently and warmly they were greeted. “People greet me very well when we cross each

other on the paths [...] even when I meet Nzeyimana, he greets me very cordially even though it is him that accused me of having participated in the murder of his father.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 16, released prisoner) “The neighbours come to greet us when we return from prison. This is Rwandan custom.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 15, released prisoner) “My victims’ family members speak with me, greet me. They do not scream at me, calling me an assassin.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 33, released prisoner) One survivor echoed these thoughts: “[w]e are together with those that killed our people. We live together, like that. We do not talk about it. Except at *gacaca*.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor) What is more, Hutu and Tutsi lived scattered, often in their old homes (the homes they lived in during the genocide) or on the hill their family was originally from: “[w]e live dispersed among the population. My only neighbour who is a survivor is my [adoptive] son.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor)²⁸⁷ “Institutionalised” meetings – the weekly *gacaca* meetings being among the most obvious example – add to the frequency and length of routine contact, as do the number of ad hoc meetings called by authorities each week.

This semblance of normalcy recalls Overdulse’s description of the function of communication in Rwandan culture. “The goal of the speaker is not to transmit correct information, but to reinforce/improve his/her social position,” he wrote (Overdulse, 1998, p. 3). This allegedly leads Rwandans to praise self-control highly. “Not that the Rwandan does not have emotions, but he controls them: joy, sadness, love, hate, fear ... nothing seeps through.” This self-control is considered “the highest form of intelligence.” (Overdulse, 1998, p. 7-8 - my translation) According to this logic, whatever tensions there may be in a given situation therefore lurk under the surface and conflicts allegedly tend not to be expressed openly. As one respondent (quoted above) said, “we pay visits, but we hide things from each other.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9, survivor) Another concurred: “[c]onflicts here are more latent than they are visible. Rumours, tracts [anonymous letters], word-of-mouth... people don’t dare speak clearly [...] they keep it on their hearts.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 30, family member in prison) Another example came from my research

²⁸⁷ One notable exception is the *umudugudu* of Sovu. A HRW report on *imidugudu* found that “relatively few of the *imidugudu* created so far are ethnically mixed.” (HRW, 2001, p. 62) A report written for UNHCR, the major funder and implementer of the *imidugudu* housing scheme, found that, “out of 29 villages visited, 9 were composed of a mix between old [Tutsi] and new [Hutu] case returnees.” (Laurent and Bugnion, 1999, p. 10) The remaining 20 were inhabited by members of one ethnic group only.

assistant. Remarking that in Kigali there were certain practices he had noticed like friends signalling to each whether a person who had just come into a bar was Hutu or Tutsi, he asked respondents from Bunzazi during a group interview if such practices existed there. Everyone fervently confirmed that they did and one respondent specified: “it happens often. You go into a cabaret and you hear someone ask “do you have a piece of paper?” In fact they are not talking about any paper, it’s to signal that a Tutsi has just come in and that they should change the topic of conversation.” (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005)²⁸⁸

Institutionalising Collaborative Work and Common Goals

In studies of “inter-group relations”, social scientists have found that, unless certain conditions are met, “[s]uperficial contact can generate conflict rather than harmony.” (Minow, 2003) The “Contact hypothesis”, as it is sometimes referred to, states that only if such conditions as equal status, common goals, cooperative (not competitive) work and intimate contact are met, will intergroup contact improve intergroup relations and reduce prejudice (Paluck and Green, 2005). This hypothesis has been tested in controlled or laboratory-type settings where the appropriate conditions can be created and monitored (Cook, 1978). However, these conditions can be difficult to find, or create, in ‘field’ settings.

Indeed, social interactions are by-products of several factors. Personality is one: is someone prone to visiting, to discussing? Social status is another: respected community members, particularly local elders were more likely to be consulted and to speak with many different parties during the course of a day or week. How a person earns a living is also relevant: does the person run a cabaret in his/her home? Is the person in charge of bringing the harvests to the market? Geography also matters. The respondents who live in the *umudugudu* of Sovu reported feeling isolated; this is partly due to them being geographically removed from clusters of other houses, markets, water taps, sector offices, churches, etc. “We do not have many neighbours. We are isolated.” (Sovu, Interviewee no

²⁸⁸ This series of quotes underscores how difficult conducting research in this context is and the importance of triangulating. Second, the paragraph shows how ill-suited a survey-type quantitative methodology is, particularly given the subject-matter. Taking time to speak with respondents in private, coming back several times as required, establishing relations with everyone early on and getting to the same subject from different angles have been the cornerstones of my methodology (cf. Chapter 1).

24, survivor) Finally, the larger context in which inter-group contact is occurring is relevant.²⁸⁹ This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

However, some social contact can be successfully facilitated or institutionalised – particularly in contexts where national and local elites are backing the scheme. In the context of Maraba, my interviews with district and other authorities and with respondents in Sovu and Bunzazi revealed that sustained attempts were being made to create the conditions of common goals and collaborative work. Most frequently, this took the shape of forming (farmers’) associations or cooperatives and allotting them land to cultivate jointly. The first justification for this policy, and the first priority for the district authorities was to promote economic development (District de Maraba, 2001). Though Maraba remained very poor, the perception was that the authorities were trying to remedy this: “[e]ven if the sector is poor, its inhabitants are hard workers. And thanks to the authorities, there are now projects and the poor have grouped themselves in associations and have received fields [from the district]. The projects come thanks to the authorities.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral")²⁹⁰ “The government has its plans for the country, has its Vision 2020. We have begun to see the fruits of this vision. Before, there were famines regularly. Now, we have been sensitized [“sensibiliser”] to form associations.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral") Various trainings were also usually offered to members of associations: “I was sent to Ruhengeri and Kibuye by the CRS [Catholic Relief Services, an international NGO], for a study-visit. We grow potatoes here now; we didn’t before.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 5, "neutral") “There are associations for agriculture, for savings and credit [“tontines”]... Through these associations, seminars are often organized to teach us management and other skills.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor)

But the related goal of reconciliation was usually also mentioned. “The Mayor [of the district] encourages everyone to form associations. [...] When people have the same

²⁸⁹ To use the oft-quoted example of school desegregation programmes in the US: “[a]dults oppose it. Schools re-segregate informally or formally [...] In such circumstances, intergroup contact may actually be worse for intergroup relations.” And “[t]he idea that social contact will naturally occur and inevitably lead to positive results is not borne out.” (Minow, 2004, p. 218)

²⁹⁰ Conversely, associations are perceived as being only for richer people and not accessible to women alone: “[a]ssociations? No, I am all alone. I do not have time.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 27, family member in prison) and “I am not a member of an association. This requires time [I do not have].” (Sovu, Interviewee no 28, family member in prison) Both respondents are women who head households.

goal, they can speak together and this brings about unity and reconciliation.” (Sovu, secteur-level authority) “We tried to put together people from different groups, women whose husbands are in jail, widows, in associations for artisan work so that they can speak because when people speak, many things solve themselves.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 4, "neutral") To the question “what is the most important government policy for reconciliation”, one respondent answers: “[i]t’s making people live together. The State wants to group us in associations so that we come together.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor) These associations are a fairly widespread phenomenon: “[p]eople here – practically everyone – have adhered to associations.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 31, family member recently released) “Even the LDF [Local Defense Forces] have their association.” (Sovu, secteur-level authority) On top of poverty alleviation, capacity development, and reconciliation through collaborative work, there was also a feeling that such groups were more conducive to passing ideas and directives. “Associations reach many people. The message passes better via this channel and faster because we are often together and when you say something, on unity and reconciliation for example, people can see for themselves that what you say, you do.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 4, "neutral")²⁹¹

The ethnographic data I gathered supports this idea: people who were in various cooperatives or whose work entailed contact with others – seller at market, teacher, district employee, *abunzi* (conciliator), etc. – tended to have lower (better) “coexistence scores”. Excluding the eight prisoners and four newly released prisoners (the former group was not free to interact with others at will and the latter group had not had the time to establish such regular contacts yet), eight of the remaining 16 good scorers were active in at least one, often several, mixed associations (typically for joint cultivation of fields and the production of artisanal goods) and four more were in daily contact with all layers of the population through their work as district employees or *abunzi*.²⁹² This contrasts with the remaining nine poor scorers (excluding once again the prisoner and released prisoner

²⁹¹ Here is another hint of the important continuities between the pre- and post-1994 periods. Indeed, a respondent, recalling the years leading up to the genocide, explained how it was among other places at meetings for heads of associations at the commune (now district) that hate propaganda started circulating (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7, family member in prison). Chapter 7 expands on these continuities.

²⁹² Two of this group of 15 were members of genocide survivor associations only and so are not counted as members to mixed associations.

sample), six of which reported no regular contact with members of the other group in their daily or weekly routines; four were members of no association whatsoever and two were members of genocide associations; the remaining three were members of mixed (agricultural) associations.

Often, the people with regular contact were able to show considerable empathy. When I asked a respondent if she could understand survivors who were disbelieving of people's pleas of innocence (in *gacaca*), she answered: "[y]es, I can understand them. They have wounds." (Sovu, Interviewee no 26, family member in prison) Another respondent, whose husband had been released in 2005 after ten years in prison, said she could understand both survivors and perpetrators: "those people [the survivors] look at us and see the people who killed their own. I can understand that. In their shoes, I'd feel the same way." (Sovu, Interviewee no 31, family member recently released) A survivor, who ranked well on the coexistence score, explained why it was not a good idea to ask the neighbours who had pillaged her house after she was forced to flee, to reimburse or reinstate the goods they had taken: "[e]ven those people who took things, when they came back [from their own exile in IDP camps or in Zaire/DRC], they had nothing either. We couldn't ask them for something they didn't have. Even their doors had been stolen." (Sovu, Interviewee no 22, survivor)²⁹³

Conversely, the thirteen "worst" ranked on the coexistence scale had little breadth and depth in their social interactions.²⁹⁴ For the four prisoners, this was self-explanatory –

²⁹³ This finding at the meso (or community) level, that "good scorers" are those whose social lives are characterised by regular substantive contact with a variety of other people, including people of the other ethnic group, recalls Varshney's work on the structure of civic life (intra versus inter-ethnic civic engagement) and the presence or absence of ethnic violence. Using Robert Putman's (1993) notion of "social capital", Varshney argues that what matters for preventing ethnic violence is not whether social capital exists, but whether social and civic ties cut *across* ethnic groups (Varshney, 2002).

²⁹⁴ Breadth, depth and type of social interactions were gauged based on, among other things, the answers to the following questions: "When was the last time you shared a beer with a member of the other group? When was the last time you were invited/extended an invitation to a wedding/funeral to a member of the other group?"; "Are there mixed marriages in your community today? Can you cite any examples?"; "Are you a member of a cooperative, group or association? What kind of group is it?"; "How do you earn your living?"; "Describe a typical day/ a typical week." See Appendix 7.

as clarified above, they were not free to interact with anyone other than fellow inmates.²⁹⁵ The social interactions of the nine remaining respondents tended to be dominated either by contact with their respective genocide survivors' associations or by no regular collaborative contact with anybody (see previous paragraph). Membership in survivor-only associations in particular may have unwittingly compounded the very social alienation some reported: "I cannot know if we are reconciled here because I do not have [social] relations with anyone." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor) A few non-survivor respondents noted that some survivors were putting themselves "on the side" with these exclusive associations (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 3, "neutral"). As mentioned above, geographic isolation can contribute to social isolation: the inhabitants of the *umudugudu* of Sovu – all Tutsi (survivors or OCL returnees) – reported both.

This sense of social isolation was further compounded by the behaviour of successive waves of released prisoners. The 2005 released prisoners I interviewed reported that their instructions in the *ingando* were not to approach survivors alone or immediately after their release. "To visit a survivor, you have to go with an authority, a *nyumbakumi* or a responsible [of your cell] to avoid any incident. This is what we were told in the *ingando*." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 14, released prisoner) Nearly three months on, three of the four prisoners who had been released on 29 August 2005 had seen their surviving victims by coincidence but none had approached them. "There is a woman I'd like to ask forgiveness from, but I haven't seen her yet. She lives in the *umudugudu* and I don't dare go alone." (Sovu, Interviewee no 32, released prisoner) "The person who had me put in jail, she is a neighbour. My sister-in-law [who was in prison with me and was also released at the same time as me] and myself are waiting for the responsible [cell-level authority] to arrange a visit." (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 15, released prisoner)

Further aggravating the social alienation some survivors felt, were the corruption scandals that have rocked some of the very organizations and funds intended to assist them. "I was in an association called *Abasa*, for women who were raped during the genocide. We

²⁹⁵ There are Tutsi, and even genocide survivors, in prison. Though they are apparently held in separate blocks from the prisoners accused of genocide-related crimes, my prisoner respondents thought their living conditions were not much better than their own.

were 82 members and it was a religious woman [a nun] who set up the organization that was stealing the funds. We complained to *Ibuka*, and are waiting for the results. They turned us into merchandise, a business. They took our photos, our identities... *Abasa* still exists, they took other women [to replace the 30 or so who left]. They tell people that we are dead of AIDS. It is true that some of us died, but not all of us. This is a very large injustice. They really wronged us. They acted like the *interahamwe*. But it is not easy to confront people that manage so much money.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 8, survivor) Another survivor mentioned similar problems with the FARG: “[t]here are corruption problems. The problems arise when it is time to distribute the assistance. They can even give assistance to people that are more rich than you. There are times when the assistance that comes is not enough for everyone. That is when favouritism and corruption can come in.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 10, survivor) This of course re-victimized the victim and reinforced his/her feelings of utter social isolation.

The Lost Custom of Helping Neighbours

Even though these associations and cooperatives were spoken of positively, the importance of spontaneous and voluntary communal work was continuously underscored particularly by the women who headed households – regardless of if this was due to widowhood or their husbands being in prison. “These people, with who I am sitting right now, they know very well that I don’t have children anymore, that I don’t have brothers anymore, and they know that it is them that killed my brothers, my nephews. And no one has thought to come [...] cut wood for my fire, or ask after me when I am sick, give me a hand when I am tilling my field.” (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005) To the question “when was the last time someone came to help you with your field”, a widowed respondent answered “[t]hey come help me only when I have banana beer. This month they came. But no one comes to work for free!” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor) A woman whose husband had been in jail since 1995 underscored how uncommon it had become to help neighbours out since 1994: “[a]fter the war, I’d say that the [voluntary] help you can get from others for the work you need to do in the fields is 1% of what it was before.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7, family member in prison)

This lack of solidarity, of spontaneous mutual help between community members and even family members at times further degenerated into opportunistic behaviour. Released prisoners in particular were disappointed by their families' and friends' actions during their time behind bars: “[m]y brothers have taken the fields right in front of my house. I leave them; I want to stay on good terms with them. But if they had wanted to help me, they would have at least not let my house fall into ruins. [...] I have come back to nothing.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 32, released prisoner)²⁹⁶

This helping of one's neighbours in need – a spontaneous and reciprocal show of solidarity – was consistently described as a typically Rwandan characteristic *before*. “I have always learned that a Rwandan is characterized by *ubupfura* [nobility, largess of his soul]. [He] shares equitably and takes care of his friend's children if the friend dies.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 21, “neutral”) But this had now changed: “Rwandans after the war and before the war don't resemble each other. [...] Their hearts have changed. There is no more love.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 7, family member in prison) “Before, Rwandans got along with each other, helped each other, and married [between groups].” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 15, released prisoner) But “[d]uring the war, the Rwandan changed. For example, the Rwandan of today was characterized by jealousy and hypocrisy too (Sovu, Interviewee no 37, prisoner). “Rwandans have become mean.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9, survivor) This is further evidence to a broader interpretation of the past under an extremely romantic light, where life before the genocide was almost idyllic. Surprisingly, nearly all my respondents showed evidence of this “rosy past” syndrome, even though cases of earlier pogroms against Tutsi were fairly well known (cf. Chapter 5).

The belief that Rwandans had changed, had lost some of their “Rwandanness” – and namely their tradition of solidarity and mutual help – was also reflected in respondents' estimates of how many tried to help or save others during the genocide – as opposed to earlier Tutsi pogroms. As discussed in Chapter 5, the consensus view seemed to be that some Hutu did try to help people who were persecuted in 1994, but that their numbers were

²⁹⁶ His wife and two malnourished children had been sleeping in a hut with a hole in the ceiling through which the rain came in.

low. When pressed to name names, those who could, named only a handful, usually two or three; one respondent was able to name five. This contrasts with the actions of Hutu in 1959 (the first large-scale Tutsi massacres): “[i]n 1959, from what people have told me, the Hutu from these parts helped the Tutsi alot; they kept their possessions and gave them back afterwards.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor) One person who sheltered eleven Tutsi in his house in 1994 said: “I am disappointed that not more people helped [the victims] especially because the killers were like our brothers. Their wives were our daughters.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 29, family member in prison)²⁹⁷

Recalling the “Rosy Past” syndrome explored in Chapter 5, what is interesting is that upon closer inspection, this long Rwandan tradition of mutual help has in fact not been “spontaneous” or “voluntary” for several decades. The practice of *umuganda* (collective, unpaid work) offers a good case in point. *Umuganda* was mostly phased out during colonialism; it was brought back by President Habyarimana in 1974 (Verwimp, 1999).²⁹⁸ Among other things, Habyarimana saw his *umuganda* policy as a restoration of Rwandan values and traditions – a source of pride – as well as an excellent development strategy because of all the free labour it provided the State. He made *umuganda* mandatory once per week and in so doing eroded its “voluntary” and hence “traditional” nature.²⁹⁹ One respondent acknowledged this: “[t]he *umuganda* is part of Rwandan culture. It is under Habyarimana that it became a programme of the State.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 19, prisoner)

In this section, I showed that respondents involved in collaborative projects with others, particularly people with different life experiences than them – tended to score better on the “coexistence score” chiefly because they were able to empathize. In this way, and though they were unaware of this dynamic, the “good scorers” had revised their narratives of the past in ways which accounted for the actions of the “other group” – this is an excellent

²⁹⁷ None of the eleven Tutsi he sheltered survived.

²⁹⁸ Rwanda officially became a German colony in 1899 and a Belgian one in 1916. Independence came in 1962.

²⁹⁹ Monthly *umuganda* remains mandatory under President Kagame. Usual tasks include maintaining or building roads, schools, and communal buildings.

example of the Contact hypothesis at play, and of a bottom-up, voluntaristic (as opposed to imposed) meaning-making exercise so praised by Dougherty (2004) among others (see Chapter 2). Moreover, and as foreshadowed in the earlier part of this chapter, it is not ensuring opportunities for better livelihoods alone that helps people score better, but rather the opportunity this affords them to empathize, and break down monolithic perceptions of the other (“it’s not all Rwandans that are bad”). On the other hand, spontaneous mutual help, considered to be the norm “before”, is both valued and perceived to be waning in the post-1994 period. The solidarity and social bonds such help would be a testament of cannot be replaced by “institutionalised” work such as *umuganda* or for-profit endeavours such as cooperatives and farmers’ associations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I begin to answer the question of what factors help promote “reconciliation” in post-genocide Rwanda. To do this, I looked at ethnographic data gathered in two sectors in the southern district of Maraba. Based on this data, I provided evidence for two findings and laid the groundwork for a third. First, I showed that the attitudes and behaviours of my respondents were influenced to a larger extent by what had happened to them since 1994, as opposed to during 1994. This varied with individual circumstance, but overall the more people had been able to rebuild their lives and hope for a better future, the “better” they ranked on the “coexistence score” I constructed. In other words, and to turn to the most consistently used definition of reconciliation (cf. Chapter 5), the more things were “like before” – or the more respondents had grounds to believe they were moving in that direction – the better the coexistence score. Second, I found that the breath and depth of social relations also have an impact on the coexistence score. If people came into regular contact with a variety of Rwandans, not just people who had had the same experiences as them, they tended to have lower (better) coexistence scores. People who were in “mixed” associations (cooperatives) also tended to have better scores – validating the basic premise of the literature on the “Contact hypothesis” and the emergence of mutually tolerable versions of events this contact can promote (cf. second reconciliation paradigm). There are policy ramifications for this and indeed authorities can and have been shaping community life with policies that promoted collaborative work and common goals, with economic

development being first and foremost among them. However, there were areas that were considerably more difficult to “legislate”, such as the reported loss of solidarity and of spontaneous and voluntary help of neighbours in need. This coincided with a clear deterioration of perceptions of fellow Rwandans. Whether spontaneous help had decreased or not from pre-1994 levels is almost immaterial. What matters most is that community bonds of solidarity were perceived to be withering away.

Ethnicity is an important factor particularly in a post-genocide context and it was referred to, directly or in “code” in all my interviews. But it could not explain all or even most patterns of “reconciliation” and “non-reconciliation” – at the individual (micro) and community (meso) level. Just as it was foreshadowed in the crime statistics (Chapter 3), Sovu and Bunzazi bear no significant difference in this regard. As we saw here, respondents’ perceptions and behaviours were the result of social and economic processes and it is these processes that bear the explanatory weight when it comes to “reconciliation” or the lack thereof. A final explanatory layer, the interplay between the local and the national, is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Reconciliation by Decree: Revisiting the Rwandan Tradition of Obedience in Sovu and Bunzazi

Introduction

I argue in Chapter 6 that individual life stories *since* 1994 (the micro-level) as well as the depth, breadth and type of social interactions in Sovu and Bunzazi (the meso-level) help explain the patterns of reconciliation and non-reconciliation (or coexistence and non-coexistence) in these two communities. In this chapter, I turn to a third and final conclusion. Based on my fieldwork in Sovu and Bunzazi, I find that the fact that my grassroots respondents lacked the space to publicly articulate for themselves what reconciliation meant and how it could best be carried out, had a *negative* impact on the process. The evidence I present to buttress this conclusion is again sourced primarily from data gathered during fieldwork, in particular from interviews and participant observation during *gacaca*, “sensitization”, and other meetings. To illustrate this lack of latitude in what I describe as a “procedural”, or “top-down” form of reconciliation, I focus on the way the processes of forgiveness on the one hand, and mourning on the other (both highly individual, and therefore “thick” components of a reconciliation process – see Figure 1, p. 59), have been appropriated, or institutionalised by the central authorities and the significant resentment this has engendered among all categories of respondents.³⁰⁰

In a second section, I argue that this attempt at imposing reconciliation “from above”, via a mix of cajoling and coercive language, is indicative of a reliance among central authorities on an assumed Rwandan tradition of obedience. This is in stark contrast to the RPF language which praises, among other things, critical thinking (the second reconciliation pillar) and represents, in fact, an embracing of the “cultural mediocrity” the RPF simultaneously rejects. I show that this belief in an alleged tradition of obedience is

³⁰⁰ Note on style: In this chapter, I will refer to sector, cell and lower level authorities as being “local authorities” (“*autorités de base*”), who are close to and part of the grassroots population. This is in opposition to national (Kigali-based), provincial and district level authorities, which I will refer to as “central authorities” or “State authorities”. Much like President Habyarimana’s MRND party was conflated with the Rwandan State from 1974 to the introduction of multiparty politics in 1991 (Vandeginste and Huyse, 1999, p. 16), my respondents sometimes used “RPF” and “State authorities” interchangeably. In the Maraba context, an overlapping distinction is that “local authorities” live in, and are part of, the communities under their administration, unlike “central authorities”, who live in Kigali or the closest provincial capital and are not necessarily a native of the area under their remit. Another caveat: within “central authorities”, I include elected officials and senior civil servants; I omit secretarial and support staff.

reflected in and reinforced by academic and media writing, particularly in discussions on the extent of popular participation in the Rwandan genocide. However, at least three problems plague the assumption of Rwandan obedience. First, rarely are assertions of Rwandan obedience based on empirical, “micro-level” research. Second, this assumption overlooks documented instances of Rwandans disobeying direct orders from central and local authorities (Kimonyo, 2000, p. 50, p. 65-66; Uvin, 1998, p. 67-68). A related third problem is that “conforming” to authorities’ desired reconciliation behaviours – such as reaching quorum in *gacaca*, or requesting (and granting) forgiveness (by prisoners and survivors respectively) – is a fairly meaningless proxy for successful reconciliation in this instance. Indeed, participation in the State’s genocidal project in 1994 was secured through a mix of carrot-and-stick measures, and participation in the current authorities’ reconciliation project is secured through similar means. In neither case does participation necessarily translate into ideological commitment to – or sincere belief in – the State’s project.

