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## **Post-conflict Development in the Ethnically Divided Society in Rwanda**

Barbara Tóthová

Master in International Studies

Supervisor:

PhD, Manuel João Ramos, Associate Professor with Aggregation

Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

September 2024



SOCIOLOGIA  
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

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History Department

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, anthropologist expert and Professor Manuel João Ramos, for his invaluable guidance, empowering mentorship, and insightful suggestions throughout the research process. His expertise and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this dissertation.

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## **Abstract**

The current state of Rwanda followed by the aftermath of the infamous Rwandan genocide was shaped by many cultural processes. This research project aims to bring to light the experiences of the Rwandese from the two tribes involved in this horrific event, to promote a better understanding of the Rwandan genocide, also known as the genocide against the Tutsi, occurred in 1994 and how this event shaped the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres in Rwanda. This project's main perspective is to shed light on the contemporary developments taking place in Rwanda and to find out how does this past event influence the local communities and their co-existing. The reason for conducting this research and writing this dissertation is the lack of information and research accessible to the public on the given topic, even in academic spaces.

Additionally, the secondary purpose of this project is to provide insights to this specific event, the reasons why it took place and how did it influence Rwanda as a single-standing country, but also Rwanda within the international spectrum. The reason for including this information is that it is high in importance and provides more context to the researched topic.

The data for this project was collected through semi-structured interviews and a well-researched literature review. The interviews also demonstrate the main thesis of this research, which is that the post-conflict development in Rwanda involves working through a collective trauma, allowing ethnic power-sharing and education for tolerance and reconstruction as an important aspect of democratization.

Influences and after-effects of the past genocide discussed in this project include lingering traumatic and posttraumatic stress disorder signs in former prisoners and their children, displacement of entire communities, economic underdevelopment, systemic human rights violations, and more.

Barriers to a rapid improvement within the society discussed in this project include lack of justice for the original perpetrators of the genocide, but overall, the country has seen huge developmental strides over the last 20+ years. Other themes include the effects of the

genocide on education and the youth, mental health of the entire population, efforts to unite the country and more.

These findings indicate the need for educational resources and mentorship for the Rwandese to be able to recover from this collective trauma, as well as a need for local government programs to foster a sense of community among citizens and the neighbouring countries. It has been concluded that more research is to be done on the given topic to provide more information and insight into the current state of Rwanda, following the genocide of 1994.

**Keywords:** Rwanda, genocide, ethnic division, democracy, collective trauma

## Resumo

O estado actual do Ruanda, seguido pelas consequências do infame genocídio ruandês, foi moldado por muitos processos culturais. Este projeto de pesquisa visa trazer à luz as experiências dos ruandeses das duas tribos envolvidas neste terrível evento, para promover uma melhor compreensão do genocídio ruandês, também conhecido como genocídio contra os tutsis, ocorrido em 1994 e como este evento moldou as esferas social, económica, política e cultural no Ruanda. A principal perspectiva deste projecto é lançar luz sobre os desenvolvimentos contemporâneos que ocorrem no Ruanda e descobrir como é que este evento passado influencia as comunidades locais e a sua coexistência. A razão para realizar esta pesquisa e escrever esta dissertação é a falta de informações e pesquisas acessíveis ao público sobre o tema em questão, mesmo em espaços académicos.

Além disso, o objectivo secundário deste projecto é fornecer informações sobre este evento específico, as razões pelas quais ocorreu e como influenciou o Ruanda como um país único, mas também o Ruanda no espectro internacional. A razão para incluir essas informações é que elas são de grande importância e fornecem mais contexto ao tema pesquisado.

Os dados para este projeto foram coletados por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas e uma revisão bibliográfica bem pesquisada. As entrevistas também demonstram a tese principal desta investigação, que é a de que o desenvolvimento pós-conflito no Ruanda envolve trabalhar através de um trauma colectivo, permitindo a partilha étnica do poder e a educação para a tolerância e a reconstrução como um aspecto importante da democratização.

As influências e consequências do genocídio passado discutidas neste projecto incluem sinais persistentes de perturbação de stress traumático e pós-traumático em ex-prisoneiros e nos seus filhos, deslocação de comunidades inteiras, subdesenvolvimento económico, violações sistémicas dos direitos humanos e muito mais.

As barreiras a uma rápida melhoria na sociedade discutida neste projecto incluem a falta de justiça para os autores originais do genocídio, mas, no geral, o país registou enormes

avanços de desenvolvimento nos últimos mais de 20 anos. Outros temas incluem os efeitos do genocídio na educação e na juventude, na saúde mental de toda a população, nos esforços para unir o país e muito mais.

Estas conclusões indicam a necessidade de recursos educativos e de orientação para que os ruandeses possam recuperar deste trauma colectivo, bem como a necessidade de programas governamentais locais para promover um sentido de comunidade entre os cidadãos e os países vizinhos. Concluiu-se que mais pesquisas devem ser feitas sobre este tópico para fornecer mais informações e insights sobre o estado atual de Ruanda, após o genocídio de 1994.

Palavras-chave: Ruanda, genocídio, divisão étnica, democracia, trauma coletivo

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## **1. Introduction**

The after-effect of the Rwandan genocide which took place in 1994 and which claimed the lives of approximately 800,000 people, majority of who were the Tutsi, left Rwanda devastated and deeply scarred with lasting wounds to their identity, social structure, economic, political, and spiritual spheres. As the nation heavily struggled with the aftermath of this tragedy, the challenge of fostering post-conflict developments in Rwanda's ethnically divided society emerged as a paramount concern. This dissertation seeks to explore the complexities of post-conflict developments in Rwanda over the last 20+ years, focusing on the unique socio-political dynamics shaped by ethnic divisions and the efforts undertaken to reconcile, rebuild, and achieve sustainable development in the country and in its communities.

From a certain point of view, Rwanda's history can be described by deep-rooted ethnic divisions, notably between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, which have been perpetuated by the Belgian and German colonial legacies and political manipulations over the last few centuries. These divisions, historically backed by colonial policies of divide, rule, and conquer became entrenched in Rwandan society, fueling tensions between local tribes and ultimately culminating in the genocide of 1994. The failure of the international community to intervene effectively during the genocide further exacerbated tensions and highlighted the urgent need for reconciliation and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath.

The *Modern African Studies Journal* published by Cambridge University Press debates that what immensely contributed to the ethnic conflict in Rwanda is, in fact the German and Belgian colonial legacy. Scholar Mahmood Mandami (2001) argues that the Rwandan genocide “needs to be thought through within the logic of colonialism, which created the native impulse to eliminate the settler” (Magnarella, 2002). He further explains an interesting theory which tells us that the Tutsi, “a group with a privileged relationship to power before and during colonialism, were constructed as a privileged alien settler presence, first by the colonialists, then by the Hutu revolution of 1959 and the Hutu power propaganda from 1990 to 1994. During German and Belgian colonial rule and thereafter, Hutu was made into a native identity and Tutsi a settler one.” Mandami (2001) further explains that because of this, the genocide needs to be looked at from a natives’ perspective and argues that the Hutu saw themselves as sons and daughters of the soil, and their mission as one of clearing

the soil from a threatening alien (Tutsi) presence. The conclusion Mandami (2001) draws upon is that this was not an ethnic, but racial cleansing, be it that for the Hutu who killed, Tutsi was “a colonial settler, not a neighbor” (Magnarella, 2002). Despite the effort to transform ethnic identities and promote national unity across the country, the legacy of social ethnic divisions continues to shape social, political, and economic dynamics in post-genocide Rwanda. The Hutu and Tutsi divide, deeply engraved in Rwandan history, has had widespread implications for governance, social cohesion, and development of the country. Understanding the context of these ethnic divisions is crucial for comprehending the realities of post-genocide development in Rwanda and applying effective strategies for national reconciliation and sustainable development of social life.