Throughout this chapter, the fundamental continuities in the nature of State-society relations will be highlighted. In particular, I will focus on the perception among my grassroots respondents that Rwandan society is, now as before, divided into what may be described as two “classes”: the “high people” – the elites, with power, money and education – and the “low people” – the masses, with little to no influence, money or education.³⁰¹

7.1 National Politics, Local Dynamics: Reconciliation as Government Procedure

Methods

Throughout my three-month period of fieldwork in Maraba, I attended several public meetings, the details of which are listed in Appendix 5. These include *gacaca* sessions in

³⁰¹ Rwandan socio-economic classes can be subdivided further. In terms of the “high people” for example, there is a division between the Tutsi returnees, many of whom were educated in Uganda and are Anglophone, who are influential within the government of Paul Kagame, and the old elite, Hutu but also Tutsi alike, who grew up in Rwanda, are mostly Francophone, and have been marginalised by the Kagame government. Ties of kinship (family, friendship) can also matter (Dorsey, 2000). For example, the circle of people around President Kagame are rumoured to share four characteristics: former refugees in Uganda (preferably, from Gahunge camp), studied in Kampala’s Makerere University, Protestant, and originally from Gahini, in (former) Kibungo province (south-eastern Rwanda – see Vandeginste and Huyse, 1999, p. 16). Again, as has been demonstrated previously and as will be argued again, it is not ethnicity alone that determines identity, behaviour or allegiances.

Sovu and Bunzazi³⁰², as well as meetings called by both central and local authorities – usually referred to as “sensitisation meetings”.³⁰³ Rwandans have a “moral obligation” as well as a “legal obligation”, enshrined in the law creating *gacaca* courts, to participate in *gacaca*.³⁰⁴ Sensitisation meetings on the other hand are not quite obligatory, but they are perceived to various degrees as such by the residents of Sovu and Bunzazi. I also attended a session for *ingando* participants in the camps hosting the prisoners originally from Sovu and Bunzazi (in Save, northern Butare) as well as the closing ceremony of the *ingando* camps. Lastly, I attended *abunzi* (“conciliators”) meetings in Sovu and Bunzazi (cf. Chapter 1). *Abunzi* committees were functional in both Sovu and Bunzazi at the time of fieldwork, with Bunzazi’s committee being particularly active. Only the parties to the conflict are obliged to attend, though the sessions are open to the public. Because the *abunzi* meetings are not obligatory, they are listed separately in the Appendix.

My interpreter and I took care to introduce ourselves to the authorities chairing the meetings during our first encounters with them. At first, we were presented to the assembled crowd and were allocated privileged seating (on a bench or in the shade) but these formal niceties were phased out by the end of the three-month period. During the meetings, I worked with my translator and we took turns taking detailed notes. I was thus intermittently able to observe the proceedings and participants’ behaviours, including body language, more carefully. We would also take the opportunity to mingle with the crowd after each meeting was adjourned, to gather their impressions of the proceedings.

The Extensive Role of Authorities

The frequency with which these meetings were held is one immediately obvious observation the data yields. I personally attended 13 in a 12-week period, but these do not include a host of other meetings inhabitants of Sovu and Bunzazi would have had to attend

³⁰² I also attended a *gacaca* trial in neighbouring Tare sector, a pilot (and therefore more advanced) court. See Appendix 5.

³⁰³ From anecdotal evidence sourced during fieldwork from informal conversations with Rwandans who had grown up in Rwanda (i.e. not OCL returnees), I have gathered that “sensitization” meetings, also referred to as “animation sessions”, were regular under Habyarimana as well. This is one of many hints that alert us to the presence of continuities, not just ruptures, between the pre- and post-1994 periods.

³⁰⁴ See, in Appendix 2, article 29 of Organic law no 16/2004 (present in previous *gacaca* laws as well), which sanctions “any person who omits or refuses to testify on what he/she has seen or on what he/she knows, or who makes a false or slanderous denunciation” with a one- to three-year jail sentence.

(such as monthly, obligatory *umuganda*, for example).³⁰⁵ Meetings would last on average between two and four hours, but on top of this they routinely involved substantial time spent waiting for the authorities who called the meeting and/or for a quorum of participants to be reached.³⁰⁶

A second observation is the recurrent presence of higher-level authorities than the meeting would normally require. In other words, the Conseillers (sector-level) would routinely get involved, and even chair *gacaca* sessions (the cell-level *gacaca* judges' remit) as would occasionally district-level authorities such as Vice-mayors (cf. Appendix 5).³⁰⁷ With the exception of *abunzi* sessions, security forces were equally ubiquitous at these meetings: there was an LDF, police or military presence in all but one of the meetings I attended. When I asked a *gacaca* judge in Sovu to explain why two policemen were present at that day's *gacaca* session, he explained: "[m]any military come here, from Mount Huye.³⁰⁸ There is at least one for each sector. They come dressed in civilian clothing. They write reports, too, because they ask us questions. They also use LDFs to fetch the population, especially now that there is work for them to do in their fields, they do not come spontaneously." (Sovu, Gacaca, 18 October 2005) It is to be expected that some form of security be present at the modernised *gacaca* courts, just as it is in classical courts of justice.³⁰⁹ It also makes good sense to have a security presence at the larger meetings, if only for crowd-control purposes. It is rather their ubiquity, their monitoring activities and,

³⁰⁵ *Umuganda* is discussed in Chapter 6. The economic sacrifice of participation in meetings, particularly weekly participation in *gacaca* for the judges, who on top of chairing the sessions take on a substantial (clerical) work load, as well as for subsistence farmers (the vast majority of participants in rural areas), particularly in the rainy season, is discussed in a PRI report on the pilot *gacaca* courts (PRI, 2005, p. 39-40).

³⁰⁶ Possible interpretations of this lateness on the participants' behalf will be discussed below. The organisers/chairs of these meetings were however routinely late themselves. For example, on the day of the closing ceremony of the *ingando* camps in Save, *ingando* participants and some observers like myself were present as of 9 a.m., the presiding authorities opened the meeting at 12h40.

³⁰⁷ The Mayor of each district, the highest administrative authority, is deputised by four Vice-mayors, each charged with a particular portfolio (social affairs, economic affairs, etc.)

³⁰⁸ There is a small military base at the top of Mount Huye, which I visited. I was told by the soldiers stationed there that their first task is to guard the strategically important telecommunications antenna at the summit. Mount Huye is partly in the sector of Sovu and soldiers are regularly seen in the cabarets in the little commercial centre of Gako cell, including in the Conseillère of Sovu's cabaret.

³⁰⁹ This is because, as discussed in Chapter 1, modern *gacaca* courts resemble classical courts in several ways; unlike "traditional" *gacaca*, participation in the modern version is obligatory, and punishments (including prison sentences) are State-enforced (Betts, 2005; Wolters, 2005; Waldorf, 2006a).

as we will see below, the implication of their presence given the coercive language frequently used, that I wish to highlight.

The Use of Language

A third observation concerns the language used by the authorities chairing the meetings. Regardless of their administrative level, veiled threats and coercive language were frequently used. For example, at the closing ceremony of the *ingando* camps, in Save district (northern Butare), one of the guests of honour, a priest and NURC Commissioner said to the about-to-be released prisoners gathered for the occasion: “I hope you will not turn out to be people who use double-speak [“des gens à double langage”], and that what you say you will do, you will do. The truth passes through fire and does not burn [...] You can lie all you want, but this will turn against you sooner or later.” (Save, 29 August 2005) During a special meeting held instead of *gacaca*³¹⁰, a Vice-mayor of Maraba said: “I have come with people responsible for security [“des responsables de sécurité”]. No one will leave this meeting until after we’ve reached a consensus on this problem.” (Sovu, Gacacaday, 31 August 2005) During another meeting, this one a *gacaca* session in Bunzazi, a *gacaca* judge said: “[b]eware. *Gacaca* is strong. People from other sectors are sending me information [i.e. denunciations].” (Bunzazi, Gacaca, 12 October 2005)

This language of veiled threats sometimes escalated to the use of sanctions. During the 12 October *gacaca* session in Bunzazi for example, the Vice-mayor took down the names of 46 people who had come late. The 46 were given a choice between spending the night in the district “cachot” (holding cells) and paying a Rwf 2,000 fine (approximately US\$ 4). The actual use of force, in the form of arrests carried out during meetings, was also in evidence: during the 21 September *gacaca* session, two released prisoners were re-arrested in front of the general assembly in Bunzazi (Bunzazi, Gacaca, 21 September 2005).³¹¹

³¹⁰ This special meeting was called following the nation-wide mass provisional release of prisoners that occurred on 29/30 August 2005. One prisoner, originally from Sovu, who was to have been released, was returned to prison at the last minute, apparently after the Conseillère of Sovu’s intervention. See Chapter 6 for a full description of the incident.

³¹¹ PRI, which has conducted extensive *gacaca* monitoring activities across the country virtually since the courts first began operating (in 2001), reports that the tendency has been for local authorities to resort

However, the tone was not always punitive, with some recourse to cajoling and patriotic language – though these instances remained on the whole very rare in the meetings I personally attended. Examples of cajoling language include the Vice-mayor praising the work of all Rwandans who participate in *gacaca*: “you are helping peace in Rwanda. We are preparing for the future of our children, a future without distrust.” (Bunzazi, Gacaca, 12 October 2005) The Mayor of Maraba, after instructing my research assistant not to translate what he was about to say, explained to the assembled audience on another occasion: “[f]oreigners do not understand the great capacity Rwandans have to solve their own problems. For example, she [Eugenia] does not understand how you can be sitting here, next to one another, perhaps next to your torturers. Rwandans are an example for the rest of humanity.” (Gihindamuyaga, 28 September 2005)

These meetings were also occasions to call on participants to recite directives or mottos: “why is *gacaca* a justice that reconciles?” asked the Mayor of one of the *gacaca* judges at the Gihindamuyaga meeting. “Because it reconciles but also sanctions” answered the judge, in a formula I heard time and again during *gacaca* opening statements (Gihindamuyaga, 28 September 2005). RPF propaganda and songs were also occasionally heard: during the closing ceremony of the *ingando* in Save, for example, the préfet of Butare repeated: “your father, your real father, is President Paul Kagame. Your parent is Kagame.” (Save, 29 August 2005)³¹² RPF songs were also sung by the released prisoners. Throughout the meetings then, one detects an undertone of forced consent, of imposition, which I will illustrate in more detail below in the discussion on the institutionalization of forgiveness and mourning.

This imposition is compounded by authorities’ unconvincing reassurances when faced with questions regarding locals’ anxieties. For example, a participant in a special meeting at Simbi asked the following question: “[i]f I am the only witness to a crime – I saw five people kill someone but they all deny it – aren’t people going to think I am a liar?”

increasingly to “coercive measures” such as fines and even “the use of force” (which the report leaves undefined). The illegal character of these sanctions is also underlined (PRI, 2005, p. 40).

³¹² The use of the image of the leader as benevolent parent or father recalls similar imagery surrounding Habyarimana or even the kings of the pre-colonial period. These and other “continuities with the past” will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The response she obtained was the following: “[y]ou have to say it, even if they all deny it” (Simbi, Special meeting, 7 September). During an *ingando* lecture delivered by a national representative of the Rwandan National Human Rights Commission, a soon-to-be released prisoner expressed concern at how he would be received by neighbours. He obtained the following answer: “there could be frictions between you and the people outside. But do not worry about it. We have sensitised them [“sensibiliser”], like we have you. I guarantee that you will have no problems after your liberation.” (Save, 18 August 2005) It is noteworthy that neither answer addresses the substance of the concerns raised on these two occasions.

The Grassroots and the Authorities: An Ambivalent Relationship

The extent of authorities’ role – at all administrative levels – in communicating and shaping reconciliation discourse and practices in Sovu and Bunzazi is perhaps now becoming clear. The influence and role the State has in the reconciliation process was also recognised, often explicitly, by my respondents: “[t]he tribunal in Arusha is of no use to us in Sovu. It’s the government that can influence reconciliation.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 35, prisoner) “The government has become a mediator between the victims and the perpetrators.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 15, released prisoner) My interviews however, also revealed that respondents had a deeply ambivalent attitude towards these “ubiquitous” government authorities. One example of this ambivalence and scepticism was discussed in Chapter 6 and concerns respondents’ varying interpretations of Rwandan history, which diverge from the RPF-endorsed version on certain (but not all) key points.³¹³

In fact, evidence of this ambivalence is found throughout the interviews I conducted. Indeed, on the one hand, respondents consistently valued the security that had progressively been consolidated by these authorities since the RPF came to power in 1994. Focus group participants in Sovu and Bunzazi chose security as the top pre-condition for reconciliation, and further considered that this pre-condition had been attained (cf. Table 18, p. 147). There was also a strong element of “the authorities know best” in respondents’ comments:

³¹³ The official discourse leaves out, for example, any discussion of what role the RPF may have played in creating conditions that led to the 1994 genocide.[0]

“I don’t understand how a person who has killed ten others or even more is liberated, and we keep in prison those who say they haven’t killed anyone. But the State must know where it wants to lead the country. The government is better equipped than me to take decisions it deems useful.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 21, "neutral")

“We go to *gacaca* regularly. It is there that we meet those that killed our family so that we can forgive them. It must be a good thing, since it is the State that does it.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor)

The language of parent and father used (as we saw above) by the Préfet of Butare, was also found in some of my respondents’ comments: “[t]he State is like a father [...] And the State asks itself ‘where will I lead the country if I don’t take my responsibilities as a father?’” (Sovu, Group interview); “[i]t is the State that is responsible for its population in the eyes of the international community and it has to show that it is the father of the population in its entirety” (Sovu, Group interview); “[t]he State is like a parent.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 37, prisoner)

On the other hand, running in parallel to this appreciation of the authorities’ accomplishments with regards to security and their “parental” (presumably benign) oversight over Rwandan society was scepticism and resentment of their top-down approach to reconciliation. This theme of imposition was clearly seen in the coercive language used by authorities to conduct public meetings (as discussed above). However, this theme was also found throughout my (private) interviews. “We are obliged to reconcile with each other. [...] Everything is decided from above. If they tell us to reconcile, we can’t say no.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor) “Now we will forgive them. What else can we do? Even God asks that we forgive.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor)³¹⁴ Significantly, the

³¹⁴ Much has been made of the possible relationship between faith and reconciliation (and forgiveness), in particular in the wake of the South African TRC and as a result of Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s central role in this process. However, it is interesting to note at this juncture that this quote represents one of the only occasions a respondent spontaneously mentioned God or religion to me. Neither word figured in my interview guide (cf. Appendix 7) except in the context of discussing daily and weekly routines, which typically involved time devoted to worship (mostly in Churches). This omission of God and religion is surprising given that a strong majority of Rwandans proclaim themselves to be devout, with Catholicism the dominant religion (see Footnote 110). It is all the more surprising, given the topic of the thesis generally (reconciliation) and the topics specifically discussed in the following sections (forgiveness and mourning). It is further interesting to note that God is mentioned here only to emphasise the obligation to forgive – further buttressing the argument presented here on the institutionalisation of forgiveness (and mourning). My explanation for this absence of God from grassroots’ (and Rwandan non-government elites’) discourses is that understandings and

idea that reconciliation was being imposed in a top-down fashion was found across all categories of respondents, not just survivors (versus prisoners), or respondents from Sovu (versus those from Bunzazi). “Reconciliation is a government programme, as are these sensitizations. They’ve trained the authorities all the way through to the grassroots.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 4, "neutral") “The ‘bas peuple’ is very docile. Because the authorities are telling them to live together and reconcile themselves, they will do it.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 2, "neutral")

This recognition that the RPF government has great influence over the reconciliation process went hand in hand with the recognition that this same government was the main instigator of this process. By implication, the initiative to reconcile, or the way this initiative had been translated into practice was not “organic” or community-based. One respondent, quoted earlier, explained that “reconciliation is a notion that came later, when I was in prison.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 14, released prisoner - he was imprisoned in 1996) A survivor was more specific when she said: “it’s only now, with the release of these prisoners [starting in 2003] that we are talking about reconciliation here.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor)

Table 26: Grassroots Perceptions of Influence over the Reconciliation Process

Who has influence over the reconciliation process? (n=29)	Totals	Sovu/Bunz		Hutu/Tutsi	
“The State has big influence” (positive/neutral role)	18	10	9	14	4
“The State tells us what to do” (coercive, negative role)	11	5	5	5	6
Total	29	15	14	19	10

This led to recognition, and resentment, of the institutionalised form this reconciliation process had taken in some instances. One clear example of this imposed or institutionalised reconciliation is found in the officially sanctioned approach to apologies and forgiveness. Another example is the official periods of mourning each April. Both will be discussed in the following section.

expectations of reconciliation tend towards the thin pole of the reconciliation continuum – where faith and God are not involved.

The Institutionalisation of Forgiveness, Mourning – and of Reconciliation

Forgiveness

As seen in Chapter 3, the word “forgiveness” is introduced late (2001) into Presidential statements but is then progressively used more in government discourse.³¹⁵ Perhaps as a result, and combined with the mass conditional releases that occurred just as my fieldwork in Maraba was beginning, it also permeated discussions with my grassroots respondents – as seen in Chapter 5. In the government-issued confession forms filled out by all of the released prisoners, and four of the eight prisoners I spoke to, a formula was included whereby all signatories of the form asked for forgiveness from the Rwandan State, society and victims. For many, this was perceived first and foremost as a mandatory step in order to qualify for a conditional release. “This [asking for forgiveness] is what they ask us to do. Even those who ate cows, beans, all have to ask forgiveness from God, from the families of the victims, from the Rwandan State.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 17, prisoner) Regardless of remorse, this bargain between State and prisoner “guarantees” forgiveness according to some: as one released prisoner explained, “the State has told those who committed a crime that if they ask for forgiveness, they will be forgiven.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 16, released prisoner)³¹⁶

This government procedure thus conflated witness statement and apology, first in writing on the confession form and later, orally in front of *gacaca* (see Appendix 2, Chapter II of *gacaca* law). This was also where most prisoners and released prisoners I interviewed saw their role in the reconciliation process as beginning and ending. When I asked a respondent if his request for forgiveness on his confession form sufficed, he answered: “[i]n the context of unity and reconciliation, we have asked for forgiveness. But it’s not necessary to get down on our knees. I do not even know this person [the victim]. I met the family only much later, after the war.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 17, prisoner) When I asked if he was planning on asking forgiveness from this family now that he knew who they were,

³¹⁵ As a reminder, I studied Presidential statements to December 2005.

³¹⁶ The same opinions have been expressed in confessed prisoner testimonials recorded elsewhere: “I am certain of being forgiven, because I confessed...” (Hatzfeld, 2003, p. 203). Based on its interviews, African Rights concludes that “[m]any prisoners regard reconciliation, not as a process, but as a programme that the government can impose from above and force the nation to accept.” (African Rights, 2000, p. 123)

he replied “I have already asked for forgiveness. In my confession form.”³¹⁷ Most prisoners and released prisoners I spoke to had not considered, and were not concerned with seeking out their victims’ families in private to apologise, or what would happen if the victims’ families did not grant the allegedly sought-after forgiveness. To the question “what if they do not forgive you?” one released prisoner responds: “I’d insist. But at least I’d have done my part.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 15, released prisoner) Another says: “[i]t’s their problem [if they don’t forgive me]. We have asked God.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 16, released prisoner)

And yet these apologies – first in writing on the confession form and then proffered in public, usually when the newly released prisoner is first granted the right to speak at *gacaca* – are considered both very important and grossly inadequate by survivors. “These public shows of remorse are nauseating. [...] They are a theatre” said one survivor (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor).³¹⁸ “They greet us, but they do not take the initiative to come here so we can talk. [...] When someone hurts you, they should come to see you.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 10, survivor) “They tell us reconciliation is coming together, living together, even with those that did us harm. Maybe I could, if they asked for forgiveness! But no one has come to ask me for that.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor)

Not all prisoners and released prisoners interviewed report not feeling the need to visit their victims’ families in person. One revealed he was too nervous to go: “[t]here is a woman I’d like to ask forgiveness from, but I haven’t seen her yet” says a released prisoner six weeks after he’d been released. “She lives just down the hill, in the *umudugudu* [of Sovu] and I don’t dare go alone. And she does not go to *gacaca*.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 32, released prisoner) Some survivors themselves recognise how difficult such a visit would be – “it’s impossible, they are too ashamed, they don’t dare come” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9,

³¹⁷ This respondent pleads innocent to the charges brought against him, which he was not able to explain clearly but which amount to complicity to murder. He confesses to being present as a man (“the victim” he speaks of above) was being killed: “[m]y confession is a witness statement: they killed a man in my presence. They pulled him out of a house and I was there. [...] I did not help him.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 17, prisoner)

³¹⁸ This survivor uses the same word, “theatre”, as a genocide survivor from the “non-government elite” constituency (see Chapter 4).

survivor) – but still insist that the onus is on the released prisoner to take the first, difficult step. However most released prisoners mentioned the directives they received in prison and in *ingando* camps not to visit survivors in their homes unless in the company of a local authority. “To visit a survivor, you have to go with an authority, a *nyumbakumi* or a responsible, to avoid any incident. That’s what they told us in the *ingando*.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 16, released prisoner)³¹⁹ This apparently accounted for some of the delays in meeting with victims’ families as local authorities were not easy to get hold of for such visits.

What is remarkable here is the private, micro-level of social life at which we see local and central authorities intervening, with at least in some instances the unintended consequence of survivor frustration as a result of released prisoner’s (perceived) evasive behaviour. Towards the end of my fieldwork in Maraba, as survivors’ complaints about released prisoners’ behaviour became increasingly frequent, a released prisoner explained: “[t]hings will change. We will go to the church. There are people who are in charge and they will tell you the day they’ve fixed for this. We discussed this in a meeting [with authorities] yesterday. Do not fear, we will be asking you for forgiveness.” (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005) Apparently, district authorities had decided to organize a “*fête de convivialité*”, a community party on the church grounds at Simbi, where part of the festivities would include released prisoners proffering apologies to genocide survivors, again in a public arena. The directive “not to go into the families [homes]” was to be maintained (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005).

The concern that underlay these acts may have been genuine – to avoid re-traumatizing survivors at the sight of their or their loved ones’ tormentors at their doorstep for instance. But the way this decision was arrived at, in a top-down manner and with no consultation process, continued the tradition of paternalistic decision-making and of intrusion in even the most intimate spheres of citizens’ lives. It also contributed to the

³¹⁹ This instruction was repeated by the préfet of Butare during the *ingando* closing ceremony in Save: “if you go alone [to a survivor’s house], you risk traumatising them. Pass through the authorities to say you are sorry.” (Save, 29 August 2005)

notion that reconciliation was not organic, not a genuine initiative by the parties directly concerned, but being “téléguidé”, controlled remotely, from above.

Mourning

Similarly, respondents voiced the belief that the official mourning periods were designed by the authorities for the authorities. A pair of genocide survivors described the 7 April annual week of mourning as “a week that comes to make us crazy [*agashinyaguro*]. They ask us to go dig up our people but we do not dig them up in order to go home with them. Showing us these remains all the time... we go home traumatized. There should really be another way to do the official mourning.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 9, survivor; Bunzazi, Interviewee no 10, survivor) “The annual mourning periods remind us of our sadness. We relive our misfortunes. When they tell us it’s the time for mourning, we say that maybe it would be better not to talk about it anymore.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 12, survivor - see also Footnote 122 on voluntary amnesia)³²⁰

The day of official mourning takes place annually on 7 April nationwide, and the month of April generally is considered a month of mourning where parties and celebrations – public or private – are discouraged. The specific day that is commemorated at lower administrative levels varies in each locality according to when the genocide first set on. In Sovu, it is commemorated on 22 April, the day the massacre at the Sovu convent began and in Bunzazi, on 18 April when the massacre in the neighbouring parish church at Simbi began. Typically, the day is characterized by speeches from central authorities and the celebration of a mass. The event goes on through the night: “[d]uring the night, we pray and we also give testimonies since we are on the site of the massacres. We say how people died. It’s the survivors that speak.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 22, survivor)

³²⁰ Claudine Vidal also argues that the RPF has monopolised and instrumentalised mourning for its own political purposes. Similarly to the respondent I quote here, Vidal concludes that this type of mourning hinders reconciliation. In particular, she describes how the government’s decision in 1996 to henceforth incorporate the unearthing and public display of corpses into the commemoration ceremonies has been an “unheard of transgression” of victims’, and Rwandan cultural sensibilities (“transgression inouïe des rapports traditionnels aux morts”, p. 578), as well as a form of State violence. “Horror does not justify horror,” she concludes (“L’horreur ne justifie pas l’horreur en retour”, in Vidal, 2004, p. 581).

Most respondents reported a strong pressure to attend and some thought it was compulsory. To the question “do you have to go to the church?” one respondent said “[i]t’s not obligatory but everyone goes. Some even spend the night.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 2, “neutral”) Another respondent simply answered “yes” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 3, “neutral”). The prisoners I spoke to were the most open in terms of expressing frustration at the one-sided nature of the mourning that was taking place. “Remembering victims is not in itself a bad thing, but it should be to the memory of all victims, not only the Tutsi, but also the Hutu.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 36, prisoner) “We do not have a right to that mourning. It belongs to the people who are remembering those killed during the genocide, so the Tutsi.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 17, prisoner) “Why not fix a day every year for the memory of all the dead, all the Rwandans who died, Hutu and Tutsi?” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 19, prisoner) One prisoner even alleged that the mourning periods were detrimental to reconciliation: “[t]he way it is done is not good. [...] The survivors take the little kids to the church at night, telling them what happened and how they should behave with the Hutu. A released prisoner had nephews [genocide survivors] who would visit him while he was in prison. These nephews heard during the mourning period that they had to attack Hutu families, to decimate them. Some wiser people were contradicting these words, but it shows that during the mourning period, there are bad teachings that are given.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 37, prisoner) As the respondent had been in prison since 1997, his impressions were based on hearsay. If anything his concerns over “the way mourning is done” were ones that the survivors I spoke to shared. Indeed, one survivor I interviewed agreed that mourning and reconciliation are not compatible: “when you remember the dead, you don’t think about reconciliation.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 13, survivor)³²¹ Importantly, this challenges the reconciliation literature that assumes that talking, expressing feelings, mourning openly,

³²¹ A relevant but little-known fact is the adverse way the annual mourning periods impact prisoners. Here is a partial transcript of one prisoner’s answers to a series of my questions (in italics): “*How is the genocide commemorated in prison?* We sit. The Director comes. He tells us we killed people and that we must remember. *Does it last one day or longer?* They bring us together almost everyday for seven days. It was the same thing in the ‘cachot’ [district-level holding cells or lockups] before. *Other than that, do you feel a difference in your activities?* We do not go work outside. We do not eat. When there is no more food, we can’t go outside. There are often food shortages during this week. The prison authorities don’t allow visits [N.B.: family members bring food to prisoners during visits]. *Why?* We are in prison; people don’t bother to tell us why. *What do you think about all this?* What do you want me to think? *Does this mourning week help reconciliation?* Yes. *How?* ... [Won’t answer, confused answer]” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 20, prisoner)

etc. leads to reconciliation, or “healing” as per the South African TRC motto “revealing is healing”.³²²

These two examples of authorities “intervening” in what are in principle highly personal, “thick” processes – forgiveness and mourning – speaks potently to the procedural and imposed nature that the reconciliation process had taken in these two communities. Different meanings of forgiveness and of mourning are also apparent here. For the RPF and the central authorities, mourning appeared to be mandatory, collective and perennial; for my respondents, genocide survivors as well as others, mourning was highly personal, and importantly, evolving and finite. For released prisoners, forgiveness was granted by the State and was delivered upon their release; however, survivors considered themselves the sole bestowers of forgiveness and they resented the fact that released prisoners did not seem to recognise this, or pay anything more than lip service to it.³²³

The State’s trampling of survivors’ right to forgive is acutely resented: “[i]n fact, survivors are mad at the State. They tell us these people, the released prisoners, have asked for forgiveness but to whom did they ask this? It’s against the State that we hold a grudge.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor)³²⁴ Interestingly, prisoners tend to focus their frustration on the State as well, rather than on their Tutsi neighbours. Speaking on relations with Tutsi prison mates, one respondent said: “[o]ur relations [with Tutsi prisoners] are very good. When they arrive, they are apprehensive but they quickly realize that no one will do them any harm. Even those that killed Hutu [N.B.: in revenge crimes presumably], like Mudago and Mpare, they are met with absolutely no aggression. Prisoners have more of a problem with the State, not with the Tutsi.” (Bunzazi, Interviewee no 18, prisoner) Another respondent, whose son was in jail, said this about her neighbours: “[m]ost people know he is innocent, I think. But they, the normal people, they also have no power.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 27, family member in prison, emphasis added)

³²² This and the other, broader implications of my findings will be discussed in (the concluding) Chapter 8.

³²³ Wiesenthal explores exactly this dilemma in his *The Sunflower* (Wiesenthal, 1998). During the group discussion in Bunzazi, a survivor expressed this resentment when, turning to a released prisoner in the groups, she said: “[y]our heart should lead you to my door. [...] Are you waiting for the State to send you like it sent you to kill me?” (Bunzazi, Group interview, 31 October 2005)

³²⁴ African Rights also concludes that relations between survivors and the State have suffered as a result of the guilty plea procedure, during which confessing prisoners ask for forgiveness (African Rights, 2000, p. 121).

7.2 The Assumption of Rwandan Obedience

The “High People” and the “Low People”: Continuities in State-Society Relations

In highlighting what I have called the “institutionalisation of mourning and forgiveness”, my first aim is to show that the lack of latitude my respondents had in defining reconciliation, or what practices may best contribute to it, bred frustration and resentment. In accounting for the patterns of reconciliation and non-reconciliation in Sovu and Bunzazi, something I began to do in Chapter 6, this negative reaction to the imposition of a certain practice of reconciliation – shared by an important cross-section of respondents (see Table 26: Grassroots Perceptions of Influence over the Reconciliation Process, p. 215) – represents my third and final finding.

A related aim of discussing the top-down nature of reconciliation in these two communities is to underline that this resentment was not necessarily directed at the “others” but at the State itself. Prisoners (code for “Hutu”) and survivors (code for “Tutsi”) alike, typically depicted as having diametrically opposed interests and opinions, converged in their reaction to the way the RPF had designed the official genocide mourning ceremonies for example.

In fact, this perception of central and local authorities as intrusive and coercive may actually have been a unifying factor among my grassroots respondents. Indeed, throughout my interviews and informal conversations, the distinction and *distance* between my respondents (in Sovu and Bunzazi) and the central authorities was felt. As discussed in Chapter 5, social positions were considered as decisive in determining criminal and moral responsibility for one’s acts during the genocide.³²⁵ As seen in Chapter 3, RPF authorities themselves recognise that the Rwandan peasant masses were manipulated by the elites of the previous regime. The cultural mediocrity of Rwandan peasants was also claimed. This fuelled a heavy RPF emphasis on education and “progress” more generally. At a local level, in Sovu and Bunzazi, more subtle signs of this distinction between “low people” and “high people” (to use my respondents’ phrasing) were equally present. Seating patterns at

³²⁵ Prisoners interviewed by a French journalist expressed similar ideas: “[i]f these organizers hadn’t shown up, it wouldn’t have occurred to the farmers to begin the work. They would have brandished machetes in anger over the plane crash and then gone back to their fields.” (Hatzfeld, 2003, p. 182)

meetings were telling. More obviously, authorities would occasionally ridicule members of the audience.³²⁶

Moreover, messages were always delivered in a one-way, lecture-style with a clear delimitation between speaker and audience, paving the way for some observers to label such meetings “indoctrination”.³²⁷ The idea that debate is discouraged at the expense of communication of directives is echoed in several reports. A USAID report I quoted earlier (cf. Chapter 4) concluded that “government consultation processes [amount to] mobilization of support for decisions already taken rather than open discussion of issues.” (USAID/Rwanda, 2004, p. 38) An International Crisis Group report similarly concluded that popular participation (in the context of drafting a new Constitution) was “highly supervised” and that there was no allowance for open debate (ICG, 2002, p. 6).

Additional evidence of a social hierarchy of the “governors” and the “governed” is found in anthropological and historical monographs on both Rwandan and Burundian communities. One anthropologist studying Burundian (Hutu) refugees in Dar Es Salaam in the 1990s uses similar language to describe “those with power” and “those who are affected by power”: the *Watu wa Juu* (Swahili for High People) versus the *Watu wa Chinichini* or *Watu Wadogo* (the Very Low People, and the Little People, respectively). Even in exile, “[t]he paths of these two groups rarely crossed” he concluded (Sommers, 2001, p. 13). In another (co-authored) publication, the same anthropologist argues that the stereotypes used in genocidal propaganda – whereby Hutu are debased and oppressed and Tutsi are cunning and powerful – built on prevalent traditional perceptions of society as being divided “between the controllers and the controlled, the superior and the inferior, the confident and the self-hating, the blessed and the damned, the clever and the stupid, and the privileged and the desperate.” (Sommers and McClintock, 2003) The historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien also speaks of these same social cleavages, which pre-date the so-called ethnic ones: the

³²⁶ An example occurred in Bunzazi, when a Vice-mayor asked an elderly peasant farmer to stand up: “[t]his man has cows. He washes his cows, but not himself, he stays dirty.” The man explained that he had come to *gacaca* directly from his fields and had not had the opportunity to change, but he was still laughed at by the assembly, including by my research assistant (Bunzazi, Gacaca, 12 October 2005).

³²⁷ On *ingando* camps and indoctrination see Mgabko (2005); on the imposition of the RPF ideology more generally see the International Crisis Group (2001a) and Reyntjens (2004).

imfura, he explains, are the people of value, and the *rubanda*, the simple people (all “ranks” together – see Chrétien, 2003, p. 83).

The Obedient “Low People”

I have argued that ethnicity is not the only, nor always the most salient axis of identity in Sovu and Bunzazi. Based on evidence gathered during fieldwork, I show that, alongside ethnicity, my respondents also refer to a common identity of being “low people” – as opposed to “high people” who are broadly defined as being educated, having power and (by extension) wealth. What is more, low people are subjected to high people’s power or, as in 1994, their competition for power.³²⁸ As one respondent (quoted in Chapter 5) succinctly put it: “[t]he origins of the genocide lie with all those that were fighting for power, I mean the political parties and the [Tutsi] refugees that were fighting to return to the country.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 36, prisoner) The elites in Kigali therefore have more in common with each other, than they do with their Hutu or Tutsi kin, “on the hills”.

This distance between high and low people, and the impression that low people’s destiny is largely in the hands of the high people, is reinforced by the coercive language used by government representatives (described above). This mode of communication also works against the rationale behind the RPF decentralisation programme (cf. Chapter 1) and their related project of improving Rwandan culture and combating submissiveness to figures of authority (cf. Chapter 3). This represents a central contradiction between RPF discourse on the one hand, and practice on the other, which we will return to in Chapter 8.

In terms of the particularly sensitive topic of reconciliation, one obvious reason why authorities would choose to impose a certain message – and matching acceptable behaviour – is their assumption (conscious or not) that the “low people” are predisposed to receiving and accepting messages in this fashion. In other words, if the Rwandan masses were taught to kill by the preceding regime, they can now be taught to reconcile. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the *ingando* camps in Save, the NURC Commissioner mentioned above

³²⁸ This idea is not particular to Maraba or Rwanda, as the popular (originally) Swahili proverb “when elephants fight, the grass gets trampled” (also used by some respondents) attests to. “Big men” are sometimes considered characteristic of African politics (Russell, 2000).

expressed this as follows: “[t]he genocide, even if you participated in it, it is not hereditary. Your sperm does not have a ‘genocide microbe’ in it. Genocide is something you were taught. Since they taught you to do evil, now we will teach you to do good.” (Save, 29 August 2005)

This assumption that the Rwandans masses are malleable or passive receptacles of government messages is reflected in, and reinforced by a wide range of writing on Rwanda. Nowhere is this more visible than on the subject of popular participation in the genocide. Indeed, the way the 1994 genocide was carried out, by elite military units such as the Presidential Guard and militia such as the *interahamwe*, but also by ordinary civilians, perhaps tens of thousands of them, begs the questions “why” and “how”. What is more, evidence to date points to the fact that many victims would have been known to their killers – as neighbours, friends or relatives. Lastly, the means used to carry out the massacres, apparently with the frequent use of crude agricultural instruments such as the machete, made the killings “an intimate affair” (Mamdani, 2001, p. 6). The image of submissive, obedient (if not zealous) Rwandans offers an easily graspable, even seductive answer to these “why” and “how” questions, which is perhaps why it is continuously referred to in descriptions and explanations of the genocide.

Murderous Masses: Images in Media Reporting

A Lexis Nexis search of “major” news stories (English and French language) using “Rwanda” and “obedience” as search terms turned up 307 (242 English and 65 French) results, sourced from both leading newspapers and international wire services.³²⁹ “Rwandan society demands obedience to power” writes a reporter in the UK’s *The Observer* (Hilsum, 2004). Rwanda is “a country with a long culture of unquestioning obedience to authority” where it is “all too easy simply to learn to repeat [in] parrot fashion”, writes another in *The Independent* (Braid, 2000). Rwandans are combating an “ethic of blind obedience,” is a quote from a *Christian Science Monitor* article (McLaughlin, 2004). Agence France Press

³²⁹ “Obédience” and “obéissance” were the search terms used in French. I restricted the search, conducted on Lexis Nexis Executive on 15 October 2006, to “major stories”. When not restricted to major stories, over 1,000 results are retrieved, automatically stopping the search. I am thus not able to specify what proportion of total stories on Rwanda these 307 represent.

(AFP) quotes a Rwandan teacher who explains that “if an authority gives orders, the population will execute these, because of ignorance.” (Fontemaggi, 2004, my translation)

Often, to lend the claim of the tradition of obedience more weight, “experts” are cited. One piece quotes a Rwandan social and cultural anthropologist who has served as an expert witness at the ICTR: “[d]uring his testimony, Mbonyinkebe [the anthropologist] said that the culture of obedience to the authority in Rwanda was deep rooted and contributed largely to the massacres of 1994.” (Hirondelle, 2005a) An unnamed UN Development Programme report is quoted in an AFP piece: “[p]articipation and democratisation are essential for overcoming the hierarchical structures and culture of obedience so prevalent in and detrimental to Rwanda's past” (Parayre, 2003). What is more, this obedience is depicted as persisting to this day: “Rwanda has an entrenched culture of obedience, and the populace has been quick to pick up on the [post-1994] government's no-ethnicity policy, at least in conversations with an outsider.” (Lacey, 2004) “When peasants and professionals alike were told to kill, they killed. When they're now told to confess so Rwanda's jails can be thinned out, they confess.” (Nelson, 2004)

Out of this sample, four articles make reference to obedience as being a universal human trait under certain circumstances.³³⁰ There are comparisons with Germany (Hansen, 2002), Cambodia (Regg Cohn, 2003), and the massacre by American soldiers in My Lai – described as a “crime of obedience” (Brittain, 2001). But still, the idea that there is something specific to Rwandan culture comes back: “[in] Rwandan culture [...] which tends to be very authoritarian and male dominated, there certainly were responses to male

³³⁰ Psychologist Stanley Milgram’s famous experiment is the most frequently cited evidence for a universal human propensity to obey figures of authority. In his experiments, Milgram asked volunteers to take on the role of “teacher” and administer increasing levels of electric shocks to other volunteers, the “learners”, each time the latter answered incorrectly in response to a memory test. (The “learner” group of volunteers were complicit in the experiment.) Milgram later applied his conclusions to explain the Nazi extermination project: “[i]t has been reliably established that from 1933-1945 millions of innocent persons were systematically slaughtered on command. Gas chambers were built, death camps were guarded, daily quotas of corpses were produced with the same efficiency as the manufacture of appliances. These inhumane policies may have originated in the mind of a single person, *but they could only have been carried out on a massive scale if a very large number of people obeyed orders.*” (Milgram, writing in 1963 and quoted in Blass, 2002, p. 91, emphasis added)

figures in families that were much stronger than there would have been in some other cases of genocide.” (Hansen, 2002)³³¹

The Question of Agency in Scholarship on the Rwandan Genocide

A sizeable number of scholars working on the 1994 genocide stress the highly organised, State-driven nature of the killings (Prunier, 1995; DesForges, 1999; Hintjens, 1999). This line of argument assumes a high degree of social control, acquired thanks to an organised State bureaucracy but also, crucially, a Rwandan tradition of deference to authority. For example, as previously quoted, Prunier has written that “[w]hen the highest authorities in that state told you to do something, you did it, even if it included killing.” (Prunier, 1995, p. 245) Others who stress Malthusian pressures and socio-economic exclusion (“structural violence”) to explain mobilisation (Willame, 1995; Uvin, 1998) also at times factor in a culture of obedience. “One always obeys the boss in this country.” (Willame, 1995, p. 108, my translation) Some authors who look at the role of hate media, with whom extremist elements in the Habyarimana regime collaborated closely, see deference to authority as key to the implementation of the genocide as well: “[i]n a society where the idea of hierarchy has been present for centuries, the responsibility of leadership circles is huge.” (Chrétien, Dupaquier et al., 1995, p. 381) According to all of these different schools of thought – which together represent the vast bulk of literature on the Rwandan genocide – there was no “ethnic conflict” in Rwanda per se.³³² Instead, ethnicity was “instrumentalised”. The triggers of the genocide were essentially political and/or economic and responsibility lies first and foremost with the criminal political and military elite who manipulated or duped the Rwandan popular masses.³³³

This recognition or concentration of agency only at top or elite levels is more subtly seen in phrasing. A careful reading of Chrétien et al.’s book on Rwandan extremist media,

³³¹ This resembles Goldhagen’s thesis in his *Hiter’s Willing Executioners*. Describing Germany’s particular brand of “virulent racist eliminationist antisemitism”, he argues that “[n]o other country’s antisemitism was at once so widespread as to have been a cultural axiom, was so firmly wedded to racism, had at its foundation such a pernicious image of Jews that deemed them to be a mortal threat to the *Volk*, and was so deadly in content, producing, even in the nineteenth century, such frequent and explicit calls for the extermination of the Jews...” (Goldhagen, 1997, p. 419)

³³² This refers to the essentialist definition of ethnicity.

³³³ Strauss confirms this, defining the “the new status quo [in scholarship] on the genocide” as such: “a state-organized, planned extermination campaign that served elite interests and drew on constructed ethnic categories” (Strauss, 2004b, p. 86).

for example, reveals the extent of such phrasing: “the skilfulness with which racist propaganda brought masses of people to internalise the slogans of hate” (p. 380); “the regime and its ‘transmission mechanisms’ [“courroies de transmissions”] strove to mobilize the Hutu against a common enemy” (p. 70); “[genocidal] propaganda therefore recovered Christian culture in order to have its hateful project better penetrate” (p. 325); “the genocide associates extermination and humiliation” (p. 376).³³⁴ Here, the subjects (underlined) are the regime, propaganda, and the genocide – not perpetrators themselves, as a group or as individuals.