This dissertation seeks to achieve several objectives. Firstly, it aims to critically analyze the socio-political context of post-conflict development in Rwanda, with a focus on the role of ethnic divisions in shaping development dynamics. Secondly, it seeks to assess the effectiveness of post-genocide reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts in promoting social cohesion and national unity. Thirdly, it aims to examine the impact of development policies and initiatives on promoting inclusive growth and reducing socio-economic disparities in ethnically divided communities. Finally, it seeks to identify challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in Rwanda's post-conflict context and propose recommendations for new policies and practices.

This dissertation is organized into several chapters, each addressing a key aspect of post-conflict development in Rwanda. Chapter 1 provides a brief recollection of the history of the country, predominantly from the point of view of colonial history, social, and ethnic background. Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive review of the literature on ethnic divisions, tactics used against the victims of genocide, post-conflict development, and reconciliation processes. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework guiding the study and outlines the research methodology. Subchapters delve into empirical findings, analysis, followed by conclusions and recommendations for new policies and practices that could contribute to a more stable and developed Rwanda.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **1. Howard, and Astri Suhrke. “The International Response to Conflict and Genocide.”**

Howard and Suhrke’s report dives deep into how the international community responded to the Rwandan genocide, and it paints a rather sobering picture. They detail the slow and often disjointed response from global actors, which, according to their analysis, only made the situation worse. The delay in providing timely and effective aid was a significant issue that hampered both immediate relief and long-term recovery efforts (Howard & Suhrke, 2003).

Their critique is quite revealing. It’s clear from their findings that the lack of a coordinated international approach not only failed to address the crisis effectively but also had lasting impacts on post-genocide recovery. They argue that without a more efficient and unified response, the international community missed crucial opportunities to ease the suffering and support Rwanda’s recovery (Howard & Suhrke, 2003).

What’s particularly important in their analysis is the emphasis on the need for a well-organized international framework for dealing with such crises. The authors make a strong case that to truly support a country like Rwanda in its journey to heal and rebuild, there has to be a concerted effort both from local stakeholders and the international community (Howard & Suhrke, 2003). This underscores a key point in your dissertation: the role of global cooperation is essential for effective post-conflict recovery and development.

### **2. De Heusch, Luc. “Rwanda: Responsibilities for a Genocide.”**

In his insightful article, De Heusch explores the historical and sociopolitical roots that set the stage for the Rwandan genocide. He focuses on how colonial powers played a significant role in shaping the ethnic landscape of Rwanda. According to De Heusch, the colonial administration didn’t just observe but actively manipulated ethnic identities to strengthen their control over the region. This manipulation created and deepened divisions between the Hutus and Tutsis, laying the groundwork for the mistrust and animosity that would later explode into violence in 1994 (De Heusch, 1995).

What stands out in De Heusch's analysis is his argument that these ethnic divisions weren't merely a result of internal dynamics but were significantly influenced by external forces, particularly colonial rulers. This perspective is crucial for understanding why the ethnic tensions in Rwanda run so deep and how they have persisted into the present day (De Heusch, 1995).

This article is particularly important for my dissertation because it highlights the need for Rwanda to address these historical grievances as part of its post-conflict development process. By confronting and educating its population about the colonial origins of these divisions, Rwanda can move towards healing and fostering a more inclusive national identity. De Heusch's work underscores the importance of this historical context in shaping Rwanda's approach to unity and recovery, as demonstrated in the ongoing efforts discussed in my research (De Heusch, 1995).

### **3. "African Studies." East Africa Living Encyclopedia, University of Pennsylvania.**

The entry on Rwanda in the East Africa Living Encyclopedia offers a thorough historical perspective, spanning from pre-colonial times through to the post-colonial era. It sheds light on how colonial powers, especially the Belgian administration, played a significant role in shaping ethnic identities and relations in Rwanda. By favoring certain groups over others and implementing policies that exacerbated divisions, colonial rulers deepened existing ethnic rifts (African Studies, n.d).

This historical overview is crucial for understanding the current social dynamics and the enduring impact of colonialism on Rwandan society. The entry underscores how these colonial policies have left a lasting legacy, which continues to affect ethnic relations and the nation's ability to heal from past traumas (African Studies, n.d).

For my dissertation, this source is particularly valuable because it highlights the importance of addressing and educating the Rwandan population about these colonial legacies. By fostering a more nuanced understanding of how ethnicity was manipulated for colonial control, Rwanda can work towards overcoming the divisive impacts of its past. This educational effort is essential for building a more cohesive and unified society, which is a key focus of my research on post-conflict development (African Studies, n.d).

#### **4. “United Nations: Rwanda.”**

The United Nations leaflet on Rwanda offers a clear and concise overview of the historical context and the UN’s role in Rwanda’s post-genocide recovery. The document outlines various initiatives that the UN has undertaken to foster peace, stability, and development in the wake of the 1994 genocide. It provides insights into the efforts aimed at promoting justice, reconciliation, and rebuilding trust among the Rwandan people (United Nations, 2022).

One of the key takeaways from this leaflet is the UN’s approach to addressing the complex challenges of post-conflict reconstruction. It details the difficulties faced in implementing these initiatives, including the intricate process of justice and the need for effective reconciliation mechanisms (United Nations, 2022).

For my dissertation, this source is particularly valuable because it highlights the role of international frameworks in supporting Rwanda’s recovery. It underscores the importance of global cooperation in addressing the aftermath of collective trauma and emphasizes how such cooperation can facilitate sustainable development. The UN’s involvement in Rwanda serves as a pertinent example of how international support can aid in healing and rebuilding a society that has been torn apart by conflict. Additionally, the experiences outlined in this leaflet can offer lessons for enhancing future international interventions to prevent and de-escalate conflicts more effectively (United Nations, 2022).

#### **5. Magnarella, Paul J. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*.**

In his article in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Magnarella delves into the complex legal and social landscape of Rwanda after the genocide, with a particular emphasis on the efforts toward justice and reconciliation. He offers a thorough analysis of the establishment and functioning of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Gacaca courts, which were pivotal in addressing the atrocities of 1994 and in fostering national healing (Magnarella, 2002).

Magnarella highlights both the successes and the challenges faced by these legal mechanisms. The ICTR, established by the United Nations, played a crucial role in

prosecuting high-level perpetrators of the genocide, while the Gacaca courts, a traditional Rwandan justice system, were instrumental in dealing with a larger number of cases at the community level (2002). Despite their importance, these systems encountered various obstacles, including issues of fairness, efficiency, and the need to balance traditional and modern legal practices.

This source is particularly valuable for my dissertation as it provides deep insights into how legal and social frameworks interact in the aftermath of a genocide. Magnarella's discussion underscores the importance of effective justice systems in rebuilding trust and addressing collective trauma. His analysis aligns well with my focus on the necessity of robust legal and social structures to support healing and development in post-conflict Rwanda (Magnarella, 2002).