The recourse to the image of the unquestioningly obedient Rwandan is also found in some NGO reports. “From the beginning, obedience and violence characterized the political culture of the independent Rwandese state.” (Amnesty International, 2002a, p. 4) There is a “deeply-ingrained habit in Rwanda of obeying official orders.” (African Rights, 1995b, p. 249) We must destroy the “culture of blind obedience to authority.” (Prendergast and Smock, 1999, p. 13)

Finally, Rwandans themselves make use of the image. In one news piece, a Rwandan journalist quotes a lecturer at Rwanda’s National University (Butare): “[t]he problem with Rwandans is that they are too obedient to authority [...] They will do whatever the rulers tell them, and they will ask no questions. There is no culture of debate here.” (Kanuma, 2005) As we saw in previous chapters, my own Rwandan respondents – grassroots (Chapter 5), government elite (Chapter 3) and non-government elite (Chapter 4) refer to this alleged tradition of obedience as well, either to explain other’s actions or to mitigate their own.

Three Problems with the Theory of Rwandan Obedience

The hypothesis that Rwandans, or more specifically, the Rwandan (uneducated and/or rural) masses (the “low people”), or more specifically still, the Rwandan Hutu masses, are particularly predisposed to obeying orders from figures of authority may or may not be

³³⁴ All quotes are my translations; emphasis added.

valid.³³⁵ It would require an altogether different research project to test that proposition. However, I argue here that the assumption of an alleged tradition of obedience must be rendered explicit, and used much more carefully and much more sparingly, for three reasons.

First, rarely are assertions of Rwandan obedience (during the genocide in this case) based on empirical, “micro-level” research. As a number of authors have argued, discussions of individual motives for participation in the genocide – duress, fear, opportunism, racism – are usually referenced superficially if at all (Kimonyo, 2000; Fujii, 2004; Mironko, 2004a; Straus, 2004a; McDoom, 2005). Based on still-emerging empirical evidence however, individual motivations appear to have played a role in explaining patterns of mobilisation. These include fear of retribution from (local) authorities (Straus, 2004a, see his chapter 8), fear of the RPF and of the Tutsi (Fujii, 2004), greed (Prunier, 1995, p. 250; André and Platteau, 1998; DesForges, 1999, p. 261) and personal enmities (Uvin, 1998, p. 216-7). In the first two cases of fear, perpetrators were apparently motivated by self-preservation, in the latter two cases of greed and personal enmities, by self-interest. None of these corroborate a “culture of obedience”. Moreover, individual motives appear to vary across perpetrators and across time (Davenport and Stam, on-going) – they are not static, as the culture of obedience assumption would suggest.

Second, this assumption overlooks documented instances of Rwandans disobeying direct orders from authorities. Kimonyo qualifies the uprooting of 300,000 coffee trees in the late 1980s, for example, as “one of the most important acts of popular dissidence” for that period (Kimonyo, 2000, p. 50).³³⁶ During the same timeframe (late 1980s), he also mentions the illegal migration flows towards cities, increasing numbers of charismatic (religious) movements (such as the Pentecostal church for example), the rise of criminality

³³⁵ Hutu are occasionally singled out from Tutsi: “[t]he indoctrinated Hutu masses, manipulated by a political system that required unquestioning obedience to authority, responded by taking up machetes, knives and clubs.” (Swain, 2004) The Tutsi were seen by Colonialists as “monopolising political, economic and military power”, the Hutu, as “destined to blindly obey” (Fritscher, 1994, my translation).

³³⁶ Coffee was a major export earner: it accounted for between 60% and 80% of state revenue according to some figures. Uprooting coffee trees was forbidden under Rwandan law (Verwimp, 2003b, p. 162).

(p. 50), and non-compliance with *umuganda* (p. 70) as further examples of disobedience.³³⁷ In the post-1994 period, examples of “subtle resistance” to orders from the authorities, such as tardiness or absenteeism at *gacaca*, also abound.³³⁸ Penal Reform International, due to its researchers’ near continuous presence at several sites throughout the pilot phase of *gacaca* (and thereafter) is able to quite conclusively state that “absenteeism very quickly became an increasingly noticeable phenomenon [during the pilot phase], to the point that, after some months, it became a heavy burden on the process.” (PRI, 2005, p. 39)³³⁹ Non-compliance to the duty of participating in *gacaca* is particularly visible in cases where the *gacaca* judges themselves fail to turn up: PRI describes the economic, but also social and psychological costs of their job, which has led to the postponement of some sessions as the quorum of judges was not reached (PRI, 2005, p. 42). During my three months of fieldwork in Maraba, *gacaca* sessions started at 11 a.m. on average (they were supposed to start at 9 a.m.) and there was at least one instance of less than 30 people turning up for the monthly *umuganda* in Sovu – on 27 August 2005 (Sovu, Gacaca-day, 31 August 2005).³⁴⁰

Third, “conforming” to authorities’ desired reconciliation behaviour does not necessarily translate into ideological commitment to, or sincere belief in the State’s project – in this case, its reconciliation project. Evidence collected during fieldwork illustrates this point. The interviews I conducted in Sovu and Bunzazi show that even though respondents

³³⁷ To back-up his claims of Rwandan insubordination, Kimonyo references numerous respected “old” Rwanda scholars (who have been studying Rwanda for years before the genocide) including André Guichaoua, Danielle De Lame, and Catherine Newbury.

³³⁸ This “subtle resistance” recalls Scott’s argument about “everyday forms of peasant resistance” (the subtitle to his book, *Weapons of the Weak*), where he discusses “the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on” (p. 29) and uncovers “routine compliance and resistance that covers its tracks” (p. 278 – from Scott, 1985).

³³⁹ Absenteeism can be due to several reasons, including fear of reprisals for testimonies, unwillingness to testify, and economic constraints. On the latter point, according to PRI, absenteeism is more pronounced during the parts of the year when farmers need to till their fields. Though farmers in Rwanda clear and maintain their fields nearly year-round, the rainy seasons are the crucial, more labour-intensive periods during which crops are sown and harvested. There are two rainy seasons in Rwanda; the first extends roughly from February to June (the long rains), the second, from September to December (the short rains). My fieldwork took place during this second rainy season. Both rainy seasons in 2005 started late and rainfall was below average, resulting in significant food shortages (FEWS NET/World Food Programme, 2006).

³⁴⁰ The monthly reports I consulted (sent by District authorities to the Province and kept in the District archive) do not mention size of participation for *umuganda* on average, or specifically in Sovu and Bunzazi. However, from personal communications with local residents, it is clear that a more acceptable turnout would usually be in the low hundreds.

are expertly able to pay lip-service to official discourse on Rwanda history and the causes of the genocide for example, they rarely accept the entirety of this discourse as valid (cf. Chapter 5). Indeed, some authors who stress obedience also point to the fact that conformism does not entail conviction (see for example, Lacey's 9 April 2004 piece in *The New York Times*, quoted above). But that does not seem to result in a more careful use of the concepts: "blind" obedience remains equated with "unthinking" conformism despite the fact that conformism can and has been the result of a very thoughtful process of calculation and self-interest.

This conflation of obedience and conviction becomes a problem if actors – government authorities, foreign donors, human rights monitoring groups – use data such as the number of confessions and attendance at *gacaca* as proxies for "success". The SNJG, for example, cites such numbers in its reports to its donors. In one report, it estimates popular participation in *gacaca* at 85%; how it arrived at this estimate is not clear (SNJG, undated (a)). In another report, it tracks the numbers of confessions registered by *gacaca* courts (SNJG, undated (b)). As we saw in Chapter 3, the provincial authorities in Butare, and later the District Mayor's office used the pace at which *gacaca* was progressing as an indicator of "good" reconciliation (in the case of Bunzazi) and "bad" reconciliation (in the case of Sovu). However, such indicators tell us nothing about the state of the reconciliation process. In other words, reconciliation – be it thick or thin, understood as justice, or as a unitary narrative about the past, or as forgiveness – cannot be imposed. Nor can it be measured using indicators that conflate mandatory behaviour with something done out of free will.

Conclusion

The extent to which authorities are implicated in every aspect of the reconciliation process, already foreshadowed in the material presented in previous chapters, is laid bare in this chapter. Central and local authorities' use of coercive language and methods to impose the RPF reconciliation policy (and vision of Rwanda history) discouraged any dialogue on the areas where there was divergence (or agreement) between the RPF and grassroots conceptions of reconciliation. Such areas are outlined in Chapter 5 and in the present

chapter, in the discussion of forgiveness and mourning, where government intervention had generated a significant amount of resentment among all segments of the population I interviewed. This imposition of a certain reconciliation model was in direct contradiction to the RPF's own societal project (discussed in Chapter 3) to "improve" Rwandans by promoting independent thinking.

The choice to impose a model as well as a set of correlated reconciliation behaviours is reinforced by, and reinforces, the image of the Rwandan as obedient, submissive and malleable. This image is referred to – implicitly or explicitly – in a range of discourses (academic, international media, Rwandan government, grassroots respondents, etc.) yet it is problematic for a number of reasons. With respect to attempts to "impose" reconciliation, the premise of the obedient Rwandan can at times be counterproductive – as the discussion on imposed and institutionalised forgiveness and mourning (and the frustrations this imposition has resulted in) has shown. It certainly represents a major disjuncture between RPF discourse on reconciliation, and its practice.

This reliance on an alleged tradition of Rwandan obedience to implement the RPF reconciliation model is perhaps the result of a conflation of conformism and obedience on the one hand, with conviction and commitment on the other. This conflation may also lead to false conclusions on the state of the reconciliation process, as respondents have shown an ability to comply with authorities' orders all the while "rebellious" covertly or overtly. Finally, this coercive State role serves to highlight the fundamental continuities in the pre-1994 and post-1994 periods in terms of the vertical nature of State-society relations. It also reinforces persistent perceptions of class distinctions, or as my respondents put it, the differences between "high people" and "low people" – something which is often overlooked in the literature on the post-genocide period, but whose salience is particularly clear in the two communities I studied.

* * *

Part III laid bare three explanatory factors for the patterns of reconciliation and non-reconciliation among respondents in Sovu and Bunzazi: (i) the degree to which individuals had been able to rebuild their lives since 1994 to resemble something like “it was before”, (ii) the extent to which respondents interacted with others, be it neighbours, acquaintances or colleagues with different experiences during the 1994 genocide than their own, and (iii) the lack of space within the “institutionalised” nature of the reconciliation process. As I have argued from the outset, these findings were only visible “up close”, with the use of detailed ethnographic data. The findings have Rwanda-wide ramifications, as well as several implications for the reconciliation literature I review in Chapter 2. These will be discussed in the following, concluding chapter.

Part IV: Is Reconciliation Succeeding? Is Coexistence?

This thesis began with a concern that the enormity of 1994 was overshadowing the post-genocide period in Rwanda – in academia, as well as in media reporting to a broader (Western) public, easily influenced by tales of African barbarism and anarchy. This concern was compounded by a widespread captivation with war and violence, and a corresponding disinterest in situations that are characterised by a lack of violence – often misleadingly dubbed “peaceful”. Yet, the reconciliation strategy led by the RPF government since 1994 has been shown to be an ambitious, complex and evolving one. It is therefore worthy of study in its own right, if only for the assumptions it allows us to challenge in the reconciliation literature, and the lessons the Rwandan experience may hold for other post-conflict contexts.

When sustained attention does, on occasion, turn to the post-1994 period, the RPF vision of reconciliation is also, however, the “public transcript” or “dominant discourse”. Because a heavily revised version of history is an integral part of the RPF reconciliation strategy, it is important to recognise that this vision (of Rwandan society, history, and reconciliation itself) is not something that should be taken at face value. Rather, the discourse of reconciliation has become a political tool for the RPF. For example and as we have seen, reconciliation, a popular or “positive” project, can be used to rally support, at least on the surface, for difficult compromises; similarly to “peace”, it is difficult to be against “reconciliation”. In the case of Rwanda, reconciliation was further being used to legitimate the new post-conflict ruling elite, as well as marginalise and, with the 2001 divisionism law, criminalise those who would criticise (or even just disagree) with them.

Based on a summary and discussion of the findings of the thesis, provided in Chapter 8, the broader remit of Part IV is to address questions such as: Is reconciliation succeeding in the Rwandan context? Is coexistence (the word I now favour using)? What can we learn from Rwanda’s experience that can refine our understanding – and practice – of such processes more generally? What do these findings tell us about Rwandan society and politics?

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Introduction

In late 2003, just after having won the Presidential election with 95% of the vote, Paul Kagame spoke confidently about the prospects for reconciliation in Rwanda: “[i]t is like a process, a healing process. [...] I see it working, it is really becoming different in the country...” (Waugh, 2004, p. 224) Speaking on a BBC call-in show around the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the genocide, Kagame described Rwanda’s achievements: “a lot has happened in the 10 years; progress has been made in rebuilding the country; reconciliation has worked” (Doucet, 2004). In a 2006 interview with Germany’s *Der Spiegel* magazine, Kagame again asserted that “[r]econciliation is taking place here” (Thielke and Hoyng, 2006). This thesis has been concerned with unpacking these kinds of statements – what does “reconciliation is working” or “reconciliation is taking place” – actually mean? What are assessments of progress made based on? These questions have not been seriously addressed – either by the RPF government, or by the growing number of Rwanda scholars and post-conflict reconciliation experts.

This thesis therefore began by examining how a circle of RPF insiders around President Kagame understood reconciliation. It then compared this RPF “public transcript” to the discourses of other “elite” constituencies, i.e. Rwandan non-government opinion leaders and the Top Five donors to Rwanda, as well as “grassroots” constituencies in two rural communities in the south of the country. The latter were disaggregated further to consider individual and “life history” data (demographic, social, economic), as well as community data (presence and aims of local associations, frequency and content of community meetings), and data gleaned from interactions between government authorities and local communities (during *gacaca* and other meetings) in order to get at which factors appeared to impact on “reconciliation” at the local level. In a first section of this concluding chapter, I summarise the findings of the thesis and draw out the interconnections between them. In a second section, I discuss the broader implications of the findings, including on post-conflict reconciliation literature, and on prevailing notions of Rwandan politics and society.

8.1 The Findings

The rise in the use, over the past 15 years, of the word “reconciliation” in post-conflict settings has not led to a corresponding rise in the theorization of the concept, or even in more than a handful of attempts at clear definitions of what the word means.³⁴¹ Accordingly, this thesis adopts as its basis a conception of reconciliation as shorthand for different and often competing definitions, corresponding to diverse agendas, perceptions and discourses which can be usefully thought of as falling within one (or more) of three reconciliation paradigms: reconciliation as justice, as re-interpreting the past, and as forgiveness. These reconciliation discourses can evolve over time: my data allowed me to trace the evolution of the official government discourse for example, from 1994 to 2005. These discourses can also, as I will argue in the second half of this chapter, serve larger political functions, rather than as accurate gauges of social realities on the ground: in as much as reconciliation narratives encapsulate re-readings of the past and visions of the future, they can help legitimate the new ruling elite and contribute to building a “new” nation for example, and as Wilson (2001) argues in the case of South Africa.

A first general observation the thesis allows us to make is that the RPF government plays the lead role in setting the parameters of the “formal” reconciliation process in Rwanda: the role of national civil society groups or international NGOs has been severely limited and the main donors to the country, the only remaining source of potential “counter-power” domestically (Uvin, 2003a, p. 4), have largely chosen to support the government line. In this respect, reconciliation in Rwanda is a profoundly elite-driven, as opposed to grassroots-driven, as well as national, as opposed to international or “hybrid”, project.³⁴² Indeed, not only is the RPF reconciliation discourse the “dominant narrative” or “public transcript”, as I have argued, but it is its corresponding strategy that is being institutionalised through various organs of the State. This is seen in the promulgation of the genocide and *gacaca* laws and their plea bargaining provisions, the provisional (pre-trial)

³⁴¹ Neither has it led to an examination of its most problematic assumptions – something to which the second half of this chapter is devoted.

³⁴² Kimonyo et al. agree: “the RPF-dominated government [...] unlike many other post-conflict governments, has played the leading role in the course of events [since 1994].” (Kimonyo et al., 2004, p. 98) The implications of this elite-led and unchallenged reconciliation process will be discussed in the second half of this chapter, on the discussion of agency and the democracy assumption.

release programmes, and the *ingando* or civic re-education camps – to name but three examples.

What does Reconciliation mean to Different Constituencies in the Rwandan Context?

The thesis finds that the RPF government reconciliation strategy is premised on two, interconnected “reconciliation pillars”. The first pillar is “backward looking”, concerning itself with the establishment of degrees of responsibility (and of punishment) for the genocide. Ultimately in store for the bulk of *génocidaires*, by which I mean those accused of Category 2 and 3 crimes, is “forgiveness”, i.e. the commuting, by government, of prison sentences through plea bargaining provisions. At the time of fieldwork, according to RPF government forecasts, it appeared that these individuals could have reasonably expected to be back in their communities perhaps as early as 2008.³⁴³ In terms of the reconciliation paradigms I identified in Chapter 2, I show that the RPF moved from a conception of reconciliation that fit within the retributive justice paradigm, to an explicit incorporation of forgiveness as a cornerstone of its reconciliation strategy. The RPF’s second reconciliation pillar is “forward looking” in that it amounts to an endeavour to rebuild a unified Rwandan nation and “improve” Rwandan citizens and Rwandan culture with a view to a better, peaceful future. Both pillars rest on the premise that Rwandans must be inculcated with a “correct” reading of history, i.e. one that emphasises, among other things, their organic (racial and ethnic) unity.³⁴⁴ This is an archetypical case of the second reconciliation paradigm, essentially a meaning-making exercise where reconciliation is achieved when different parties to the conflict agree on one version of events.

Rwandan non-government elites tended to support elements of both RPF reconciliation pillars. They endorsed, for example, the need to “improve” Rwandans, by which they usually meant the uneducated, peasant masses. However, this constituency did

³⁴³ At the time of fieldwork, *gacaca* had been set to wrap up in mid-2007; many convicted by the courts had been expected to be sent to community service (TIG) camps to serve out half, or even the entirety of their sentence. See Chapter 1.

³⁴⁴ As previously mentioned, there was increasing evidence, at the time of fieldwork, of a recognition among the RPF that Rwandans could have multiple identities (including so-called ethnic ones) as long as their Rwandan identity remained primary. I identified three further recurring themes of this RPF version of history: the responsibility of the previous regime for the genocide, large popular participation (through the manipulation of “the masses”) and the need for a Rwandan (and African) emancipation from the West/the International Community.

not buy into the RPF official version of history – as I detail below. Furthermore, the non-government elites agreed that there were clear degrees of responsibility for the genocide, and therefore different punishments were required. However, they resisted the notion of forgiveness promoted by the RPF, remaining firmly within the justice paradigm of reconciliation. Indeed, the non-government elites saw the RPF reconciliation strategy as riddled with major oversights, heavily emphasising the importance of reparations for victims and providing opportunities for economic development for all particularly in the country side (as opposed to privileging only one “type” of Rwandan). In the process, the elites evoked some important elements of a restorative approach to justice, failing which they saw seeds for potential future violence. Indeed, several non-government elites (four in all) thought that another genocide was possible in the future. Interestingly, they did not necessarily object to the plea bargaining process itself, or to the provisional release programme, or the community works scheme (in lieu of prison sentences, the TIG) – all of which are cornerstones of the RPF’s forgiveness (first pillar) strategy. Rather, it was the way these programmes were implemented by the government that undermined their support and consolidated their aversion to the “stage managed” or “institutionalised” nature of the reconciliation process.³⁴⁵

Donors, no doubt appropriately, tended to limit their official comments on the RPF approach to reconciliation³⁴⁶, preferring instead to focus on “traditional” donor priorities in Rwanda. Accordingly, all Top Five donors spent the bulk of their funds on poverty reduction and rural economic development projects.³⁴⁷ Consistent with a broader notion within development circles that poverty and inequality are among the causes of insecurity, rebellion and war, they were able to repackage these poverty and rural development projects as “good for reconciliation” as well as “good for the poor”, but failed to demonstrate how. Donors’ second programmatic (and spending) priority fell into more

³⁴⁵ To use the example of the community works programme, the first TIGistes were put to work in one central location, and not in their respective communities as had been originally intended. This undermined both the symbolic (being seen to work) and practical (contributing to the development of the community you helped to destroy) underpinnings of the programme, to which the non-government elite had attached much importance.

³⁴⁶ When they did, it was to endorse the government’s commitment to reconciliation very generally. Moreover, all five top donors have at one time or another lauded the RPF’s unity strategy (part of the second pillar).

³⁴⁷ Except the UK, which disburses most of its aid directly into the government central budget.

“interventionist” policy categories – part of the “new post-conflict agenda” that recognises that development is neither purely technical nor a-political. These more interventionist policies typically included projects to promote “good governance”, which recall Borer’s NUR model (see Figure 1: The Thick-to-Thin Reconciliation Continuum, p. 59). However, for a variety of reasons touched upon in Chapter 4, the Top Five defined this more interventionist side of their mandates as a narrow, service-delivery matter. Quantifiable product, i.e. how many judges were trained, was privileged over process, i.e. how is justice perceived; the RPF government similarly privileged product over process, as we will see below.

Grassroots respondents also agreed with elements of both RPF reconciliation pillars. On the first pillar, degrees of responsibility were recognised and indeed, further refined in terms of “class”. Grassroots respondents saw the genocide as an “intellectuals’ affair”. The “bas peuple”, the uneducated peasant masses, had been “mere executioners”, manipulated by the “hauts responsables”; they were therefore less accountable for the massacres they had carried out. Accordingly, who the “big génocidaires” were, i.e. the ones who should be accused of Category 1 (worst) genocide crimes, was defined based on a socio-economic hierarchy with the rich, educated and powerful elite affiliated with the previous government at the very top.³⁴⁸ However, and perhaps even more vehemently than the non-government elites, grassroots respondents rejected the language of forgiveness outright, even for “mere executioners”, arguing that it was the deterrence function of punishment which mattered most. Tellingly, when the word forgiveness became especially prominent in the wake of the August 2005 wave of provisional releases, it was not conceived by grassroots respondents as implying the foregoing of punishment. This places grassroots discourses on reconciliation squarely within the (retributive) justice paradigm, or to use Crocker’s terminology, at the thin end of the thick-to-thin reconciliation continuum.

On the second RPF reconciliation pillar, and unlike the RPF and non-government elite respondents, the grassroots constituency did not see reconciliation as a

³⁴⁸ This allocation of responsibility was of course also very convenient for many of my grassroots respondents – the prisoners and released prisoners, their families and friends – because it reduced their own responsibility as executioners or bystanders.

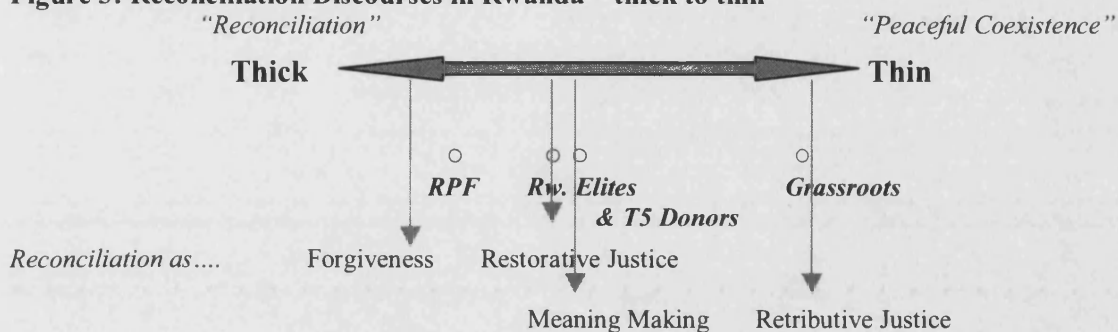
“transformative” exercise, but rather as a return to the way things were before. This yearning for a “rosy past” contradicted of course what respondents themselves knew, and had reported to me, about life in the pre-1994 period. But, this internal contradiction may be explained in light of the above, i.e. the genocide being an intellectual’s affair. Indeed, respondents in Sovu and Bunzazi considered the root of past (and future) violence as lying with the elites; they were the ones who had to reconcile with each other, the feeling was, and stop exporting their conflicts to otherwise “harmonious” local communities. This post-facto explanation of the genocide and civil war (as well as previous cycles of violence in the country) had obvious flaws, but pining for a return to a “rosy past” is nonetheless the most common definition of reconciliation I found among the grassroots constituency. In this way, even though it was a “hidden transcript”, and even though they were unaware of this evolving consensus, grassroots respondents had found important elements of a mutually tolerable narrative for the past.

Among this constituency, once again, it was the government’s style, or implementation strategy, rather than the substance of its policies that caused most frustration and anger. This was most clearly visible in discussions with my grassroots respondents on how the second wave of mass provisional releases was handled – namely with little to no popular consultations or transparency. Moreover, grassroots (and non-government elite) respondents felt that the RPF, and even the President specifically, was usurping victims’ rights to bestow forgiveness and had poorly designed the release programme, as well as the plea bargaining provisions of the genocide and successive *gacaca* laws. These offered strong incentives for vacuous or fake confessions and insincere apologies. The resulting “institutionalised forgiveness” had further, counter-productive effects when released prisoners, as per a government directive received in *ingando*, did not approach victims after their return into the communities. As more and more weeks passed, many of the survivors I spoke to in Sovu and Bunzazi came to interpret the released prisoners’ evasive behaviour as further proof of a lack of remorse or even as an insult,

apparently upsetting some of them deeply. This was of course precisely what the original government directive had sought to avoid.³⁴⁹

For ease of reference, Figure 3, recapping the different constituencies' positions, is reproduced here.

Figure 3: Reconciliation Discourses in Rwanda – thick to thin



Which Factors Promote, and which Impede Coexistence in Sovu and Bunzazi?

To get closer to the root of different perceptions of coexistence, I ranked my grassroots respondents individually according to a “coexistence score” I constructed. Using questions that avoided the word reconciliation (as we have seen, narrowly associated with the RPF government), I asked individuals to reflect on the degree of security they felt for the future (questions 1 and 2), social relations (question 3) and social contact across ethnic groups (question 4), and perceptions of justice (questions 5 and 6 – see

³⁴⁹ The same counter-productive effect was noticed in the way the mourning periods were conducted; survivors reported great distress at the unearthing of remains in particular.

Table 23: Questions that comprise the “Coexistence Score”, p. 184). Out of 37 respondents, thirteen respondents – four prisoners, five genocide survivors and four “ordinary” Rwandans (three Hutu and one of mixed origin); eight women and five men, six from Bunzazi and seven from Sovu – scored “badly”, i.e. received a score of 50 and up out of a total possible score of 100.

At the micro (individual) level, the thesis showed that what these “worst scorers” had in common, and what distinguished them from the “good scorers”, was a loss of hope. More specifically, all worst scorers shared a (well-founded) conviction that they were not in charge of their own destinies and were powerless to improve their own, and their families’ personal circumstances. The four “badly scoring” prisoners continued to be detained, in their estimation, as a result of vindictive and/or powerful personalities. The survivors, all women (four widows and one orphan), were extremely poor even by local standards³⁵⁰ and had been unable to climb out of the almost literal poverty trap into which the genocide had propelled them. Two of the four “ordinary” Rwandans felt themselves the target of vindictive and powerful “enemies” and the last two were particularly poor, women-headed households. Conversely, the “best” scorers had managed, to various degrees, to rebuild successful lives since 1994: their households were on the whole better off and almost half occupied positions in local representative or mediation bodies (sources of empowerment and pride). In this way, the “good” scorers appeared to have been able to rebuild their lives to resemble something of “the way things were before” – or had the hope that this was within their grasp.

At the meso- (community) level, “good scorers” typically, and always in an unprompted manner³⁵¹, showed an ability to empathise with people who had had different life experiences from them, particularly during the genocide. Such empathy was totally absent from the “worst scorers” responses. This corresponded with very limited breath, depth and type of social interactions for “poor scorers”. Indeed, omitting routine (and mandatory) contact through weekly (prison, or hill) *gacaca* sessions, ad hoc meetings

³⁵⁰ Maraba was among the poorest district in Rwanda at the time of fieldwork.

³⁵¹ My interview guide contained no questions on empathy, see Appendix 7.

called by district and other authorities, *umuganda*, etc., social contact was limited either due to imprisonment or social relations being focused on involvement in genocide survivor organisations, which by definition would usually be heavily mono-ethnic.³⁵² The “worst scoring” genocide survivors also reported feeling socially isolated: one example they cited as proof of this social isolation was that help from neighbours was not forthcoming – again, as would have allegedly spontaneously been the case “before”.³⁵³ In the case of the survivors from Sovu specifically, social isolation was compounded by geographic isolation for those who lived in the *umudugudu*, which was removed from the rest of the habitats of the sector. By contrast, when “good scorers” gave me accounts of their typical daily and weekly schedules, contact with different “types” of people featured much more prominently. This came as a result of a variety of factors: as they carried out their tasks as local representatives, or participated in mixed (farmers’, artisans’, coffee, micro-credit) associations, or through their occupations (selling their wares at the local markets) or at times, due to personality traits (some were obviously very outgoing). Interestingly, it did not appear that it was the opportunities for income-generation these collaborative projects provided that led to the capacity to empathise, and to the low (good) coexistence scores. Rather, it was the opportunity these projects afforded to members to break down monolithic perceptions of “the Others” that did. Theorising this within the second reconciliation paradigm, we see the progressive emergence of an increasingly unitary version of events among the good scorers.

Lastly, the way the official reconciliation discourse was translated into local settings (i.e. Sovu and Bunzazi) was examined. Respondents reported, and I witnessed, that

³⁵² The social contact “good scorers” had through their membership in (mixed, farmers or artisans or coffee growers’) associations was also difficult for the single women I spoke to from Sovu and Bunzazi to access – be they single through widowhood or because their husbands were in jail. Indeed, the joining or start-up fee required was often beyond their means, as was the commitment to make (frequently weekly) contributions in labour. This point will be taken up again in the concluding section of this chapter.

³⁵³ The opinion that the degree to which neighbours were willing to help spontaneously and with no guarantee of compensation had fallen dramatically in the post-1994 period, was shared by all respondents, good and bad scorers. This may be another case of the “rosy past” syndrome; we know from other, historical accounts that *umuganda*, during which dilapidated houses could be mended for example, was revived and institutionalised under President Habyarimana. The social bonds that spontaneous help would have been a testament of were not replaced in my grassroots respondents’ views by the collaborative work undertaken in the context of for-profit endeavours such as farming cooperatives.

representatives of the State,³⁵⁴ usually conflated by respondents with the RPF, had an important presence in their lives, interacting with various sections of the respective sector's inhabitants at least once per week on average. Community meetings of various kinds³⁵⁵ were regular, and pressure to attend strong, if not codified in law – as was the case for *gacaca* sessions. Threatening or coercive language was the tone most frequently used by the authorities chairing the meetings³⁵⁶, coupled at times with the imposition of sanctions such as fines, or even short stays in the district detention facility (the “cachot”). Reflecting the fundamentally ambiguous perceptions grassroots respondents had of State authorities, interviews revealed that there was appreciation and respect for authorities, at the same time as there was resentment. For example, the security the new government had established was extremely important to respondents, who also exhibited a deference to the new government (and their representatives') decisions, adopting a “they must know best” attitude. However, the imposition of an institutionalised kind of reconciliation behaviour, which included as we have seen, directives on who is to be forgiven and who is to be mourned, was acutely resented. Such directives, delivered in a top-down fashion, represent a direct contradiction to the RPF's second reconciliation pillar, which seeks to promote independent critical thinking.³⁵⁷ As a corollary, there was no “local ownership” of the reconciliation process – much less of its vocabulary. For example, there was some evidence that the words “reconciliation” and “forgiveness” had themselves been imported – including from my own vocabulary, i.e. the wording of my questions and how I introduced myself and my project. Grassroots respondents (and their non-government elite counterparts) typically preferred the use of more “minimalist” language (see Figure 3, reproduced on p. 242).

Analysis

There were thus parts of the RPF reconciliation strategy that were broadly supported, even praised by all constituencies – as well as areas of significant discord and criticism. More generally, it is important to acknowledge the shared sense of admiration among the

³⁵⁴ Meaning concretely senior district staff (the Mayor and Vice-Mayors), provincial authorities, and government security forces (Police) in Sovu and Bunzazi.

³⁵⁵ Weekly *gacaca* sessions and ad hoc “sensitisation meetings” usually on *gacaca* or related matters (released prisoners, slow pace of *gacaca*, etc.) were the two most frequent.

³⁵⁶ The authorities chairing the meetings were at times of a higher rank than the meeting's intended chairperson, for example a Vice-Mayor chaired a *gacaca* session, or simply usurped the intended chairperson's authority, as when the Conseiller de secteur chaired a *gacaca* session.

³⁵⁷ This theme will be taken up again in the conclusion to this chapter.

different Rwandan respondents, as well as the Top Five donors, for the RPF government: the difficult situation it faced in the wake of the genocide, and the security it progressively established – and had maintained – in Rwanda since then, building by the same token the (*sine qua non*) basis for a future reconciliation. A strong nationalism also unified the different Rwandan constituencies: in this respect, the RPF's nation-*building* programme has fertile ground on which to grow.

These successes – consensus on a hierarchy of responsibility for the genocide (and the broad definition of various categories of guilt), the establishment and consolidation of security throughout the country – are considerable. Though no direct comparison is possible, Burundi – whose leaders' approach to reconciliation, and specifically to ethnicity and power-sharing, was cited by some non-government elites as a potential role model for the RPF – had, at the time of writing, achieved neither. Indeed, there is only tenuous agreement on even the most basic facts concerning the various cycles of violence that Burundi has known since Independence – let alone on degrees of responsibility for them (Lemarchand, 1995, xii).³⁵⁸ Moreover, rebel groups, armed bandits and ill-disciplined government security forces mean that insecurity persists in several parts of Burundi.³⁵⁹

However, the thesis finds that at least two recurring themes put into question these achievements. First, and as mentioned above, the RPF's authoritarian, or top-down *style* in terms of communication, design and implementation of the official reconciliation strategy was at times counterproductive (i.e. directive for released prisoners not to approach survivors after their release), invasive (i.e. the usurping of victim's rights to bestow forgiveness) and alienating (i.e. disallowing the public mourning of Hutu victims). Another

³⁵⁸ Lemarchand explains for example that Tutsi in Burundi tend to “invent one genocide (the 1993 killings of Tutsi) and forget another (the 1972 genocide of Hutu)” (Lemarchand, 1998). In Rwanda as well there is some talk of, for example, an alleged “double genocide”, in 1994, of Tutsi by the FAR/*Interahamwe*, and of Hutu by the RPF/RPA, or even of a triple genocide, adding that of Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern DRC in 1996, by the RPA and its Congolese allies (Verwimp, 2003c), but I found no evidence to suggest these are anything more than fringe movements.

³⁵⁹ Bujumbura-Rural, Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces, as well as the capital, Bujumbura, remained vulnerable to rebel attack (and government security forces' counterattacks) at the time of writing. Also at the time of writing, on-going peace talks with the last remaining sizeable Burundian rebel group, the Parti pour la libération du peuple Hutu – Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL), hosted by Tanzania, had resulted in the signing of a ceasefire agreement on 7 September 2006, but the talks had since stalled (Lemarchand, 2006).

way this top-down style was visible was the RPF's orientation towards quantifiable results – the number of confessions, the speed of *gacaca* proceedings – over less quantifiable *process*.³⁶⁰ This was visible in the justification I received from Butare provincial authorities for why Bunzazi was an example of a community where reconciliation was going well, and Sovu, an example of reconciliation going badly.

Second, and potentially much more damaging, some elements of the RPF's "healing truth", an integral part of the overall reconciliation strategy as we have seen, were rejected by non-government elites and grassroots respondents alike, as incorrect, if not manipulative and cynical. Specifically, the globalisation of guilt for the genocide to all Hutu, through an emphasis on the mass character of participation³⁶¹, coupled with the official ignoring of (the victims of) RPF killings, through their exclusion from the remit of *gacaca* courts and from commemoration ceremonies, evoked much alarm and anger. As a result, there was a generalised recognition that the RPF was "white-washing" itself or, to use the words of Eltringham and Hoyweghen, that the RPF was perpetuating a "victim-victimiser dichotomy" through its politically expedient version of history, which allowed it to cast itself as the historic victim (of the international community, of the Hutu), and as morally pure. The kind of justice being meted out by *gacaca* (as well as, to a lesser extent, the ICTR and national courts), though necessary, was therefore seen as partial and a form of victors' justice. The imposition of ethnic amnesia – which in effect "erased" the RPF's own minority status – was also criticised, even as the aspiration towards unity was welcomed as well-founded.³⁶² These opinions are not attributable to solely one "type" of Rwandan respondent – a cross-section ranging from non-government elites to grassroots respondents, and from survivors to perpetrators, echoed these thoughts. This undermined the very

³⁶⁰ Donors are guilty of this as well, as seen above.

³⁶¹ As a reminder, 2005 government perpetrator estimates corresponded to between 61 and 88% of all adult Hutu men.

³⁶² Even though the "unity" element of the RPF truth is considered a political and/or aspirational statement, respondents tended to recognise the wisdom of trying to get past ethnic labels. Once again, this is a case where the dispute lay with style, not with substance. There was a general recognition that Rwandans shared many fundamental traits, including all the traits that would usually define an ethnic group, such as culture, religion and language. As we have already seen, in most respondents' daily lives, ethnicity was less relevant or salient than class as a source of identity.

achievements described above, as well as legitimacy of the entire justice sector and indeed, of the government itself.

A final note on the Top Five donors to Rwanda: unlike their pre-1994 predecessors, described as blinded to the broader socio-political context in the country by a technocratic conception of what constitutes “development”³⁶³, the donor representatives I met with proved to be very aware of the dynamics and tensions I describe above. Yet, there was no evidence, despite the advent of a “more principled” (post-conflict) development agenda, that the “lessons-learned” from the development community’s experience in Rwanda in 1994 had translated into meaningful change in the way development was being practised, post-1994. There had been, at the time of writing, no tangible or sustained consequences for the RPF government as a result of its repressive actions over the years, with the important, more recent exception of potential or threatened military incursions into the DRC. This policy did not appear to be born out of a blindness to politics, but out of a conscious political assessment: almost a tacit agreement seemed to have been reached among the Top Five that “a strong state is a blessing”, and the RPF is the least worst option, if not a downright good one.³⁶⁴ In this respect therefore, the Top Five donors’ most substantive impact on the reconciliation process inside Rwanda may well have been their choice to continue to provide important financial and diplomatic support to the RPF, even when it demonstrated authoritarian leanings that were difficult to justify.

8.2 Implications

The findings summarised above have repercussions for the reconciliation literature reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as for dominant perceptions of Rwandan politics and society, particularly post-1994.

Debunking “Common Wisdom” in the Literature on Reconciliation *“Wishful Thinking” Part 1: Democratisation as Necessary Backdrop*

³⁶³ This allowed the development community to continue implementing projects and collaborating with the regime of (then) Rwandan President Habyarimana until the very eve of the genocide (Uvin, 1998).

³⁶⁴ This reversal of archetypal donor-recipient relations, with donors as experts, and recipients as grateful pupils, is not in itself a bad thing. Reasons for this are intuitive: it avoids moral hazard, and sustainable solutions can usually not be “imported”.

In what I have shown is a mixed record of success for a purely authoritarian/top-down reconciliation process lies a challenge to the “democracy assumption”³⁶⁵ pervasive in the reconciliation literature. There is no genuine democratising backdrop in Rwanda, yet there are some signs of success for the RPF reconciliation strategy nonetheless. For example, the thesis documented agreement among the various Rwandan constituencies on several key points of this RPF strategy. There were some suggestions that this consensus was not present at first but rather emerged, with time and heavy government influence. One respondent I quoted in Chapter 5 reported the softening of survivor attitudes over the years:

“[a]fter the war, there was a very big climate of distrust and of anger between people [...] then, some survivors started saying that what happened, happened and that we have to live together with these people. And then, even the others [the other survivors] realized that there was nothing else to do and that not everyone was guilty.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 25, survivor)

It is unclear if this could have happened without the “parental” oversight of the RPF government, which did not hesitate to impose its views, as we have seen, in an authoritarian manner as it saw fit.³⁶⁶

What is more, if we consider the participation of a majority as a defining characteristic of democracy, then democratic governance in a post-genocide context, given that the genocide itself appears to have been fairly “popular” (200,000 direct participants, to use Strauss’ figure) may not be a wise approach to achieving and maintaining security, let alone working towards something resembling reconciliation. To be clear, I am not arguing that reconciliation is working, or has been achieved in Rwanda, but rather that I found no basis on which to argue that reconciliation is predestined to fail in contexts that are non-democratic. In this respect, the RPF’s authoritarianism represents a double-edged

³⁶⁵ “Democracy” is unproblematised and usually taken to mean participation by all citizens very broadly.

³⁶⁶ Other evidence of the RPF’s mixed success rate includes the measure I devised for this study, the “coexistence score”, which, setting the bar lower than reconciliation, yielded that 24 of 37 respondents “scored well”. Another finding of this study suggests that, among grassroots respondents, security is the top pre-condition for reconciliation, followed by punishing the guilty and the return of cordial relations (the “normality” I refer to above). These have or are in the process of being delivered by the RPF. “Good governance”, which includes the notion of participation and democratisation (see Table 17: Three Pre-conditions for Reconciliation, p. 157) though valued, is ranked lower by the grassroots respondents. This is not the case for the non-government elites, who stress the need for an opening in political space – this will be touched upon in discussion of continuities with the past in the following section on “Perceptions of post-1994 Politics and Society in Rwanda”.

sword. On the one hand, it enabled the acceptance of difficult compromises, as in the example above of the “softening” of survivor attitudes on guilt and punishment (punishing according to responsibility). On the other hand, this same authoritarianism inhibited the ultimate success of a reconciliation process, by imposing boundaries such as the taboo topic of RPF crimes and the distinct tint of “victors’s justice” this results in, precluding a truly locally-owned or locally-driven process from emerging.

“Wishful Thinking” Part 2: Reconciliation as Beneficial

As Chapter 2 details, the literature invariably assumes reconciliation to be desirable, particularly on a psychological level. The hypothesis, especially strong in the restorative justice tradition and the forgiveness paradigm, is that the victim, but also his or her victimiser, and the larger community, will benefit from the catharsis that comes from reconciliation. As will be detailed below, usually some form of “intervention” to bring about this reconciliation, often explicitly or implicitly designed to foster open expression of emotions such as remorse, is assumed to be required. Such claims were made all the more popular by the South African TRC model, which was “staunchly public” if not “disturbingly exhibitionistic”, with hearings broadcast daily on the radio and television and reported prominently in print media (Linfield, 2000).

However, my respondents recurrently cast doubt over such claims. In terms of the open or public expression of emotion, grassroots respondents seemed to prize the return of cordial relations, i.e. the return of normalcy (see Table 17: Three Pre-conditions for Reconciliation, p. 157) over, public mourning and apologies (usually proffered in front of *gacaca*), which they called “a theatre”. This directly challenges the TRC/catharsis model of “revealing is healing”. Interestingly, most of the survivors and some of the (2005) released prisoners I spoke to in Sovu and Bunzazi agreed that they should talk, but not in public – coming to the survivors’ home was deemed by both parties as most appropriate (and in itself appeared to add a symbolic quality to the sought-after exchange). By the end of the fieldwork period however, the survivors and newly released prisoners had not

communicated, or rather, whatever communication there had been, was mediated through the State (and so, remained in the “public” domain), causing yet more misunderstanding.³⁶⁷

Further on the public expression of emotion and the benefits thereof, respondents expressed doubt over the annual genocide commemoration ceremonies. Several survivors I spoke with – in whose name, along with the slain victims, the commemorations are held – emphasised how these ceremonies re-traumatize them. More broadly, the official commemoration ceremonies were not seen as contributing to reconciliation, and at least in some instances, were linked to a set-back for individual and community ties.

The Muddled State of Agency: Who is Reconciling?

As we saw in Chapter 2, there is a distinction drawn in the literature on reconciliation between elite-driven (top-down) and grassroots-owned (bottom-up) reconciliation processes, with the latter valued for their reputed authenticity and sustainability.³⁶⁸ The thesis showed that “officially”, the RPF government played the lead role in the reconciliation process: taking the three reconciliation paradigms in turn, it is the RPF government that decided which model of justice to adopt (early move from a retributive form of justice to a more restorative model), that guided the narrative revision process (by imposing its own version of Rwandan history), and that bestowed forgiveness on perpetrators (when prisoners confessed and asked for forgiveness on an application form). It then operationalised this approach through a variety of State institutions and policies (the *gacaca* courts, the *ingando* camps, etc.) and enforced it, through a mix of coercive (e.g. threatening language, imposition of sanctions), legal (e.g. anti-divisionism law), “moral” (e.g. the moral obligation to attend *gacaca*) and cajoling (recourse to patriotic language of Rwandans succeeding alone and against all odds) means.