#### **6. Korman, Rémi. "The Tutsi Body in the 1994 Genocide: Ideology, Physical Destruction, and Memory."**

In his thought-provoking chapter from *Destruction and Human Remains*, Rémi Korman digs into the harrowing details of the Rwandan genocide, particularly focusing on how the Tutsi bodies were both physically and symbolically targeted. He explores how genocidal ideologies dehumanized the Tutsi, leading to their systematic extermination. Korman vividly describes how these ideologies not only justified the horrific violence but also sought to erase Tutsi identity from Rwanda's collective memory (Korman, 2014).

What makes Korman's analysis particularly powerful is his focus on the lasting impact of these atrocities on Rwanda's collective memory and identity. He underscores how the brutal destruction of Tutsi bodies was part of a larger effort to obliterate their memory from the nation's history. This perspective offers a deep understanding of the trauma experienced by Rwandans and highlights the crucial role that remembering and memorializing these events play in the healing process (Korman, 2014).

For my dissertation, Korman's insights are incredibly valuable. They reinforce the argument that addressing the legacy of the genocide is essential for Rwanda's post-conflict recovery. By confronting and honoring this painful history, Rwanda can work towards building a more inclusive and resilient society. This approach not only helps in dealing with collective trauma but also plays a key role in preventing future conflicts (Korman, 2014).

## **7. White, Kenneth R. “Scourge of Racism: Genocide in Rwanda.”**

In his article for the *Journal of Black Studies*, Kenneth R. White offers a compelling analysis of the Rwandan genocide through the lens of racial ideologies. He delves into how colonial powers entrenched racial hierarchies and divisions, which played a crucial role in the lead-up to the genocide. White argues that these deeply ingrained racial ideologies didn't just influence the conflict but were instrumental in its escalation and violence (White, 2009).

What's particularly striking about White's work is his examination of the long-lasting impact these racist ideologies have had on Rwandan society. He makes a strong case for the need to dismantle these harmful beliefs to pave the way for lasting peace and development. According to White, confronting and overcoming these colonial-era prejudices is essential for Rwanda to move forward and build a more equitable and harmonious society (White, 2009).

This article is a key piece for my dissertation as it reinforces the argument that addressing the racial and ethnic ideologies perpetuated by colonialism is vital for Rwanda's post-conflict recovery. By tackling these deep-seated issues, Rwanda can work towards a more inclusive future and foster a society that truly reflects equality and unity (White, 2009).

## **8. Drumtra, Jeff. “Testimony of Jeff Drumtra on U.S. Response to the Crisis in Rwanda/Central Africa.”**

Jeff Drumtra's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee offers a vivid firsthand account of how the United States responded to the crisis in Rwanda. In his detailed account, Drumtra discusses both the actions that were taken and the significant missed opportunities in addressing the genocide and its aftermath. His insights provide a window into the complexities and challenges faced by global humanitarian efforts during such crises.

What makes Drumtra's testimony particularly valuable is its focus on the international response mechanisms and the lessons learned from the U.S. involvement—or lack thereof—in Rwanda. His observations highlight how timely and effective international support is crucial in managing and mitigating the effects of humanitarian crises. This perspective is



directly relevant to my dissertation, as it emphasizes the need for swift and coordinated international action to support post-conflict recovery and development (Drumtra, 1994).

This testimony helps to underline the importance of a well-prepared and responsive global community in aiding countries like Rwanda during and after such catastrophic events. It reinforces the argument that effective international intervention is key to helping societies heal and rebuild after conflict.

#### **9. Alluri, Rina M. “A History of Conflict: The Rwandan Civil War and Genocide.”**

In her chapter from *The Role of Tourism in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Rwanda*, Rina M. Alluri provides an insightful historical analysis of the Rwandan Civil War and genocide. She effectively links these tragic events to broader themes of conflict and reconciliation, offering a nuanced look at the socio-political dynamics that precipitated the genocide (Alluri, 2009).

Alluri’s work stands out for its exploration of the efforts to rebuild and reconcile Rwanda in the aftermath of such devastation. She highlights how tourism has played a surprising yet significant role in this process, promoting peace and development by fostering understanding and cooperation among Rwanda’s diverse ethnic groups (Alluri, 2009). This perspective is particularly interesting as it connects the economic and social aspects of post-conflict recovery with broader reconciliation efforts.

This source is incredibly valuable for my dissertation because it provides context on the historical roots of ethnic divisions in Rwanda and emphasizes the importance of addressing these roots through various post-conflict strategies. Alluri’s discussion on the role of tourism in bridging gaps between different groups offers a unique angle on how to support education and development in a post-conflict setting (Alluri, 2009).

#### **10. de Waal, Alex, and Rakiya Omaar. “The Genocide in Rwanda and the International Response.”**

In their insightful analysis, Alex de Waal and Rakiya Omaar critically examine the international community’s response to the Rwandan genocide. Their work provides a detailed account of how both the actions and inactions of global actors shaped the course of the crisis. They delve into the political and humanitarian considerations that influenced the international

response, shedding light on the complex dynamics of international diplomacy and intervention during such a critical period (de Waal & Omaar, 1995).

What's particularly valuable in their assessment is how they highlight both the successes and shortcomings of international efforts. While some responses were timely and effective, many were marked by delays and missed opportunities, which had significant repercussions for Rwanda's recovery and rebuilding process (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Their discussion underscores the intricate balance between political interests and humanitarian needs, revealing the challenges faced by global actors in providing adequate support.

This work is highly relevant to my dissertation as it addresses the global dimension of Rwanda's post-conflict recovery. It illustrates the necessity for effective and coordinated international efforts that support local initiatives and tackle collective trauma. The insights from de Waal and Omaar's analysis reinforce the argument that a well-orchestrated international response is crucial for aiding countries in their recovery from such profound crises (de Waal & Omaar, 1995).

**11. Re-engineering rural society: The visions and ambitions of the Rwandan elite. *African Affairs*, 108(431), 289-309.**

Ansoms' (2009) study delves into the post-genocide economic strategies implemented by Rwanda's elite, focusing on rural development policies. The research highlights how the Rwandan government's vision for development has led to significant transformations in the rural landscape, particularly through land reforms and agricultural modernization. However, Ansoms points out that these policies, while aimed at reducing poverty and fostering economic growth, often marginalize the rural poor by failing to address their specific needs. The study suggests that the Rwandan elite's ambitious vision for economic progress can exacerbate existing inequalities if not implemented with careful consideration of the local context and the inclusion of the rural population in decision-making processes.

**12. Remembering to forget: Chosen amnesia as a strategy for local coexistence in post-genocide Rwanda. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute***

In his research, Buckley-Zistel (2006) explores the concept of "chosen amnesia" in post-genocide Rwanda, where the state and society have selectively chosen to forget certain

aspects of the past to promote coexistence and national unity. This strategy involves the deliberate suppression of ethnic identities and memories associated with the genocide to prevent the resurgence of ethnic tensions. The study discusses the implications of this approach, arguing that while it has contributed to peace and stability, it also risks creating a superficial sense of unity that may not address the underlying issues of identity and memory. The research raises critical questions about the long-term sustainability of peace built on such selective memory practices.