Yet, one cannot conclude from this alone that the reconciliation process in Rwanda has or will fail. In fact, my findings suggest that it was not the fact that the RPF initiated, or “owned” the reconciliation process that was resented or that precluded the sustainability of

³⁶⁷ For example, the proposed *fête de convivialité* to bring prisoners released in August 2005 together with victims.

³⁶⁸ Grassroots, or Civil Society Organisations’ (CSOs) capacity to carry such work out is not always considered.

the reconciliation process, as some of the literature concludes. Rather, as we saw above, it was part of its *content* (i.e. the extremely partial, pro-RPF version of history) and the *style* (the “institutionalised” form reconciliation took, with limited awareness raising and even more limited consultations) that caused frustration and a resistance, though covert, of the process as flawed. What is more, and as we saw above under the discussion on democratisation, it is questionable that the important consensus that was achieved and the difficult compromises that were struck could have been consolidated by a grassroots-led (democratic) reconciliation process. There was no automatic or inherent rejection by the grassroots of messages from the “top”; instead, grassroots respondents had a very ambiguous perception of the ruling elite, which included a fair amount of deference and trust in their judgement as “high people”, meaning among other things, people with education. In other words, my findings show that a reconciliation process need not necessarily, or perhaps more precisely, need not solely be grassroots-initiated to succeed.

Second, the tension between individual reconciliation and communal (or group) reconciliation is ignored in the literature, with authors typically slipping from one level of analysis to another, and back. This is facilitated by a common conceptualisation of reconciliation as a continuum of “thick-to-thin” meanings, which assumes that reconciliation is cumulative and that group and individual reconciliation are compatible. This assumption is also apparent in the Rwandan context, where the RPF conflated individual reconciliation not only with group reconciliation, but with the reconciliation of the nation; indeed, the RPF and its representatives used the same “thick” vocabulary for both. In this respect, individual reconciliation and national reconciliation, in the eyes of the RPF, was one and the same thing.³⁶⁹ This was especially visible in what I described as the “institutionalisation of forgiveness and mourning”, where we saw the formulation and imposition at national level of a policy on what are in fact highly personal and individual processes.

³⁶⁹ Even though this undermined the second pillar of the RPF reconciliation strategy (i.e. improving Rwandans, including by promoting independent thinking).

Though never articulated as such, this merging of national and individual reconciliation processes in RPF rhetoric and practice is linked to the fact that the RPF conceived “most” Rwandans (i.e. the peasant masses, survivors as well as perpetrators) as passive receptacles of government messages – now, as during the genocide. And now, as during the genocide, similar means, i.e. sensitisation meetings, heads of local (farmers’) association meetings at the district, etc., were used to disseminate the new norm of behaviour, i.e. asking and granting forgiveness, the practice of ethnic amnesia, etc., and to stigmatise and sanction nonconformists, through intimidation, public ridicule, or even use of force (imprisonment under the divisionism law, for instance).³⁷⁰ Of course the Rwandan respondents from Sovu and Bunzazi I spoke to revealed themselves not to be passive receptacles of messages. Even though they were responsive to and/or agreed with parts of the RPF reconciliation strategy (cf. the two reconciliation pillars), there were also “hidden transcripts” of disagreement, even anger and despair, which respondents did not express openly.

If some degree of clarity in discussions of agency in reconciliation is to be achieved however, it is vital to make one distinction at a minimum. The confusion over agency stems not from the fact that there is inherent tension between individual reconciliation processes and community reconciliation processes, though that may indeed be the case. Rather, it stems from the fact that there is no distinction made between the two main functions of “reconciliation discourse”, i.e. reconciliation as political slogan for the ruling elite on the one hand (i.e. “national reconciliation”), and reconciliation as describing a social reality or, more precisely, a hoped-for social reality on the other. Only in the latter are individual and community attitudes and behaviours relevant.

In academic and policy circles, presumably chiefly concerned with describing (and understanding, and eventually making recommendations to achieve) a social reality, a large dose of pragmatism and humility therefore needs to be inserted into the language used. Indeed, the thesis findings strongly suggest that the inflation of claims through the use of

³⁷⁰ These examples once again direct our attention to some basic continuities with the past, a theme that will be returned to below.

“thick” language like reconciliation (and forgiveness and healing) is inappropriate to describe individual and community relations: as one grassroots respondent (quoted in Chapter 5) told me, “we reconcile ourselves for little things.” (Sovu, Interviewee no 24, survivor) For the big things, the same respondent said “I do not understand the significance of the word.” Rwandan respondents from both the non-government elite and grassroots constituencies accordingly preferred to use “thinner” language, either importing “thick” words like reconciliation to pay lip service, for instance, to government discourse, or to show precisely how inappropriate the words were.

By shedding the pretence that “reconciliation”, as used by national politicians for example, is about individual (or communal) attitudes and behaviours, we rejoin Wilson’s argument wholesale, where diverse individual and community needs are *subordinated* to the exigencies of a “national reconciliation” process, designed by and for a new ruling elite (Hamber and Wilson, 1999).

Perceptions of post-1994 Politics and Society in Rwanda

Ethnicity and Rwandan Identity

Genocide means the intentional and systematic attempt to annihilate a people in a targeted group. Because there was a genocide in Rwanda, and because this genocide is typically the first if not the only thing outsiders know of Rwanda, a natural conclusion might be that ethnicity is the organising fault line around which identities, and therefore political allegiances and sympathies, are formed – all the more as this genocide was characterised by particularly high levels of participation. Accordingly, it is not a far cry to assume that ethnic groups – Hutu and Tutsi, or in the post-genocide parlance, survivors and perpetrators – would naturally be antagonistic and have few, if any, interests in common.

However, even if originally genuinely distinct³⁷¹, many accounts of ethnic (Hutu, Tutsi) and/or racial (Nilotes and Bantus) groups in Rwanda today consider these as more

³⁷¹ The debate over the origins of the categories Hutu and Tutsi is extremely complex and on-going. Vansina, the foremost historian of the pre-colonial period in Rwanda, rejects the view that Hutu and Tutsi were labels created or racialised or even solidified by the first Europeans, who instead, he argued “adopted a practice they found on the spot and the terminology they used to express it derived from the speech of the local elites.” However, he also categorically states that “at that time [late 1800s], the farmers in the country absolutely did not think of themselves as members of a single ethnic group [...] They distinguished themselves as the ‘people’ of Bugoyi, Kinyaga, Nduga, Rukiga, [...] not as ‘Hutu’ ” (Vansina, 2004, p. 138-9).

akin to “instrumentalised” myths (Uvin, 2001a). This not only coincides with the RPF official history (which incorporates a strictly instrumentalist view of ethnicity), but indeed with traditional anthropological and biological definitions of race and ethnicity. For example, Lemarchand writes on ethnic groups (or “tribes”) that “the tribalist argument connotes a degree of cultural and physical distance among groups not found between Hutu and Tutsi [...] the concept of tribe is patently inappropriate to describe communities that speak the same language, that share much of the same type of social organization, and whose members lived peacefully side by side for centuries” (Lemarchand, 1995, p. 4). In this sense, ethnic groups or tribes do not (and did not, on the eve of the genocide) exist in Rwanda.

Even so, my research suggests that “ethnic” identity was a social reality for my Rwandan respondents. However, I also found that identities were fluid and multi-layered. Accordingly, an OCL returnee respondent could simultaneously identify with the labels Tutsi, refugee, Rwandan, survivor, elite, critical of the RPF, supporter of the RPF, medical doctor, and hosts of others. As Ignatieff writes, “[i]t is problematic enough to vest an individual [let alone a group or nation] with a single identity: our inner lives are like battlegrounds over which uneasy truces reign” (Ignatieff, 1997, p. 169).

What is more, I found that the ethnic identity of my Rwandan respondents – non-government elite and grassroots respondents alike – did not provide strong enough explanatory power, in that it did not necessarily predispose them to any particular attitudes towards other ethnic groups, towards the degree of optimism they expressed in the future, or towards the RPF government. Moreover, a (grassroots) respondent’s ethnic background did not necessarily bare a systematic link to the “coexistence score” I devised. Much more important were other factors, such as life experiences *since* the genocide – sometimes in part, but never in whole, dependent on ethnicity. Finally, in discussions with grassroots respondents in particular, the importance of issues of class, or the distinction between “high people” and “low people”, became increasingly obvious. This refutes the validity of viewing Rwandan politics and society solely through the static lens of Hutu and Tutsi, or victims and victimisers. Indeed, such a focus results in a distorted view of social reality,

namely one which fails “to capture [...] the complex hierarchies of power, status and privilege that cut across ethnic lines” (Lemarchand, 1995, p. 5).

Continuities with the Past

These “hierarchies of power” have largely survived the genocide (and arguably hundreds of years of Rwandan history) intact, albeit with different “high people” in power – instead of President Habyarimana’s *akazu*, a similar network of Tutsi former refugees from Uganda surround President Kagame. From the standpoint of my grassroots respondents, one small circle of people in power, with kinship, business and personal ties binding them, had replaced another, and the pre- and post-1994 periods had not been characterised by a change in their own position within this hierarchy. They remained “le bas peuple”, and except for prisoners, their immediate families, and the most destitute genocide survivors, their daily lives may not have changed that much.³⁷²

In many ways, this is a mundane observation to make: the poor and powerless remain poor and powerless, and subjugated to the will of those who are rich and powerful. In other ways however, this is an explosive claim to make. As Chapter 3 in particular stresses, the RPF sees itself as a radical force of change in Rwanda, vigorously asserting not only the extremist and backward nature of its predecessors in power, be it the post-Independence regimes or their colonial forefathers, but also its own agenda to break with the pre-1994 past through a multi-faceted drive to “improve Rwandans”, through civic education and empowerment of citizens through decentralisation.

Nevertheless, examples of continuities in rural life in Sovu and Bunzazi abound, particularly with respect to relationships with representatives of the State. The examples I documented most extensively revolved around the way directives and information were communicated in Sovu and Bunzazi: in a top-down manner, through “sensitization”

³⁷² Prunier hints at this when, describing the reactions to the advent of Habyarimana coming to power, he states that whereas “the urbanized population” greeted the 1973 coup with relief, “in the case of the peasant masses who had little to do with Kigali power games, [it was greeted] with indifference.” (Prunier, 1995, p. 75)

meetings (also used under Habyarimana)³⁷³, at *gacaca*, with the sheer ubiquity of the Rwandan State even in remote rural settings, and the threatening tone typically used by authorities, at provincial, district, and other levels, compounding this further (cf. Chapter 7). Indeed, some of the same mechanisms, such as the “sensitisation” meetings mentioned above, were being used by pre- and post-1994 central authorities to communicate government directives: to facilitate genocide in the case of the former, and reconciliation in the case of the latter. There were even hints of similar personality cults, specifically of the leader as father figure, provider and protector, having been being built around “Papa Kagame”, Habyarimana³⁷⁴ and even the pre-colonial kings.³⁷⁵

Conclusion

At the close of this exercise, the extremely difficult research environment present in Rwanda, the political sensitivity of the research topic, and the research strategy adopted as a result (i.e. the privileging of few, repeat interviews) bears re-iterating. Due to this, some readers may choose to qualify the research findings summarised here as conditional, or possibly unrepresentative of a broader Rwandan reality. Be that as it may, given the inappropriateness of large N, survey-type research on the one hand, and the imperative to consider the integrity of the study and the safety of interviewees (and my research assistant) on the other, the findings have the merit of being accurate and robust.

Is “Reconciliation” Succeeding? Disentangling Discourse from Practice

Be it based on what they have read or heard anecdotally, or, for most of my Rwandan respondents, on a long and personal history of reconciliation, or non-reconciliation, or both, most people I met in Rwanda had a lot to say about the topic of this thesis. To answer the above question, “Is reconciliation succeeding?”, I therefore began by documenting the “reconciliation discourses” (perceptions, expectations, frustrations) of four constituencies in

³⁷³ “Re-education” camps were also used under Habyarimana, though I am not aware of the extent of this practice. Prunier (Prunier, 1995, p. 81) and Verwimp (Verwimp, 1999, p. 19) both mention re-education camps with respect to prostitutes being sent there: “[p]rostitutes or so-called prostitutes (often Tutsi girlfriends of expatriates) in Kigali were sent to a re-education camp in Nsinda in the prefecture of Kibungo”, writes Verwimp for instance.

³⁷⁴ In his speeches, Habyarimana systematically stressed that the well-being of peasants, including in terms of food production, was his priority (with the understanding that only Hutu were real peasants, while Tutsi were aristocrats who refused to till the soil – see Verwimp, 1999, p. 13).

³⁷⁵ Vansina details that the king, unlike courtiers or any other members of the high nobility, was the sole person responsible for the “public weal”, the well-being of all the inhabitants of the kingdom (Vansina, 2004, p. 196-7).

Rwanda, and then unearthed some explanatory variables for patterns of reconciliation and non-reconciliation, or better “coexistence” and “non-coexistence” in two rural communities.

Indeed, at the close of this exercise, it became apparent that on the one hand, (i) reconciliation was felt to be, by the quasi-totality of non-RPF Rwandan respondents, a totally inappropriate word to describe what was going on at the individual or community levels, because of its ambitious, “thick”, even warm connotations. On the other hand, (ii) reconciliation in Rwanda tended to be used as a stock phrase, an RPF-endorsed political slogan, and not as something that necessarily corresponded to or sought to describe a social reality on the ground. So, in response to the above question, taking (i) into account, an answer might be “No, reconciliation is not succeeding, but something less than reconciliation (coexistence is a word I might suggest) is largely succeeding”; and this is occurring alongside if not in spite of a public or official reconciliation process to which everyone pays lip service. Taking (ii) into account however, the answer might change from “No, but”, to “It doesn’t matter”. This is not because the behaviours and experiences of the individuals and communities I got to know in the course of this research project do not matter, but because they do not matter for the purposes of the RPF reconciliation project. The point is not to depict the members of the RPF inner clique around President Kagame as callous or immoral, but as engaged in building an image, of the nation, of themselves, that does not necessarily take into account individual and community dynamics.

In other words, the word “reconciliation” actually obscures more than it clarifies. It also brings us back to the juxtaposition of discourse and practice emphasised in the title of this thesis: as we have seen, the RPF “imposes” a reconciliation model on the one hand, while trying to “emancipate” through this very model on the other. This is evidence of an internal contradiction, but also that the RPF government has chosen to conflate, or ignore, or subjugate the individual and community processes I lay out above, in favour of focusing on implementing a national reconciliation strategy that tells an ambitious and in many ways progressive story about Rwanda, Rwandans and their new ruling elite. In this respect, the

RPF government is not behaving that differently from the ANC government in South Africa after the fall of Apartheid, for example.

What is more, I have come to the realisation that this complex and thoroughly mixed record of reconciliation in Rwanda, though it sheds light on a plethora of individual and community processes, and in so doing, has intrinsic value, may not be as “policy relevant” as I had, at the outset, hoped and assumed.

On “Reconciliation Policy”

As I have already hinted above, there appears to be a pervasive assumption within some academic, practitioner, and government circles, that some kind of “intervention” – be it an income-generation project, conflict-resolution training, or a “truth” revealing exercise – is required for “reconciliation” (a word I now favour avoiding) to take place. Whatever happens outside such interventions, the “normalisation” of relations I described in Sovu and Bunzazi – i.e. the return of security, the greeting of one another, the contact, both mandatory and social (elective) – is sometimes devalued³⁷⁶ and mostly ignored. The thinking seems to be that nothing happens, or worse, that the situation deteriorates, without some form of pro-reconciliation policy being designed and implemented.³⁷⁷ The concomitant danger of lapsing into a “functionalist” logic, whereby whatever social cohesion there is, is retroactively attributed to reconciliation projects, and vice versa, is real.³⁷⁸ And yet most of what I have described in Sovu and Bunzazi, the patterns of reconciliation and non-reconciliation, happened not in isolation, but rather in an “unplanned” or “unassisted” way. As such, these patterns are invisible to the policy world.

³⁷⁶ Neuffer, for example, considers the “seeming normalcy” of everyday life in Rwanda surprising. She later depicts this as a fragile façade, insinuating it should be taken down and “dealt with” presumably through discussion and the open expression of emotion: “the legacy of Rwanda’s genocide lived on in people’s inner lives. Survivors, whether Tutsi or Hutu, went through the motions of everyday existence but not its emotions; they skated across their feelings, frightened of experiencing them too deeply. [...] ‘Look right in front of you’, she [author’s translator] replied. ‘We have all lost something. We even have an expression for it: *bapfuye buhagazi*. It means the walking dead. This is the land of the walking dead.” (Neuffer, 2001, p. 251)

³⁷⁷ This was certainly the opinion of both the RPF government and the non-government elite constituency, both of whom endorsed the view that Rwandan society needed to be transformed in order for reconciliation to be achieved.

³⁷⁸ This is the type of logic that also allows any harassment or crime committed against a genocide survivor to be cited as proof of lingering genocidal ideology and divisionism, for example.

Second, much of what I describe as factors which promote “reconciliation” – a feeling of having control over one’s own future, spontaneous voluntary help among neighbours – is difficult to “do” or “plan”. In fact, I found that “reconciliation” is in many ways a deeply personal and idiosyncratic process, which does not lend itself well to modelling and replication – to policy, in other words. This is not to say that everything the RPF government (or donor agencies, or NGOs) did was for naught. Indeed, other factors which I also identify as promoting “reconciliation”, such as collaborative contact with members of other groups within society (i.e. Sociology’s Contact Hypothesis), can and have been facilitated in Maraba through the vigorous promotion of, in particular, farming associations by district authorities. However, there needs to be a recognition of the limits of what “policy” can achieve. As a result, the “thick” language of “reconciliation” and “forgiveness”, already deemed inappropriate by my respondents to describe social relations in their communities, is also inappropriate to describe these initiatives (in the Rwandan context, *gacaca*, *ingando*, early releases, TIG, etc.) or their results.³⁷⁹ This leads to the larger question of whether the phrase “reconciliation policy” is a contradiction in terms. Based on the findings presented in this thesis, I believe the question must be answered in the affirmative.

On Future Research

This study has allowed me to rebut and/or begin to refine a handful of untested assumptions and unchallenged dominant conceptions of Rwandan politics and society on the one hand, and of “reconciliation”, or “peacebuilding” processes on the other. On the latter point (reconciliation or peacebuilding processes), one particularly important policy tool in the post-conflict interventions arsenal, namely the link between poverty and reconciliation, deserves, I feel, fairly urgent further attention. If, as Duffield argues, the fields of poverty and security have been merged, with poverty reproblematised as a main source of insecurity, as an offshoot, the fields of poverty and reconciliation have also been merged. We already saw that the Top Five donors to Rwanda have repackaged their economic development aid and poverty reduction efforts as “good for reconciliation”. Moreover,

³⁷⁹ Indeed, these “thicker” words were borrowed from the official government discourse, as well as my own: the title of my research project included the word reconciliation and this was also featured prominently in the formulation of my interview guide questions.

statements of the “you cannot eat peace” type, causally linking the two concepts, are fairly common. “[R]apid [economic] growth will assist peace”, writes Collier (Collier, 2000, p. 19). The authors of another report, on Rwanda and Burundi, similarly conclude that “[o]ne of the most important prerequisites for reconciliation is broad-based economic development. In fact, peace and reconciliation themes ring hollow [...] in the absence of economic opportunity.” (Prendergast and Smock, 1999) Another author refines this argument somewhat, pinpointing *exclusion*, rather than absolute poverty, as the paramount concern for reconciliation: “Hutus, for the most part, have since the genocide, been completely marginalised [...] economically.” (Sarkin, 1999, p. 115)

My findings paint a rather more mixed picture than the above quotes suggest. On the one hand, both the non-government Rwandan elites and the Top Five donors privileged socio-economic aspects of reconciliation: poverty, inequality, economic development – with non-government elites adding reparations for victims. The RPF government shared many of these concerns and had made sustained (though not necessarily successful) efforts in the domains of poverty reduction and the promotion of economic growth. However, interestingly, the RPF tended not to make a direct link between the material notions of poverty and development and what was a primarily intellectual or ideational reconciliation process. And respondents from Sovu and Bunzazi tended to agree: group discussions resulted in the ranking of economic well-being and reparations in seventh and eighth place respectively, for example, way after security and punishing the guilty (see Table 17: Three Pre-conditions for Reconciliation, p. 157).

Moreover, I found no evidence that the income generated from small associations had a positive effect on “reconciliation”. Rather, it was the opportunity to interact and collaborate with others which was more relevant, as respondents involved in such associations typically showed a much more obvious ability to empathise (social meetings had a similar effect). More generally speaking, respondents from the relatively more affluent Sovu did not systematically score higher on the “coexistence score” than their counterparts in the more destitute Bunzazi.

Some research in this vein, challenging comfortable assumptions, is beginning to be undertaken: one post-doctoral research project I have become aware of speaks of identifying and studying, through a mix of survey work and individual and focus group interviews, how peacebuilding initiatives can be strengthened [or not] with a modest mechanism of poverty reduction (usually small income-generating projects – see Paluck, 2007b, p. 5). Many more untested assumptions and unchallenged dominant conceptions remain however. There is much more empirically-grounded research needed if a better understanding of post-conflict reconciliation initiatives is to be achieved.

Abbreviations

CSOs: Civil Society Organisation

DFID: (UK) Department for International Development

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

EC: European Commission

FARG: Fonds d'assistance des rescapés du génocide (genocide survivors' fund)

FDLR: Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

ICTR: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

LDF: Local Defence Forces, civilian security officers who have received basic to no military training and some weapons; managed by local districts

MINALOC: Ministry of Social Affairs and Local Government

NURC: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

OCL: Old Caseload (refugee or returnee), refers to Tutsi who fled from 1959 and onward

PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

RPA: the Rwandan Patriotic Army, the former armed wing of the (then rebel) RPF, now part of the Rwandan Defence Forces, RDF, the formal Rwandan State Army

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

RWF: Rwandan Franc

TIG : Travaux d'intérêt général

TRC: (South African) Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Glossary

Colline: Hill, basic unit of identification for Rwandans. Rwanda is sometimes referred to as the country of “one thousand hills”, due to its topography.

Conseiller (male) / conseillère (fem.): Former title of elected local official responsible for sectors (the second to last administrative unit in the Rwandan state structure); the new title of “Coordinateurs” has not caught on however, and the person occupying this post is still commonly referred to as Conseiller, or *Konseye*.

Gacaca: Traditional local conflict resolution mechanism that was modernized, revamped and re-introduced in 2001 to try genocide perpetrators throughout the country. There are *gacaca* jurisdictions at cell, sector, and district levels.

Génocidaire: Someone accused of (but not necessarily tried) for genocide related crimes.

Ibuka: “Remember” in Kinyarwanda, a genocide survivors’ umbrella organisation.

Imidugudu (plural; umudugudu, singular): A “villagisation” policy introduced by the RPF to counter acute land shortage/degradation problems. As the traditional habitation patterns in Rwanda have been that of the scattered homesteads, force was used by government security forces to remove Rwandans from their houses and plots of land and relocate them to the *imidugudu*. Their construction was suspended, but not cancelled, when the forced nature of the programme became sufficiently public and donor funds were withdrawn.

Ingando: Run by the NURC, *ingando* are also referred to as solidarity camps or civic re-education camps (the latter is the term preferred by the NURC). Meant as a teaching and reflection retreat, the best known *ingando* are those that have been organised for released detainees (all over the country) and repatriating FDLR Rwandan rebels (at Mutobo camp, in the north-west). However, *ingando* are mandatory for all Rwandan high school graduates about to go to university, and there have been *ingando* organised for teachers, local authorities, and various other “opinion leaders”. Depending on the participants, the length and content of the *ingando* varies.

Interahamwe: Meaning “those who fight together”, the *interahamwe* was a Hutu militia, originally the youth wing of the MRND(D) party of President Habyarimana. *Interahamwe* is now used as an insult, as well as a loose synonym for any category of génocidaire.

Inyagamugayo: *Gacaca* judge, Kinyarwandan word meaning “the ones with integrity”.

Inyenzi: “Cockroach”, insult levelled at Tutsi during the genocide.

Inkotanyi: Meaning “fierce combatant”, it is a flattering nickname for RPF/RPA combatants.

Nyumbakumi: A local representative of (typically) 10 households, though this number varies; though the mandate is informal, the *nyumbakumi* is often described as the lowest level in the Rwandan administrative state structure that leads all the way up to the President

Umuganda: Mandatory, community service; performed once per month; it typically involves the rehabilitation of local roads, communal grounds and buildings.

Un juste: A “righteous person”; in the Rwandan context, a person who tried to save others who were being persecuted during the genocide, often at great personal risk to him/herself.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps of Rwanda

Map 1: Rwanda in the World



Source: Maps of World, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/rwanda/rwanda-location-map.html>, last accessed on 12 February 2007

Map 2: Rwanda in Southern Africa



Source: Atlapedia, http://www.atlapedia.com/online/maps/political/Southern_Africa.htm, last accessed on 12 February 2007

Map 3: Rwanda, Political Map



Source: UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Cartographic Section, Map No. 3717 Rev. 9, January 2004

Appendix 2: Select Passages from Organic Law No 16/2004 on Gacaca

NB.: This law modifies previous Gacaca laws, notably by reorganizing the categorisation of genocide crimes, from four down to three categories (see article 51).

* * *

Loi Organique ° 16/2004 du 19/6/2004 portant organisation, compétence et fonctionnement des Juridictions Gacaca chargées des poursuites et du jugement des infractions constitutives du crime de génocide et d'autres crimes contre l'humanité commis entre le 1^{er} octobre 1990 et le 31 décembre 1994

Nous, KAGAME Paul,
Président de la République ;

Le Parlement a adopté et nous sanctionnons, promulguons la loi organique dont la teneur suit, et ordonnons qu'elle soit publiée au journal officiel de la République du Rwanda.

Le Parlement :
La Chambre des Députés, en sa séance du 17 juin 2004 ;

Le Sénat, en sa séance du 10 juin 2004 ;

[...]

Adopte :

TITRE II : De la création, de l'organisation et de la compétence des Juridictions Gacaca et des relations avec les autres institutions

Article 29 :
Participer aux activités des Juridictions Gacaca est une obligation pour tout Rwandais. Toute personne qui omet ou refuse de témoigner sur ce qu'elle a vu ou sur ce dont elle a connaissance, de même que celle qui fait une dénonciation mensongère, est poursuivie par la Juridiction Gacaca qui en a fait le constat. Elle encourt une peine d'emprisonnement allant de trois (3) à six (6) mois. En cas de récidive, le prévenu encourt une peine d'emprisonnement allant de six (6) mois à un (1) an.

[...]

Article 34 :

[...]

La victime [...] est toute personne dont les siens ont été tués, qui a été pourchassée pour être tuée mais qui s'est échappée, qui a subi des tortures sexuelles ou qui a été violée, qui a été blessée ou qui a subi toute autre violence, dont les biens ont été pillés, dont la maison a été détruite ou les biens ont été endommagés d'une autre manière, à cause de son ethnie ou ses opinions contraires à l'idéologie du génocide.

TITRE III : De la poursuite des infractions et du jugement

CHAPITRE PREMIER : Des personnes poursuivies

Article 51 :

Selon les actes de participation aux infractions visées à l'article premier de la présente loi organique et commises entre le 1er octobre 1990 et le 31 décembre 1994, la personne poursuivie peut être classée dans l'une des catégories suivantes :

Catégorie 1 :

1° la personne que les actes criminels ou de participation criminelle rangent parmi les planificateurs, les organisateurs, les incitateurs, les superviseurs et les encadreurs du crime de génocide ou des crimes contre l'humanité, ainsi que ses complices ;

2° la personne qui, agissant en position d'autorité : au niveau national, au niveau la Préfecture, au niveau de la Sous-Préfecture ou de la Commune, au sein des partis politiques, de l'armée, de la gendarmerie, de la police communale, des confessions religieuses ou des milices, a commis ces infractions ou a encouragé les autres à les commettre, ainsi que ses complices ;

3° le meurtrier de grand renom qui s'est distingué dans le milieu où il résidait ou partout où il est passé, à cause du zèle qui l'a caractérisé dans les tueries ou la méchanceté excessive avec laquelle elles ont été exécutées, ainsi que ses complices ;

4° La personne qui a commis les actes de tortures quand bien même les victimes n'en seraient pas succombées, ainsi que ses complices ;

5° la personne qui a commis l'infraction de viol ou les actes de tortures sexuelles ainsi que ses complices ;

6° la personne qui a commis les actes dégradants sur le cadavre ainsi que ses complices ;

Le Procureur Général de la République publie, au moins deux fois par an, la liste des noms des personnes classées dans la première catégorie lui adressée par les Juridictions Gacaca des Cellules.

Catégorie 2 :

1° la personne que les actes criminels ou de participation criminelle rangent parmi les auteurs, coauteurs ou complices d'homicides volontaires ou d'atteintes graves contre les personnes ayant entraîné la mort, ainsi que ses complices ;

2° la personne qui dans l'intention de donner la mort, a causé des blessures ou commis d'autres violences graves mais auxquelles les victimes n'ont pas succombé, ainsi que ses complices ;

3° la personne ayant commis d'autres actes criminels ou de participation criminelle à la personne sans l'intention de donner la mort, ainsi que ses complices.

Catégorie 3 :

La personne ayant seulement commis des infractions contre les biens. Toutefois, l'auteur desdites infractions qui, à la date d'entrée en vigueur de la présente loi organique, a convenu soit avec la victime, soit devant l'autorité publique ou en arbitrage, d'un règlement à l'amiable, ne peut plus être poursuivi pour les mêmes faits.

Article 52 :

Les personnes en position d'autorité au niveau du Secteur et de la Cellule au moment du génocide sont classées dans la catégorie correspondant aux infractions qu'elles ont commises, mais leur qualité de dirigeant les expose à la peine la plus sévère prévue pour les prévenus se trouvant dans la même catégorie.

Article 53 :

Pour l'application de la présente loi organique, le complice est celui qui aura, par n'importe quel moyen, prêté une aide à commettre l'infraction aux personnes dont il est question à l'article 51 de la présente loi organique. Le fait que l'un quelconque des actes visés par la présente loi organique a été commis par un subordonné ne dégage pas son supérieur de sa responsabilité pénale s'il avait ou pouvait savoir que le subordonné s'appropriait à commettre cet acte ou l'avait fait et que le supérieur n'a pas pris les mesures nécessaires et raisonnables pour en punir les auteurs ou empêcher que ledit acte ne soit commis alors qu'il en avait les moyens.

[...]

CHAPITRE II : De la procédure d'aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d'excuses.

SECTION PREMIERE : DE l'admissibilité de des conduites de la procédure d'aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d'excuses

Article 54 :

Toute personne ayant commis les infractions visées à l'article premier de la présente loi organique a droit de recourir à la procédure d'aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d'excuses. La demande d'excuses est publiquement adressée aux victimes, si elles sont encore vivantes et à la société rwandaise. Pour être reçues au titre d'aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d'excuses, les déclarations du prévenu doivent contenir :

- 1° la description détaillée sur tout ce qui se rapporte à l'infraction avouée, notamment le lieu où elle a été commise, la date, comment elle a été commise, les témoins, les victimes et le lieu où il a jeté leurs corps ainsi que les biens qu'il a endommagés ;
- 2° les renseignements relatifs aux coauteurs et aux complices ainsi que tout autre renseignement utile à l'exercice de l'action publique ;
- 3° les excuses présentées pour les infractions que le requérant a commis.

Article 55 :

Les auteurs de génocide de la première catégorie qui ont recouru à la procédure d'aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d'excuses avant que leurs noms ne soient mis sur la liste dressée par la Juridiction Gacaca de la Cellule bénéficient d'une commutation des peines de la manière prévue par la présente loi organique.

Article 56 :

Les prévenus de la deuxième catégorie qui bénéficient de la commutation des peines de la manière prévue par la présente loi organique sont ceux :

- 1° qui présentent leurs aveux, le plaider de culpabilité, le repentir et les excuses avant que la Juridiction Gacaca de la Cellule ne dresse une liste des auteurs des infractions de génocide ;
- 2° qui, figurant déjà sur cette liste, recourent à la procédure d'aveu, de plaider de culpabilité et d'excuses, après que la liste des auteurs des infractions de génocide ait été établie.

Article 57 :

S'il est découvert ultérieurement des infractions qu'une personne n'avait pas avouées, elle sera poursuivie, à tout moment, pour ces infractions et pourra être classée dans la catégorie à laquelle la rattachent les infractions commises ; auquel cas, elle encourt le maximum de la peine prévue pour cette catégorie.

SECTION II : De la procédure d’aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d’excuses

Article 58 :

La procédure d’aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d’excuses est proposée devant le Siège de la Juridiction Gacaca, devant l’Officier de la Police Judiciaire ou devant l’Officier du Ministère Public chargé de l’instruction suivant l’article 46 de la présente loi organique.

Le Siège de la Juridiction, l’Officier de la Police Judiciaire ou l’Officier du Ministère Public chargé de l’instruction sont tenus d’informer le prévenu de son droit et de son intérêt à recourir à la procédure d’aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d’excuses.

[...]

Sous-section 2 : De la procédure d’aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d’excuses devant les Juridictions Gacaca

Article 62 :

Les personnes qui ont commis des crimes de génocide peuvent recourir à la procédure d’aveu, de plaider de culpabilité, de repentir et d’excuses devant le Siège de la Juridiction Gacaca. Sans préjudice des dispositions du deuxième alinéa de l’article 54 de la présente loi organique, les aveux, le plaider de culpabilité, le repentir et les excuses des prévenus se font oralement ou au moyen de déclarations écrites signées ou marquées de leur empreinte digitale.

Article 63 :

Les aveux, le plaider de culpabilité, le repentir et les excuses font l’objet d’un procès -verbal par le secrétaire de la Juridiction Gacaca et signé ou marqué d’une empreinte digitale du prévenu et par les membres du Siège de la Juridiction Gacaca. Le Siège de la Juridiction Gacaca vérifie si les aveux, le plaider de culpabilité, le repentir et les excuses remplissent les conditions fixées par la loi et si les déclarations du requérant sont exactes.

[...]

CHAPITRE VII : Du dédommagement

Article 94 :

Les procès relatifs aux biens endommagés sont rendus par la Juridiction Gacaca de la Cellule ou par les autres juridictions dans lesquelles sont poursuivis les accusés. Toutefois, ces procès ne sont pas susceptibles d’appel.

Article 95 :

La réparation des dommages causés se fait comme suit :

1° restituer les biens pillés si c’est possible;

2° payer les biens endommagés ou exécuter les travaux ayant la même valeur que les biens endommagés.

La Juridiction oblige toute personne qui doit réparer, les modalités et le délai de paiement.

Lorsque la personne condamnée à la réparation ne respecte pas les modalités et le délai lui accordés, l’exécution du jugement est assurée par la puissance publique.

Article 96 :

Les autres actions à mener en faveur des victimes sont déterminées par une loi particulière.

Appendix 3: The RPF Eight Point Plan

“The Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF):

Against a backdrop of entrenched divisive and genocidal ideology, repeated massacres, the persistent problems of refugees in the Diaspora, and the lack of avenues for peaceful political change, the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU) was formed in 1979 by some Rwandese in the Diaspora with an objective of mobilising Rwandese people to resolve these problems. Almost a decade later, in 1987, RANU became the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), whose objectives were:

- To promote national unity and reconciliation;
- To establish genuine democracy;
- To provide security for all Rwandese;
- To build an integrated and self-sustaining economy;
- To eradicate corruption in all forms;
- To repatriate and resettle Rwandese refugees;
- To devise and implement policies that promote the social welfare of all Rwandese and;
- To pursue a foreign policy based on equality, peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit between Rwanda and other countries.”

Source: The Government of Rwanda, Official Website of the Republic of Rwanda, www.rwanda1.com/government/, accessed on 3 February 2004

Appendix 4: The 1 January 2003 Presidential Decree on Mass Provisional Releases

The Office of the president has today issued a communiqué relating to various categories of persons in detention who run the risk of being imprisoned for periods longer than the penalty provided for by the law.

These include persons who have confessed of crimes of genocide and who are not in the first category, minors who were between 14 and 18 years old at the time they committed acts of genocide, and other persons accused of ordinary crimes.

His Excellency the President has instructed the relevant judicial institutions to examine, within one month and in accordance with the procedures stipulated by law, the cases of the above mentioned detainees, and to grant provisional liberty to all detainees who run the risk of being detained for periods longer than the period of imprisonment set by the law. The release of those detainees is without prejudice to the continuation of criminal proceedings against them.

The president has also reiterated that the decision of the government relating to the release of the elderly and very sick detainees continue to be implemented.

He has also given instructions to relevant authorities to examine the cases of persons accused of genocide, who confessed before the law establishing Gacaca courts came into effect with a view to affording them the advantages available to those confess under the law establishing Gacaca courts.

Furthermore, His Excellency the President has instructed the relevant authorities to examines [sic] of persons accused of infiltration so that they receive treatment comparable to that extended to those who have recently returned from the DRC.

His Excellency the President has expressed thanks to all those who are involved in the Gacaca courts process and calls upon all Rwandans to continue to participate actively in the smooth functioning of the Gacaca courts.

Source: PRI (2003) “The Guilty Plea Procedure, Cornerstone of the Rwandan Justice System”, Penal Reform International (PRI, 2003)

Appendix 5: Meetings attended in Butare Province

	Location	Type of meeting	Presided by (administrative level)	Estimated attendance	Date dd/mm
1	Bunzazi	<i>Gacaca</i>	President of cell <i>gacaca</i>	Ruheru: 50 Marambo: 80	21/09
2	Bunzazi	<i>Gacaca</i>	Conseiller (sector) President of cell <i>gacaca</i>	Ruheru: 80 Marambo: 90-100	5/10
3	Bunzazi	<i>Gacaca</i>	Vice-mayor (district) Conseiller (sector) President of cell <i>gacaca</i>	Ruheru: session cancelled, too few people Marambo: 90	12/10
4	Sovu	<i>Gacaca</i>	Conseillère (sector) President of cell <i>gacaca</i>	Kigarama: 100 Karuhayi: 80 Gako: I did not attend	17/08
5	Sovu	<i>Gacaca</i> -day (meeting instead focused on prisoner who was not released)	Vice-mayor (district) <i>Gacaca</i> coordinator (district) Conseillère (sector)	All cells together: 500	31/08
6	Sovu	<i>Gacaca</i>	Conseillère (sector)	None of the cells reach quorum.	14/09
7	Sovu	<i>Gacaca</i>	President of cell <i>gacaca</i>	Gako: 100 Karuhayi: Kigarama:	18/10
8	Sector Simbi (Maraba district – <i>gacaca</i> day)	Meeting for all Maraba <i>gacaca</i> judges (<i>inyangamugayo</i>)	<i>Gacaca</i> coordinator (district) Conseiller of Simbi (sector)	100 trickle-in by noon (meeting was to start at 9 a.m.) N.B.: There are ca. 1,500 <i>gacaca</i> judges in Maraba district	24/08
9	Sector Simbi (Maraba district – <i>gacaca</i> day)	Meeting for all residents of Maraba on <i>gacaca</i> (half here, half meeting at other location)	Representative of SNJG (national) Vice-mayor (district) <i>Gacaca</i> coordinator (district)	1,000	7/09
10	Sector Gihindamuyaga (Maraba district – <i>gacaca</i> day)	Meeting for all Maraba <i>gacaca</i> judges (<i>inyangamugayo</i>)	Mayor (district) <i>Gacaca</i> coordinator (district)	1,200	28/09
11	Save district (Butare)	<i>Ingando</i> , lecture on human rights	Rwandan National Human Rights Commission representative (National)	800	18/08
12	Save district (Butare)	<i>Ingando</i> , closing ceremony	Préfet (province of Butare) Mayor of Save (district)	1,700	29/08

13	Sector Gihindamuyaga (Maraba district)	Meeting for all prisoners released (2003 and 2005 wave) from Maraba	Vice-mayor (district) <i>Gacaca</i> coordinator (district)	300	11/10
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Abunzi (Conciliator) meetings attended

	Location	Number & summary of cases	Est. attendance	Date
14	Bunzazi	Six new cases heard: - three cases of land disputes - one dispute over wage of two farm labourers - one dispute over alimony money owned by father	27	30/08
15	Bunzazi	One case heard (none pending): - alimony payments	10	6/09
16	Sovu	No cases heard – quorum of conciliators (seven) not reached	5	8/09
17	Sovu	One case heard: - land dispute	8	21/10

Other meetings

18	Sector Tare (Maraba district)	<i>Gacaca</i> (pilot sector)	President of <i>gacaca</i> (sector-level)	130 (all cells together, on-going trial)	26/10
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Some Explanatory Notes:

Dates

- All dates refer to 2005

Gacaca

- The general assembly consists of all adult residents of the cell. For the *gacaca* court to start the session, 100 people must be present
- Quorum for judges: seven (out of a possible nine)
- During fieldwork, the *gacaca* courts were at a preliminary stage (information gathering), which concerns the lowest-level of *gacaca* courts (cell-based). Sovu has three cells (Gako, Karuhayi, Kigarama); Bunzazi has two (Marambo, Ruheru). My translator and I therefore moved between the general assemblies of each cell.
- *Gacaca* days were each Wednesday throughout Butare province. I therefore had to alternate between Sovu and Bunzazi *gacaca* sites.

Gacaca in Tare sector (cf. 'Other meetings')

- Tare is a sector neighbouring Sovu and Bunzazi. It served as Maraba's 'test' sector during the pilot phase of *gacaca*; pilot *gacaca* courts began hearing cases in March

2005. At the time of fieldwork, Tare was therefore already holding trials, whereas Sovu and Bunzazi were in the (initial) information gathering phase.

Abunzi

- Quorum for conciliators: seven
- *Abunzi* days are each Tuesday; again, I had to alternate between Sovu and Bunzazi to attend meetings.
- Sovu's *abunzi* committee had been nearly inactive since its inception in late 2004 (18 cases heard as at September 2005, compared to Bunzazi's 60) because several Conciliators apparently had waged positions (teachers, civil servants) and could not take Tuesdays off. Elections to find new (available) Conciliators were in the process of being organised at the time of my departure.

Appendix 6: Profile of 37 Respondents in Sovu and Bunzazi

No	Sector	Gender	Age	Occupation	Civil Status	Genocide-Related Experience	Ethnicity	Dates of interviews (2005)
1	Bunzazi	M	43	Local authority, former military (FAR)	Married	"Neutral"	Hutu	25 August 22 October
2	Bunzazi	F	21	Employee of the district	Engaged	"Neutral"	Hutu	28 August 27 October
3	Bunzazi	M	69	PT employee of the coffee factory, former local authority	Married	"Neutral"	Hutu	12 September
4	Bunzazi	F	34	Farmer, artisan, runs a cabaret in home, local authority	Married	"Neutral"	Hutu	6 September 8 September 17 September
5	Bunzazi	M	48	Farmer	Married	"Neutral"	Hutu	27 October
6	Bunzazi	F	45	Farmer	Married	Partner recently released	Hutu	27 September
7	Bunzazi	F	61	Farmer, <i>gacaca</i> judge	Married	Partner in jail	Mixed	22 September 28 September 4 October
8	Bunzazi	F	47	Small restaurant owner	Widowed	Survivor	Tutsi	27 September
9	Bunzazi	M	56	Farmer	Married	Survivor	Tutsi	26 September 30 September
10	Bunzazi	F	57	Farmer	Widowed	Survivor	Tutsi	30 September
11	Bunzazi	F	15	Student	Single	Survivor	Tutsi	30 September 22 October
12	Bunzazi	F	83	Farmer	Widowed	Survivor	Hutu genocide widow	26 September 22 October
13	Bunzazi	F	41	Farmer	Widowed	Survivor	Mixed	6 September
14	Bunzazi	M	39	Farmer	Married	Released prisoner	Hutu	1 September
15	Bunzazi	F	50	Farmer	Widowed	Released prisoner	Hutu	30 August 1 September 18 October
16	Bunzazi	M	32	Farmer	Single	Released prisoner	Hutu	30 August 1 September 11 October
17	Bunzazi	M	44	Former farmer	Single	Prisoner	Hutu	20 September 28 October
18	Bunzazi	M	41	University graduate	Married	Prisoner	Hutu	15 September 1 November
19	Bunzazi	M	68	Former farmer	Married	Prisoner	Hutu	8 September 31 October
20	Bunzazi	M	45	Former farmer	Married	Prisoner	Hutu	20 September
21	Sovu	M	28	Employee of the district	Single	"Neutral"	Hutu	31 August 21 October
22	Sovu	F	40	Farmer, <i>gacaca</i> judge	Married	Survivor	Tutsi	6 October 10 October

23	Sovu	M	47	Farmer	Married	OCL Returnee	Tutsi	4 October
24	Sovu	F	37	Farmer	Widowed	Survivor	Tutsi	30 September 7 October
25	Sovu	F	48	Farmer	Widowed	Survivor	Tutsi	11 October 22 October 26 October
26	Sovu	F	36	Primary school teacher, farmer, <i>gacaca</i> judge	Married	Partner in jail	Mixed	28 September 23 October
27	Sovu	F	53	Farmer and artisan	Widowed (not from genocide)	Son in jail	Hutu	19 September
28	Sovu	F	29	Farmer	Married	Partner in jail	Hutu	5 October
29	Sovu	M	70	Retired local authority, conciliator (<i>abunzi</i>)	Married	Children in jail	Hutu	8 September 22 September
30	Sovu	M	30	Cook in Butare-town, <i>gacaca</i> judge	Married	Father in jail	Hutu	6 September 12 September
31	Sovu	F	34	Farmer	Married	Partner recently released	Hutu	1 November
32	Sovu	M	42	Farmer	Married	Released prisoner	Hutu	23 August 5 September 7 October
33	Sovu	M	55	Former carpenter, looking for work	Widowed	Released prisoner	Hutu	23 August 1 September 23 October
34	Sovu	M	29	Former farmer	Single	Prisoner	Mixed	8 September 1 November
35	Sovu	M	39	Former farmer	Married	Prisoner	Hutu	15 September 25 October
36	Sovu	M	44	Former carpenter	Married	Prisoner	Hutu	8 September 31 October
37	Sovu	M	40	Former blacksmith	Married	Prisoner	Hutu	20 September 28 October

Appendix 7: Interview Guide

N.B.: This is the “grassroots version” of the guide, used in Sovu and Bunzazi. A slightly different version of this Guide was used for the prisoner and released prisoner respondents.