### **13.The Gacaca courts, post-genocide justice, and reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without lawyers. Cambridge University Press.**

Clark's (2010) comprehensive analysis of the Gacaca courts offers an in-depth examination of this unique approach to post-genocide justice and reconciliation in Rwanda. The Gacaca courts, which were community-based and operated without lawyers, aimed to process the vast number of genocide-related cases quickly and promote reconciliation at the grassroots level. Clark highlights the successes of these courts in fostering dialogue and bringing perpetrators to justice but also critically assesses the challenges they faced, including issues of fairness, the psychological impact on survivors, and the courts' long-term effectiveness in achieving true reconciliation. The study provides a nuanced view of the Gacaca courts, acknowledging their role in Rwanda's recovery while also noting their limitations.

### **14.Teaching history after identity-based conflicts: The Rwanda experience. Comparative Education Review.**

In his review, Freedman, Weinstein, and Murphy (2011) investigate the role of history education in post-genocide Rwanda, focusing on how the Rwandan government has restructured the educational curriculum to promote national unity and reconciliation. The study examines the challenges of teaching a revised history that minimizes ethnic distinctions and emphasizes a unified national identity. The authors argue that while the government's efforts have been largely successful in promoting a cohesive narrative, there is a risk that this approach could suppress important aspects of Rwandan history and lead to the exclusion of diverse perspectives. The research underscores the delicate balance required in post-conflict education to foster unity without erasing critical historical narratives.

**15. Inside Rwanda's Gacaca courts: Seeking justice after genocide. University of Wisconsin Press.**

Ingelaere's (2016) book provides an ethnographic account of the Gacaca courts, offering a detailed examination of their operation and impact on Rwandan society. The study is based on extensive fieldwork and presents the voices of both victims and perpetrators involved in the Gacaca process. Ingelaere argues that while the Gacaca courts were effective in delivering a form of justice and encouraging community involvement, they also had significant shortcomings, particularly in terms of the psychological and social consequences for participants. The book highlights the complexities of achieving justice in a post-genocide context and contributes to the broader understanding of transitional justice mechanisms in divided societies.

**16. From classrooms to conflict in Rwanda.**

King's (2014) research explores the intersection of education and conflict in Rwanda, examining how the country's education system has been both a tool for and a site of conflict. The study traces the historical role of education in reinforcing ethnic divisions and how the post-genocide government has sought to reform the system to promote unity and reconciliation. King discusses the challenges of implementing these reforms, particularly in a society still deeply affected by the trauma of the genocide. The book provides valuable insights into the role of education in either perpetuating or resolving conflicts, making it a crucial contribution to the study of post-conflict reconstruction in Rwanda.

**17. High modernism at the ground level: The Imidugudu policy in Rwanda. Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines**

In his detailed research, Newbury's (2011) article examines the Imidugudu policy, a post-genocide rural settlement program aimed at restructuring the living conditions in Rwanda. The policy, which involved moving rural populations into planned villages, was part of the government's broader strategy for modernization and economic development. Newbury critiques the policy's top-down implementation, arguing that while it had some success in improving infrastructure and security, it often disregarded the needs and preferences of the rural population. The study highlights the tensions between the government's vision for

development and the realities on the ground, offering a critical perspective on the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction in rural Rwanda.

#### **18. Difficult choices in the new post-conflict agenda: The international community in Rwanda after the genocide.**

Uvin's (2001) article provides a critical analysis of the international community's role in Rwanda's post-genocide reconstruction. The study highlights the difficult choices faced by international actors in balancing the need for immediate humanitarian assistance with the long-term goals of development and peacebuilding. Uvin (2001) argues that while international aid played a crucial role in Rwanda's recovery, it also came with challenges, including issues of dependency, the imposition of external agendas, and the sometimes conflicting goals of different international stakeholders. The article contributes to the broader debate on the effectiveness of international interventions in post-conflict settings and the importance of aligning these efforts with local needs and priorities.

#### **19. Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda: Discourse and practice. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue Canadienne d'Études du Développement***

Zorbas' (2004) article explores the discourse and practice of reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, focusing on the gap between the government's rhetoric and the reality on the ground. The study argues that while the Rwandan government has successfully promoted a narrative of unity and reconciliation, the implementation of these policies has often been uneven, with some groups feeling marginalized or excluded. Zorbas (2004) suggests that the government's top-down approach to reconciliation may not fully address the complexities of ethnic identity and the lingering effects of the genocide. The article provides a critical perspective on the challenges of achieving genuine reconciliation in a society still deeply affected by its past.

### **3. Methodology**

Post-conflict development in ethnically divided societies, particularly in Rwanda, is an area that has garnered considerable academic interest. The interplay between ethnic divisions and developmental efforts is complex and multifaceted, necessitating a thorough investigation into how these dynamics influence community rebuilding and national progress. While there is extensive research on post-conflict reconstruction and ethnic relations, the integration of these two fields remains underexplored, particularly in the context of Rwanda's unique history and socio-political landscape.

This research aims to bridge this gap by examining the specific challenges and opportunities presented by ethnic divisions in Rwanda's post-conflict development. Key questions drive this investigation: How do ethnic divisions impact the effectiveness of development initiatives in Rwanda? Are these divisions obstacles or catalysts for progress? What strategies can be implemented to foster reconciliation and equitable development in ethnically diverse communities? These questions are critical to understanding the broader implications of ethnic diversity on national development.

The primary objective of this research is to uncover how individuals and communities perceive the influence of ethnic divisions on their daily lives and developmental prospects. By focusing on personal narratives and community experiences, this study seeks to illuminate the nuanced ways in which ethnic identity intersects with development. Additionally, the research aims to identify practical strategies that have been successful in promoting unity and progress, providing valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and scholars.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these factors, this research endeavors to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on post-conflict development and ethnic relations, offering a nuanced perspective on the challenges and potentials of rebuilding a divided society. The ultimate goal is to inform more effective and inclusive development policies that acknowledge and address the complex realities of ethnic diversity in post-conflict settings like Rwanda.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the post-conflict development in the society of Rwanda. Given the complex and deeply personal nature of this subject, qualitative methods are well-suited to capture the nuanced experiences and perceptions of individuals affected by the conflict and subsequent development efforts.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

The research utilizes a case study approach, focusing on Rwanda as a single case to provide an in-depth understanding of the post-conflict development process. This approach allows for a detailed examination of the unique socio-political and economic dynamics at play in Rwanda and facilitates the exploration of both individual and community-level experiences.

### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

The data for this study were collected using a combination of semi-structured interviews and an extensive review of existing literature, including books and scientific articles. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow for in-depth exploration of participants' personal experiences and perspectives on post-conflict development in Rwanda. This method provided flexibility, enabling me to probe deeper into relevant topics as they emerged during the conversations. In addition to interviews, a thorough literature review was conducted to contextualize the findings within the broader body of existing research. This included analyzing books and peer-reviewed scientific articles that address post-conflict development, ethnic relations, and reconciliation efforts in Rwanda. The combination of qualitative interviews and comprehensive literature review provided a somewhat solid framework for understanding the complex dynamics at play in Rwanda's post-conflict development. However, it needs to be highlighted that the amount of literature dedicated to the topic of this research is very limited.

Although the search for participants was challenging, participants for this interview were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure a range of perspectives, including two participants from different ethnic backgrounds, ages, and socioeconomic statuses. All participants have agreed to have their given names shared publicly within this dissertation, and anywhere else this dissertation might be posted.