First Theme: Life History Questions

1. What is your name? Where were you born? When? Where is your current residence (cellule and sector)?
2. Did you go to school, where, until what grade? Do you speak a language other than Kinyarwanda?
3. Are you married? Do you have children? How many?
4. What is your religious affiliation? Do you attend religious services regularly?
5. Where did you grow up? Where else have you lived? Where in Rwanda is your family originally from?
6. How do you earn your living? How do/did your parent’s earn theirs?
7. Do you own land? Where?
8. What do you do in a typical day? In a typical week?
9. Are you a member of an association (tontines, coffee-growing or agricultural cooperative, dance/cultural troop)?
10. How do you see Rwandans? Describe Rwandans. What is ‘Rwandan-ness’ or Rwandan culture? What are some Rwandese symbols?
11. What were your experiences during the war and genocide? Were you in the country? Did you lose family members? Do you have relatives in prison?

Second Theme: Portrait of Community

12. Describe your community: geographically, socially, and economically.
13. What are the most usual conflicts in your community?
14. How did the war and genocide take place here?
15. What do you think caused the genocide?
16. How can we prevent more violence here?
17. Is another genocide possible?

Social Cohesion

18. Describe relations between members of your community.
19. Are relations improving or getting worse? Since when?
20. How are conflicts resolved?
21. When was the last time you shared a beer with a member of the other group? When was the last time you were invited/extended an invitation to a wedding/funeral to a member of the other group?
22. Are there mixed marriages in your community today? Cite examples.
23. Are there members of the other group in your family?
24. Do you agree with the following statements:
 - a. “It is naïve to trust others”?
 - b. “If I have a problem, I ask members of my group for help.”
 - c. “A community would have less problems if there were only members of one group.”

Third Theme: Reconciliation

Definitions

25. What does reconciliation mean to you?
26. Who reconciles with whom? Who are the main actors in the reconciliation process?
27. Has reconciliation begun in your community? (If no, is reconciliation possible?)
28. What are the obstacles to reconciliation?
29. What is the most important government policy in terms of reconciliation?
30. What approach would help most:
 - a. Put the past behind us
 - b. Punish the leaders
 - c. Punish all people who are guilty

Memorialisation

31. How should we honour the dead? What do you think about the annual periods of mourning?
32. What do you think about the genocide memorials in/close to your community?
33. Do you think honouring *les justes* would help or hinder reconciliation? How many *justes* were there in 1994? Can you name any?

Courts and Trials

34. What is the role of the ICTR? Do you feel well informed about it? Can you name a trial that has taken place there?
35. What is the role of Rwandan (classical) courts? Do you feel you have access to the courts? Do you feel the courts are impartial?
36. What is the role of the *gacaca* courts? Do you attend regularly? Can you describe a particularly memorable session?
37. In general, is the truth being revealed in *gacaca*?
38. What are the strengths and weaknesses of *gacaca*?

International Community

39. What is the role of the international community in the reconciliation process?

Education

40. How do you/would you explain the genocide to your children? How do you tell them the history of Rwanda.
41. What is the role of education in the reconciliation process?

Fourth Theme: The Future

42. What are your concerns for the future
 - a. Of you and your family?
 - b. Of your country?
43. Are you optimistic/neutral/pessimistic about the future prospects of reconciliation?

Wrap-Up Question

Is this the first time someone asked you questions like these?

Appendix 8: List of RPF Presidential Statements Analysed

	Date	Orig. L.	Title	Type	Pgs
1	06/10/1994	Fr	Allocution prononcée par seon excellence Pasteur Bizimungu, Président de la République Rwandaise lors de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU	Speech	10
2	05/11/1995	Fr	Recommandations de la Conférence tenue à Kigali sur le thème "Génocide, Impunité et Responsabilité: Dialogue pour l'Élaboration d'une Réponse au Niveau National et International"	Report, Office of the President	32
3	20/05/1996	Engl	Letter no 165/96.01/CAB/ngm, in response to Amnesty International Report	Letter, Office of the President	10
4	07/04/1998	Kinya	Genocide Commemoration Speech	Speech	4
5	07/04/1999	Kinya	Genocide Commemoration Speech	Speech	6
6	??/08/1999	Engl	Report on the Reflection Meetings Held in the Office of the President of the Republic from May 1998 to March 1999	Report, Office of the President	90
7	??/08/1999	Engl	The Unity of Rwandans - Before the Colonial Period and Under the Colonial Rule - Under the First Republic	Report, Office of the President	93
8	22/04/2000	Kinya	Address to the Nation by H.E. Paul Kagame on his Inauguration as President of the Republic of Rwanda	Speech	8
9	??/05/2000	Engl	Reply to Human Rights Watch Report "Rwanda: The Search for Security and Human Rights Abuses"	Report, Office of the President	45
10	01/06/2000	Kinya	H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, on the Occasion of the Official Launching of the Process for the Preparation of Poverty Reduction	Speech	4
11	11/09/2000	Engl	Remarks by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the University of Maryland, College Park: "Challenges and Accomplishments in Rwanda Since 1994"	Speech	5
12	01/10/2000	Kinya	H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, Address to the Nation on the 10th Anniversary of the Commencement of the Liberation Struggle	Speech	3

13	18/10/2000	Kinya	H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, on the Occasion of the Official Opening of the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation	Speech	3
14	??/??/2000	Engl	Paul Kagame: My Side of the Story - Interview with West Africa Magazine	Interview	5
15	01/01/2001	Kinya	H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, New Year's Address to the Nation	Speech	3
16	05/02/2001	Engl	H.E. Paul Kagame President of the Republic of Rwanda At Harvard University, Cambridge, USA - Accomplishments and Challenges in Reconciliation and Reconstruction in Rwanda	Speech	3
17	07/04/2001	Kinya	Address to the Nation by on Genocide Commemoration Day	Speech	3
18	??/??/2001	Engl	Interview with New African Magazine	Interview	2
19	07/04/2002	Kinya	Genocide Commemoration Speech	Speech	4
20	??/06/2002	Engl	Kagame Speaks on the Eve of the Launch of Gacaca Trials	Interview	3
21	04/07/2002	Engl	"We have achieved social, political and economic stability" over the last eight years, says President Kagame	Interview	5
22	10/07/2002	Engl	Kagame Highlights Rwanda's Outstanding Concerns in DRC	Press Conference	5
23	15/07/2002	Engl	Remarks by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, on the occasion of the visit to Rwanda by Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank	Speech	2
24	08/08/2002	Engl	Speech by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, on the Occasion of Opening of the Rwanda National Security Workshop with Civil Society	Speech	6
25	16/09/2002	Engl	The Great Lakes Conflicts: Factors, Actors, and Challenges: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda	Speech	16
26	??/09/2002	Engl	"We want to give a chane to other peace efforts," says Kagame	Interview	4
27	01/01/2003	Engl	Address by the President of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E. Paul Kagame, at the New Year's Reception for the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to Rwanda	Speech	2
28	??/01/2003	Engl	The State of the Nation - Paul Kagame interviewed by the International Herald Tribune	Interview	2

29	06/03/2003	Engl	"Conflict Resolution in Africa: The case of Rwanda" Speech by H.E Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the Baker Institute	Speech	6
30	06/03/2003	Engl	"Current Prospects for Peace in the Great Lakes Region" Speech by H.E Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the US Institute of Peace Washington	Speech	6
31	07/03/2003	Engl	"Beyond Absolute Terror: Post-Genocide Reconstruction in Rwanda" Speech by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda at the Commonwealth Club, San Francisco	Speech	6
32	07/04/2003	Kinya	Genocide Commemoration Speech	Speech	4
33	??/06/2003	Engl	President Kagame in Conversation with Clare Short about the Achievements of the Government since 1994	Interview	7
34	12/09/2003	Kinya	Rwandans United for A New Era - Speech by H.E. Paul Kagame on the Occasion of being sworn-in as President	Speech	11
35	??/09/2003	Engl	Interview by AllAfrica.com, Reuters, BBC with the President of Rwanda, H.E. Paul Kagame during the Summit of the African Union in Maputo, Mozambique	Interview	8
36	??/??/2003	Engl	"Kagame says significant progress has been made over the last nine years" - Interview with the East African and East African Standard Newspapers	Interview	7
37	??/??/2003	Engl	Kagame speaks about the lessons from Rwanda's experience with international intervention and conflict prevention" - Interview with Reuters	Interview	5
38	??/??/2003	Engl	"Rwanda moving forward to a unified, peaceful, just and democratic country" Kagame tells The New York Times	Interview	3
39	04/04/2004	Engl	Opening Remarks by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the Conference on Genocide	Speech	3
40	07/04/2004	Kinya	Speech by H.E. Paul Kagame, at the 10th Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda	Speech	6
41	11/09/2004	Kinya	Remarks by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the Celebrations to Mark the First Anniversary of Presidential and Parliamentary Multi-party Elections	Speech	6

42	11/04/2005	Engl	"The Rwandan Genocide and the Failure of the International Community" Speech by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda at the Boston College	Speech	9
43	14/04/2005	Engl	"Managing Ethnic Relations and National Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Lessons for Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region", Speech by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda at California State University - Sacramento	Speech	7
44	14/09/2005	Engl	Speech by H.E. Paul Kagame at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the 60th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations	Speech	4
		Total Kinya	13		
		Total Engl	29		
		Total Fr	2		
				Total Pgs	476

Appendix 9: Top Five Donors to Rwanda: Goals, Funding Priorities and Activities

Donor	Overarching programme goal(s) for Rwanda	HOW: Main funding areas	WHAT: Some examples of activities	Percentage of total budget	Sources
EC	1. Based on 6 PRSP priorities, encapsulated and summarized in GoR twin goals of: 1.1. national unity, reconciliation, good governance 1.2. poverty reduction	1. Rural economic development: the EC's 'focal sector'	Rehabilitation of roads Clean water projects Agricultural information project	50%	Coopération République Rwandaise – Communauté Européenne Stratégie de coopération 9e - FED (2002-07)
		N.B. Includes infrastructure projects			
		2. Non-focal sectors: includes 'good governance' activities	Support to national CSOs Support to the NURC (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission) Strengthen GoR institutional capacity, including justice sector Regional trade (The EC contributions to World Bank MRDP project)	10%	
		3. Macro-economic support (DBS), works towards both twin goals by allowing government to improve and provide equitable access to basic services, improve public financial management, etc.		40%	

World Bank (IDA)	1. Based on 6 PRSP priorities: 1.1. Rural development and agricultural transformation 1.2. Human development 1.3. Economic infrastructure 1.4. Governance 1.5. Private sector development 1.6. Institutional capacity-building	1. Revitalisation of rural economy (governance component included here)	Decentralization and community development projects Road rehabilitation Electrification	39% (includes 7% on community and local government development project)	Country Assistance Strategy for the Republic of Rwanda, 21 November 2002
		2. Private sector development, employment creation	Infrastructure investment ICT investment	23%	
		3. Human and social development	Capacity-building projects (“to try to reduce acute skill gap resulting from war and genocide”) Education (more generally)	29%	
	2. Regional Stability	4. (Regional) Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP)	9%		

UK (FCO)	1a. Regional peace and stability	1. Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Advocate for trading links and Rwanda's participation in the global economy	n/a	Rwanda: Country Assistance Plan, 2003-2006 <i>And</i> UK-GoR MoU (signed on 13 February 2006)
	1b. Promote Rwanda's case on economic issues		Advocate for increased and harmonized aid to Rwanda Chair high-level talks between Kampala and Kigali		
(DFID)	2. Increased aid coordination and effectiveness	2. Direct budgetary support (DBS)	"Two-thirds of our programme will continue to be delivered as DBS. DFID believes that where adequate structures and systems are in place, such support can have the greatest impact on poverty." (2003 Country Assistance Plan, p. 4)	66%	
	3. Improved basic government services and processes	3. Provision of technical assistance to selected ministries and agencies (e.g. Ministry of Lands) where DFID has a comparative advantage	Land reform issue: technical support to the Ministry of Lands (MINITERRE)	34%	

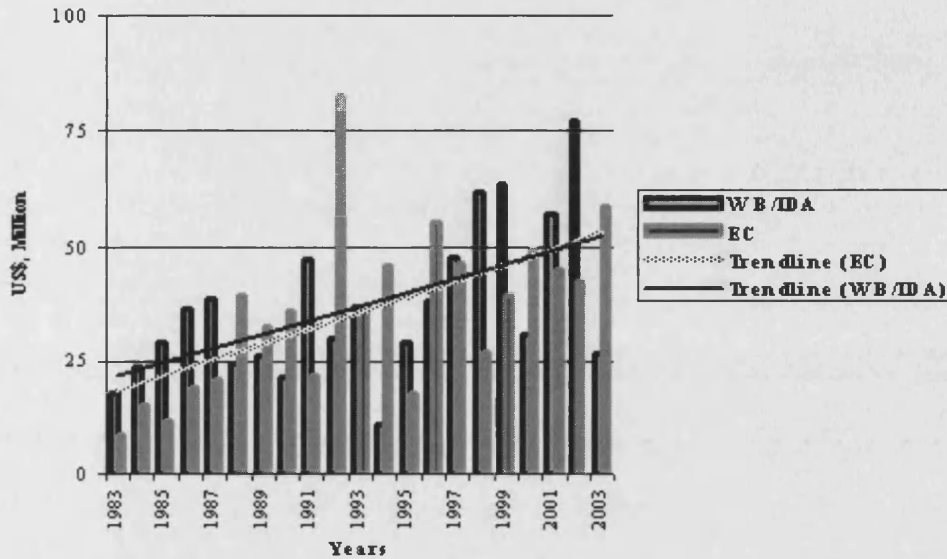
US	1. Increased regional stability	1. Diplomatic route	The US hosts tripartite 'plus' meetings (Uganda, Rwanda, DRC, Burundi)	n/a	USAID website (data sheets for USAID mission to Rwanda) http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2006/afr/rw.html (last accessed 24 April 2006)
	2. Advancing economic prosperity and rural economic growth specifically	2. Rural development: project support	Agricultural transformation Private sector development (primarily agri-business sector)	21% (FY 2004-2006 average)	
	3. Enhancing global health	3. Project support for community health services, particularly HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, etc.	Build health system's capacity and skills in several target Districts (reinforce decentralisation of health system) Training for child health practices, family planning, prevention and control infectious diseases	57% (FY 2004-2006 average)	
	4. Democracy and governance (<u>reconciliation explicitly included here</u>)	4. Project support to for capacity-building for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) among other things	Decentralisation (training for District officials) Activities with Parliament (improve MPs' skills in terms of consultative processes) Technical assistance and training to national CSOs (advocacy skills, financial management, ICT, etc.)	22%	

Dutch	1. Peace and Security in order to: 1.a. promote growth 1.b. promote 'good governance'	1. Project support for 'governance' activities (decentralisation, support to judicial sector)	The Netherlands is the most important donor to the justice sector (including gacaca). Funding is focused on <u>infrastructure</u> and <u>training</u> . Community development and decentralisation projects (district-level capacity building) in various locations Support to school of journalism (at the National University of Rwanda, Butare) Support to fiscal census which will enable local governments and civil society to monitor taxation Support to civil society organisations in policy planning, debate, execution and monitoring.	42% ³⁸⁰ N.B.: includes spending on (rural and other) <u>infrastructure</u>	Elaboration of the strategic choices into goals and results (internal Embassy document) <i>And</i> Brochure by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Kigali: The Netherlands in Rwanda
		2. Project support for economic growth, with a focus on rural economic growth	Rural infrastructure Support to development of high potential agricultural products (probably coffee) Cold storage facilities at Kigali airport (for export of perishables) Jointly with Canada, labour intensive public works programmes in 14 districts (in 3 provinces) Support to Ministry of Agriculture	51% + 7% ("cross-cutting projects")	

³⁸⁰ Disaggregated data for this category was not available at the time of writing.

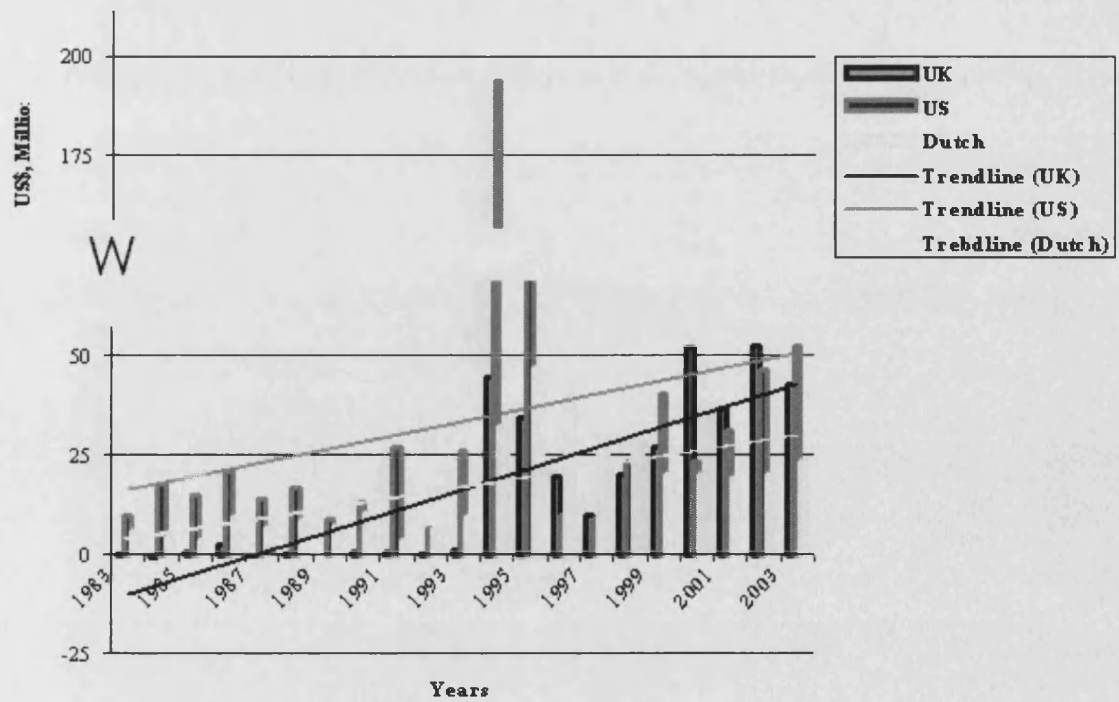
Appendix 10: Official Development Assistance Flows to Rwanda (1983-2003)

Chart 1: Net ODA Flows to Rwanda – from Multilateral Donors (1983-2003)



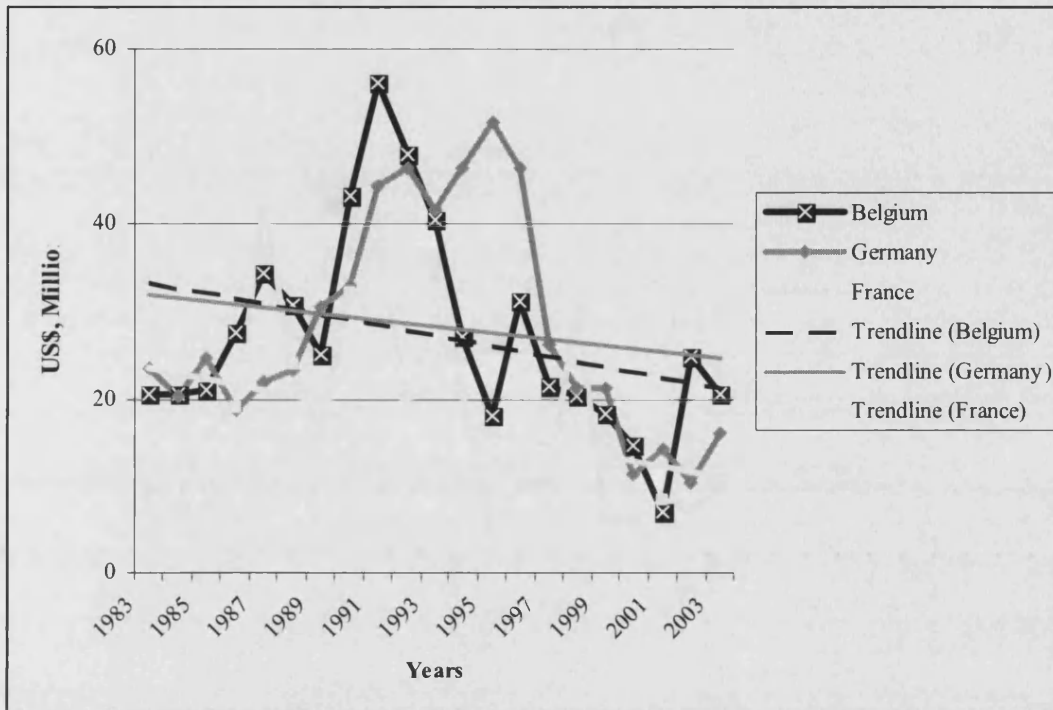
Source: OECD DAC

Chart 2: Net ODA Flows to Rwanda – from "New" Donors (1983-2003)



Source: OECD DAC

Chart 3: Net ODA Flows to Rwanda – and from "Old" Donors (1983-2003)



Source: OECD DAC

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