Name	Age	From	Ethnic origin	Interview via
Ngabo – Participant A	32	Rwanda	Abatutsi	Zoom
Gasore – Participant B	21	Rwanda	Hutu	Zoom

Ngabo is a 32-year-old secondary school teacher born in Kigali, Rwanda, who lived through the 1994 genocide and its aftermath. Born into a very diverse community, he has witnessed firsthand the profound impacts of the conflict on his family and neighbors. A few years after the genocide, his family and him have decided to move to Europe.

Currently, Ngabo is employed as a teacher at a secondary school in Berlin, Germany, where he resides. His experiences during the conflict and his subsequent involvement in peacebuilding initiatives provide him with a unique perspective on the challenges and successes of post-conflict development in Rwanda. Ngabo's insights are invaluable in understanding the long-term impacts of ethnic divisions and the strategies that can foster unity and progress in a post-conflict society. His interview has also provided a look into the perception of a genocide to a very young child.

Gasore is a 21-year-old student from Butare, a city in southern Rwanda. Growing up in the shadow of the genocide, he pursued higher education in business and social entrepreneurship, aiming to create a better life for himself and his family, according to his words. He currently resides and studies in Budapest.

Both Ngabo and Gasore bring personal experiences that enrich this study. Their diverse backgrounds and involvement in different aspects of post-conflict development



provide a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities faced by Rwanda as it continues to rebuild and progress.

The interview with Ngabo lasted 24 minutes and he was informed about his option of not having to answer questions he is not comfortable answering. The interview was conducted via Zoom platform.

The interview with Gasore lasted 29 minutes and he was informed about his option of not having to answer questions he is not comfortable answering. The interview was conducted via Zoom platform.

### **3.4 Document Analysis**

To triangulate the findings from interviews and observations, document analysis was also undertaken. Relevant documents included government reports, non-governmental organization (NGO) publications, academic articles, and media reports. These documents provided background information, statistical data, and additional perspectives on the genocide and all sources used directly or indirectly can be found in the References section.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded by hand. Initial responses were generated from the data, and through an iterative process, these responses were grouped into broader themes. The themes were then analyzed to identify patterns and relationships, providing a comprehensive understanding of the perception of the genocide for both participants.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, several ethical considerations were addressed to ensure the well-being and confidentiality of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were informed of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and measures taken to protect their anonymity. Participants agreed to share their first names. All data was securely stored and only accessible to the researcher and the participants.

Additionally, the researcher was mindful of the potential emotional impact of discussing past conflicts and was prepared to provide information on support services if needed. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of ISCTE.

### **3.7 Limitations**

While the qualitative approach provides rich, detailed insights, it also has limitations. The findings are specific to the participants and communities studied and may not be generalizable to all of Rwanda and its citizens, or other post-conflict societies. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, although serious efforts were made to triangulate data from multiple sources, such as the scientific articles or history books mentioned above.

Despite these limitations, the methodology employed in this study offers a framework for exploring the complexities of post-conflict development in Rwanda and provides valuable contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1 Literature Findings**

In reviewing the existing literature on post-conflict development in ethnically divided societies, particularly in the context of Rwanda, several key themes emerged. The literature provided valuable insights into the mechanisms of reconciliation, the role of education in nation-building, and the ongoing challenges that the country faces as it continues to heal from the genocide of 1994.

### **4.2 Reconciliation and Unity Efforts**

A significant body of literature emphasizes the importance of reconciliation in post-conflict Rwanda. The Gacaca courts, for example, are widely discussed as a leading local justice mechanism that aimed to address the atrocities committed during the genocide while promoting communal healing (Clark, 2010). The success of these courts, however, is seen as mixed; while they brought many perpetrators to justice and fostered dialogue, they also faced criticisms regarding fairness and the psychological impact on survivors (Ingelaere, 2016).

Moreover, the literature highlights the Rwandan government's emphasis on unity and reconciliation as central pillars of its national development strategy (Zorbas, 2004). The government's policies, including the creation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), have been instrumental in promoting a shared national identity, although the extent to which these efforts have permeated everyday interactions among different ethnic groups remains a subject of debate.

### **4.3 The Role of Education in Nation-Building**

Upon reviewing, it has been found that education is consistently highlighted as a critical tool for fostering national unity and promoting post-conflict development in Rwanda. According to studies by Buckley-Zistel (2006) and King (2014), the Rwandan education system has been strategically utilized to instill values of unity and reconciliation among the younger generation. Textbooks and curricula have been revised to include narratives that

emphasize the importance of unity and to reduce ethnic distinctions that were previously emphasized under colonial and pre-genocide regimes.

However, some scholars argue that while these efforts are commendable, they may also lead to the suppression of ethnic identities, which could create underlying tensions (Freedman et al., 2011). The challenge, therefore, lies in balancing the promotion of national unity with the acknowledgment of diverse ethnic identities in a way that does not reignite old animosities.

#### **4.4 Economic Development and Social Reconstruction**

The literature also examines the link between economic development and social reconstruction in Rwanda. The government's focus on economic reforms, infrastructure development, and poverty reduction is seen as a strategy to prevent future conflicts by addressing some of the root causes of the genocide, such as inequality and poverty (Ansoms, 2009). Several studies, including those by Uvin (2001) and Newbury (2011), suggest that these efforts have contributed to significant improvements in the standard of living and have helped stabilize the country.

However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring that economic growth benefits all segments of the population and does not exacerbate existing inequalities. The literature points to the need for more inclusive development policies that consider the needs of marginalized communities and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are widely shared.

#### **4.5 Interview Findings**

The interviews conducted with Ngabo, a 32-year-old teacher now living in Germany, and Gasore, a 21-year-old student studying mechanical engineering in Budapest, provided personal insights into the ongoing process of reconciliation and development in Rwanda. Their perspectives offer a complementary, but personal understanding of the themes identified in the literature, highlighting the lived experiences of Rwandans in the post-conflict era.

#### **4.6 Ngabo's Perspective on Reconciliation and Education**

Ngabo's interview reinforced the literature's findings on the importance of reconciliation in Rwanda's post-conflict recovery. Growing up in Kigali, Ngabo witnessed examples of ethnic violence firsthand. His reflections on the changes in his community over the years echo the literature's discussion on the success of government-led reconciliation efforts. Ngabo spoke about the improved sense of community in his old neighborhood, attributing it to the government's push for unity and reconciliation.

Furthermore, Ngabo's current role as a teacher in Germany underscores the critical role of education in fostering reconciliation. He emphasized the importance of teaching history in a way that promotes healing and understanding, a theme that is strongly supported by the literature. Ngabo's efforts to stay connected with his roots and contribute to peacebuilding initiatives in Rwanda highlight the diaspora's potential role in supporting national development.

#### **4.7 Gasore's Perspective on Youth and Economic Opportunities**

Gasore's interview provided valuable insights into the experiences of the younger generation in Rwanda's society. Although he was not born at the time of the genocide, Gasore's understanding of its impact was shaped by the stories of his family and his experiences growing up in Butare. His observations on the changing dynamics in his community align with the literature's findings on the increasing sense of unity and cooperation across ethnic groups.

Gasore also discussed the economic opportunities that have emerged in Rwanda since the genocide, particularly in education. His own journey to study abroad is a testament to the progress made in this area. However, his reflections on the challenges faced by his family and peers in finding stable employment highlight the ongoing need for inclusive economic policies, as discussed in the literature. Gasore's hopes for the future, centered around a united and prosperous Rwanda, reflect the aspirations of many young Rwandans who see education and economic opportunity as key to the country's continued development.

#### **4.8 Shared Insights and Common Themes**

Both interviews revealed common themes that resonate with the findings from the literature. Both Ngabo and Gasore emphasized the significance of education in promoting unity and reconciliation, aligning with the broader academic discourse on the topic. Additionally, their reflections on the evolving sense of community and the challenges of economic development in Rwanda provide a nuanced understanding of the country's post-conflict journey.

However, the interviews also highlighted the personal nature of these experiences, offering a more intimate perspective on the themes explored in the literature. Ngabo's and Gasore's stories underscore the importance of individual agency and the diverse ways in which Rwandans are contributing to the country's recovery and development.

## **5. Seeds of Division: Exploring Rwanda's Colonial Legacy**

The United Nations Security Council has ruled that the estimate of lives lost in 1994 is between 800,000 and 1 million Tutsi and a moderate number of Hutu who were all slaughtered in the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (United Nations, 2022). Although the exact figure of the deceased during this event is unknown, official Rwandan documents estimate that the number is higher by almost 200,000, which takes the estimate to more than a million. Twenty-nine years later, this figure is still increasing, and other estimates are being generated, mostly uncovering the brutality of the killings, and other practices used as weapons during the genocide. Delving into the reasons for the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi and understanding them is essential for understanding the current state of Rwanda, promoting reconciliation, preventing future atrocities, ensuring justice, and honoring the victims and survivors of this horrible event. That is why it is crucial to explore the colonial past of Rwanda and look for connection between this event and those who planted the seeds of division into Rwandan society. Understanding the surrounding experiences and the historical context in which the genocide occurred comes with exploring the colonial legacies of first Germany and Belgium and what they left behind.

According to United Nations, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1884 at the Berlin Conference, the territory of Rwanda was assigned to Germany as a part of German East Africa (United Nations, 2022). Under the German rule, the social hierarchy remained as follows: Tutsi chiefs maintained order over the majority made up of Hutu lower classes (United Nations, 2022). Rwanda was only a German colony for a short period of time, as the Belgian administration gained control over the territory during World War I. After the war, Belgium was granted a League of Nations mandate to govern Ruanda-Urundi which it ruled indirectly through Tutsi kings (United Nations, 2022). Then, in the late 1950's, during several waves of decolonization, tensions between the major tribes intensified in Rwanda. The Hutu political movement, which aimed to secure majority rule, was at the spotlight while certain factions within the Tutsi establishment opposed democratization and feared losing their privileged status (United Nations, 2022). Years later in November 1959, a violent episode provoked a Hutu uprising that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Tutsi and the displacement of entire communities, who were compelled to seek refuge in neighboring nations. This event marked the onset of the 'Hutu Peasant Revolution' or 'social revolution' spanning from 1959 to 1961,

symbolizing the decline of Tutsi authority and the escalation of ethnic tensions (United Nations, 2022).

Prior to the colonial era, as recorded by the Kigali National Genocide Archive and Library, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa lived in relative harmony. It was common for the Tutsi to be mainly cattle herders, or soldiers and administrators, the Hutu were crop farmers and the marginalized Twa hunters, or gatherers and potters. Based on anthropologist Luc De Heusch, individuals from all tribes could move up and down the tribal spectrum as their fortune rose and fell, and intermarriage was not uncommon either (1995). It also wasn't until the Belgian colonization and the introduction of personal identity cards which distinguished individuals based on the tribe they belonged to that the tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi became focused on race (Straus, 2006). This enabled for the animosity between the two tribes to grow. After World War II, Ruanda-Urundi became a UN trust territory ruled over by Belgium until 1962, after which it became an independent Rwanda and Burundi (United Nations, 2022).

In the meantime, the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1948 categorized the criteria for what acts are considered to be the acts of a 'genocide' (United Nations, 2022). Throughout the colonial era, including during both German and Belgian occupation, Tutsi, who were a minority, were favored over the Hutu and were given western-style education, while the Hutu were the oppressed masses (Melvern, 2000). In 1959, the Hutu rebelled against the Belgian colonial powers and the Tutsi elite, forcing over 150,000 Tutsi to flee to Burundi and other surrounding countries (United Nations, 2022). These events were fueled by the ongoing support of the Tutsi by the Belgian colonial powers. This Hutu uprising from 1959 to 1961 signified the end of the Tutsi domination and it sharpened the ongoing ethnic tensions across Rwanda. In 1962, Rwanda gained its independence, the monarchy was abolished, and a republic has been announced. Belgium then withdrew from the country, Rwanda and Burundi became two independent states and the Hutu revolution installed a new president, while thousands of Tutsi were forced to flee (United Nations, 2022). Republic of Rwanda was admitted to the United Nations membership upon having received the recommendation from the Security Council, while more and more Tutsi fled to countries like Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire. This enabled for a new cycle of ethnic conflict violent to spread as the Tutsi refugees started to organize against the Hutu in Rwanda to regain their initial position of power. The conflict has been escalating and new waves of



refugees were being created as several attacks by the Tutsi provoked the Hutu to murder civilians in Rwanda (United Nations, 2022). After Rwanda's independence in 1962 and the massive exodus of the Tutsi, a French anthropologist, Claudine Vidal, came to study the social hierarchy and structure to Rwanda and reached several conclusions. She claims that "the cow contract, which another anthropologist Maquet places at the heart of the traditional social system only existed between Tutsi: it was during colonization that the 'ubuhake' instituted a relationship a work extortion between the pastoralists, the owners of bovine capital, and the agriculturists (De Heusch, 1995). Ubuhaque, according to the African Studies Center, is a form of a relationship between the Tutsi and the Hutu that had a form of a client-patron contract (African Studies).

Furthermore, the study explains that:

At first, the agreement meant that Hutu could use Tutsi cattle in exchange for personal and military service. Over time ubuhake became a feudal-type class system through which land and cattle, and therefore power, were in the hands of the Tutsi minority. The Hutu indentured themselves to a Tutsi lord giving him agricultural products and personal service in exchange for the use of land and cattle." (African Studies)

Anthropologist Luc De Heusch that ubuhake is certainly not a German, nor a Belgian invention and therefore refuses to accept the proposition of anthropologist Claudine Vidal, that the Hutu and the Tutsi constituted "neither social classes nor castes before Belgian colonization" (De Heusch 1995). She also bases her take on this topic based on the fact that ubuhake was a name that was given to a social order around the 15<sup>th</sup> century, both in today's Rwanda and Burundi. Vidal, in her work, admits that 'there was a dominant group of Tutsi origin' even before colonization, and this argument is later supported with De Heusch's findings that reveal that the first German travelers noted differences in status before Belgian colonization (De Heusch 1995). De Heusch further suggests that Vidal's claims that "the crystallization of Hutu and Tutsi groups into ethnic social classes happened during colonization" and that "this system of inequality had gradually built up over four decades" is not properly explained in detail and supported by evidence. Both anthropologists, however, certainly agree that the Belgian colonization had strengthened an already existing Tutsi domination (De Heusch 1995).

December 1963 is recorded as the year in which more than 20,000 Tutsi were killed in Rwanda in response to a military attack carried out by exiled Tutsi in Burundi and this naturally created another wave of refugees. It is estimated that by the mid 1960-s, half of the Tutsi population was living outside of Rwanda (United Nations, 2022). By the late 1980s, approximately 480,000 Rwandans had fled as refugees, mainly to neighboring countries such as Burundi, Uganda, Zaire, and Tanzania. Despite their calls to return to Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana, the president of Rwanda at the time, argued that the country was already under significant population pressure and lacked sufficient economic opportunities to accommodate a large influx of Tutsi refugees and within 8 years, a civil war broke out in Rwanda (United Nations, 2022). The following years between 1990-1994 were described by several events, such as a major attack on Rwanda with a force of around 7,000 fighters from Uganda led by Rwandan Patriotic Front (later only RPF), a military movement aiming at securing repatriation of the exiled Rwandans (United Nations, 2022).

In August 1993, facilitated by the Organization of African Unity (later only OAU) and regional governments, the signing of the Arusha peace agreements seemingly resolved the conflict between the Hutu-dominated government and the opposition RPF and in support of that, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (later only UNAMIR) (United Nations, 2022). Unfortunately, despite all the efforts to promote peace and national, ethnic unity, the deaths of presidents of Burundi and Rwanda provoked several weeks of intense and systematic massacres throughout Rwanda and it at the time, it was estimated that over one million people have perished and an estimated 150,000 to 250,000 women were also raped (United Nations, 2022). Luc De Heusch explains the events of the genocide in detail, describing that:

Two months after I left, several hundred Tutsi, contemptuously called ‘cockroaches’ (cancerlats), did cross the southern frontier of the country. Badly armed, they were quickly crushed by the Rwandan national guard commanded by Belgian officers. Then ensued throughout the country the first collective massacre of the Tutsi population. Their last leaders to stay in the country were summarily executed on the orders of one or more Belgian officers. (De Heusch, 1995, p.6)

De Heusch claims that leaders of opposition parties were executed upon suspicion, and simultaneously, preparations for the mass slaughter of the Tutsi population were

underway, indicating a meticulously orchestrated genocide rather than a spontaneous outburst of popular rage (1995). Militia, trained in lethal operations, coerced Hutu civilians into participating in the merciless killings, sparing no women or children, with the ultimate goal being the eradication of the Tutsi 'race'. This tragic event marked an unparalleled catastrophe in African history (De Heusch, 1995).

The aftermath of the genocide included a war that broke out between and the Democratic Republic of Congo, then known as Zaire, in 1996 where thousands of government officials, soldiers, and militia who participated in the genocide fled Rwanda after being warned that the RPF might kill them (Verhoeven, 2012). In late 1996, the Rwandan government initiated the much-anticipated genocide trials, which had been delayed due to the loss of judicial personnel and extensive damage to courts, jails, and the overall infrastructure (United Nations, 2022).

By 2000, there were more than 100,000 genocide suspects awaiting trial. At the international level, an International Criminal Court for Rwanda has been set up to prosecute persons responsible for the genocide and those who violated the international humanitarian law in Rwanda and its neighboring states between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994. A comprehensive understanding of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda necessitates recognition of external influences, internal tensions, and psychological elements. However, the core of the issue lies in the nature of the Rwandan state itself (Verhoeven, 2012). The genocide occurred under the authority of the state, with Rwandans playing primary roles. Both historical legacies and colonial and neo-colonial policies shaped this state, whose increasingly authoritarian and unpopular government was facing significant challenges to its power by the early 1990s, leading to genocide as a desperate measure for survival. Many of the methods employed to plan, execute, and justify the genocide in Rwanda shared striking similarities with those seen in the 20th century's other major genocide, the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews (Verhoeven, 2012).

## **6. Mass Atrocity: The Tutsi Body in the 1994 Genocide**

In the turbulent history of Rwanda, the context of the genocide of 1994 is deeply rooted in a complex interplay of historical, social, ethnic, and political factors that spanned decades, shaping the nation's trajectory towards one of the most tragic and harrowing events of the 20th century. Understanding the context and the background of the genocide is crucial for understanding the rebuilding of the Rwandan nation and healing past wounds. Since 1994, the memorialization of the Tutsi genocide has prominently featured the bodies of victims. These bodies serve not only as forensic evidence but also as public displays in genocide memorials, aiming to vividly recall the historical realities of the genocide, including the locations and methods of massacres.

The atrocities committed during the genocide were fueled by an ideology propagated by 'hate media', specifically targeting Rwanda's Tutsi minority, resulting in the extermination of over 80% of the Tutsi population within a three-month period (Korman, 2014). This systematic extermination was characterized by brutal acts of violence, particularly through the use of bladed weapons, underscoring the importance of examining the historical context of bodily representations, including the colonial-era Hamitic myth. The terms 'Hutu', 'Tutsi', and 'Twa' existed before colonization but were reinforced by European colonizers who imposed a racially hierarchical ideology to maintain social control in the region (Korman, 2014). As previously stated, based on Hamitic ideology, "the Hutus were the country's true indigenous inhabitants, of 'Bantu' stock, while the Tutsis were foreign invaders, of 'Nilotic' or 'Hamitic' origin." (Korman, 2014, p. 226). The former were generally describes as 'peasants' and others were considered 'a feudal class' and studies show that this classification was based on stereotypical racial representations (Korman, 2014, p. 226).

According to Korman, the racial stereotypes that existed before colonization were rooted in Tutsis being described as "tall with thin noses and a lofty bearing, as opposed to Hutus, who were short, stocky, and flat-nosed. The Tutsis were sometimes even described as "false negroes", as Europeans with black skin." (Korman, 2014, p. 227). This system of

classification was an official policy of the Belgian colonialists, and was extended to the previously mentioned identity cards, which stated the holder's ethnic origin from 1931 onwards (9). One might wonder why were physical features important in an ethnic conflict, but studies confidently show that the body itself served as a "pendant to the identity card" and that based on physical features, the enemy could be recognized (Korman, 2014). Korman's interviewee, Esther Mujawayo, who is a co-founder of an organization for widows after the genocide, recalls a message that was aired by an extremist media source in the early days of the genocide:

How can you distinguish the cockroach from the Hutu?

You have several methods to choose from.

The cockroach has a gap between his front teeth.

The cockroach has narrow heels.

The cockroach has eight pairs of ribs.

The cockroach has stretch marks on his thighs near the buttocks.

The cockroach has a thin nose.

The cockroach's hair is not so curly.

The cockroach's skull is long at the back, and his forehead is sloped.

The cockroach is tall and there is haughtiness in his eyes.

The cockroach has a pronounced Adam's apple. (Korman, 2014, p. 227)

It is unfortunate that these very harmful and inhumane depictions were used as the basis for recognition and identification of individuals' ethnicities at the mobile checkpoints, where the militia arrested a large number of individuals (Korman, 2014). Furthermore, if the individual was missing his or her identity card, physical appearance would decide between life and death of that particular individual (Korman, 2014). As one woman survivor recounts:

They started shouting as soon as they saw me. One of them knew me well and wanted to save me. He claimed that I was not a Tutsi. He said 'Look at her carefully. She does not have the features of a Tutsi.' They began to examine me, so as to judge my Tutsiship (Korman, 2014, p. 228).

The examinations carried out by the militias were in place to identify the characteristics of a Tutsi body. Height was a crucial element, along with other physical

features that stood out, particularly the form of the nose and teeth (Korman, 2014). Therefore, the nose became a tool with which ethnicity was measured. Implications are that this racist behavior and attitude translated into the media, such as newspaper which supported the RPF that printed a joke, stating that if one wanted to become a member of the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR), an extremist party belonging to the Hutu, the person had to be able to insert both of his fingers inside his nostrils (Korman, 2014). The assumption was that the party was reserved for the Hutu only. The joke was later adopted by other extremist entities and forces, and it was integrated into numerous texts, and in the midst of the 1994 genocide, it has become an actual method of checking the ethnicity of those who were arrested at the checkpoints (Korman, 2014). Victims were subjected to the degrading practice of inserting two fingers into their nostrils to determine the width of their nose and therefore their ethnicity. One militiaman, when interrogated on this subject, gave the following account:

I was told that the Tutsi is the enemy of the Hutu because he has a slender nose. One can easily slip a finger into a Hutu's nostrils as his nose is wide. In order to find out whether a Hutu or a Tutsi was in front of us, we always tried putting a finger in his nose ... if the finger did not fit we knew it was a Tutsi. (Korman, 2014, p. 229)

In this framework of bodily categorization, the nose emerged as a primary identifier, being conspicuous and easily quantifiable. It became a focal point of propaganda, as evidenced by Kantano Habimana, a prominent RTLM journalist, advocating for its destruction. Teeth were also scrutinized, with the killers associating Tutsis with distinct dental features, possibly influenced by stereotypes of their pastoral lifestyle and historical figures like King Musinga. Notably, gaps between teeth (*inyinya*) were sought after as markers of Tutsi identity. Skin color was another criterion, with a darker complexion (*igikara*) considered Hutu and a lighter one (*inzobe*) associated with Tutsi identity (Korman, 2014).

Ethnicity played a central and devastating role in the Rwandan genocide, fueled by longstanding tensions between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority. Colonial policies institutionalized ethnic divisions, exacerbating societal rifts. This culminated in a genocide orchestrated by extremist Hutu factions, aiming to eradicate the Tutsi population. Propaganda

and militia mobilization demonized Tutsis, leading to widespread violence. Ethnicity was weaponized to segregate and exterminate perceived enemies, resulting in profound suffering.

### **6.1 Cruelty Practices During the Massacres**

Knowing the severity of the Rwandan genocide serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of promoting peace, justice, and reconciliation in the aftermath of mass violence, and underscores the collective responsibility to prevent genocide and atrocities worldwide. One of the defining features of the genocide committed against the Tutsi in 1994 was the range of practices of cruelty and violence inflicted on the Tutsi by their killers, aiming to cause suffering upon as to eliminate the victims (Korman, 2014). Delving into the essence of this cruelty, what were the distinctive characteristics that defined it in 1994?

Véronique Nahoum-Grappe delineates cruelty as a distinct manifestation of violence, distinguished by its heightened intensity (Korman, 2014). While violence may induce different levels of pain, cruelty is characterized by its deliberate intent to inflict suffering and degradation. It operates within a framework of unequal power dynamics, a dynamic that was starkly evident during the genocide (Korman, 2014). In Rwanda, a notable aspect of this cruelty was the execution of killings in plain sight. Throughout the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, perpetrators brazenly carried out their atrocities, openly committing murder in front of bystanders (Korman, 2014). This public display of violence was enabled by an ideology that shielded perpetrators from consequences, fostering a sense of social impunity that facilitated the murders. Alongside this, victims were subjected to humiliating treatment, often being stripped naked in front of onlookers who participated in the violence and pillaged abandoned belongings. (Korman, 2014). The act of stripping victims also aimed to expose perceived physical differences of the Tutsis, preventing them from concealing their identity. Furthermore, the massacres were often perpetrated by individuals within close proximity to the victims, imbuing the killings with an intimate and familial dimension (Korman, 2014). Teachers turned against their students, neighbors betrayed neighbors, and even within families, the crime of genocide tore apart the bonds of kinship (Korman, 2014).

During the genocide, many families termed as mixed were ensnared in the violence. Two scenarios emerged: those with Tutsi husbands and those with Hutu husbands. It's noteworthy that Rwandan culture assigns ethnic identity through the father (patrilineal). In families where the father was Tutsi, survival prospects lay with the Hutu mother. Tragically, some women in this situation resorted to killing their own children, now viewed as offspring of the enemy (Korman, 2014). Conversely, Hutu husbands were coerced by militias to kill their Tutsi wives in a bid to protect their children (Korman, 2014). These children, dubbed 'Hutsi', grappled with the conflicting identities of being both offspring of perpetrators and victims of the genocide (Korman, 2014). In some instances, Hutsi children fell victim to their Hutu fathers, illustrating the extreme racialization of social and familial bonds during the genocide (Korman, 2014). In families where the father was Tutsi and the mother was Hutu, only the Hutu mother had a chance of survival. Some women in this circumstance chose to end the lives of their own children, who were then labeled as 'children of the enemy.' Conversely, many Hutu husbands were coerced by militias to murder their Tutsi wives in order to protect their children (Korman, 2014). Referred to as 'Hutsi,' these children have since grappled with their dual identity as offspring of perpetrators and victims of the genocide (Korman, 2014). In certain instances, Hutsi children were even slain by their Hutu fathers, illustrating the profound racialization of social and familial dynamics during the genocide era (Korman, 2014).

Another notable aspect of the genocide was the selection of implements utilized to inflict suffering upon the victims. It is noteworthy that the tools employed for the purpose of execution were typically not traditional weapons but rather ordinary objects. This circumstance led to the development of euphemistic expressions to mask the brutality enacted. Claudine Vidal has highlighted the substitution of the term 'to cut' (gutema) for 'to kill' (kwica), indicating how the very instruments used contaminated the vocabulary associated with the act of taking life (Korman, 2014). Nonetheless, certain weapons were endowed with explicit designations, such as the cudgel known as 'Nta mpongano y'umwanzi' (no pity for the enemy) (Korman, 2014). The utilization of such weaponry inevitably entailed direct confrontation with the victim, breaching anatomical barriers and necessitating contact with blood, an experience shared by both perpetrators and victims alike (Korman, 2014). The perpetrators of the genocide also aimed to diminish the stature of the Tutsi, who were perceived as being taller. Some have described this intention as "shortening tall trees" (Korman, 2014). Victims endured horrific mutilations, including the severing of feet, legs,



and decapitation. The initial act of severing Achilles' tendons was intended to immobilize victims, stripping them of their ability to escape and their perceived physical superiority. Dismemberment also symbolized the eradication of Tutsi "growth" from the community (Korman, 2014).

In the commemorative song "We refuse to allow our history to be falsified," composer and genocide survivor Kizito Mihigo underscores this metaphorical imagery. He sings, "Twanze kuba insina ngufi," meaning "we refuse to be little banana trees," alluding to the Rwandan proverb implying vulnerability (Korman, 2014). During the genocide, as it is obvious, the killers targeted bodily features perceived as distinctive to Tutsi identity (Korman, 2014). This obsessive focus on minor differences drove them to amputate noses, fingers, and other appendages, both from the deceased and the living. This distorted ideology even extended to attacks on inanimate objects and animals, notably religious statues believed to bear the "markings" of Tutsi physical traits (Korman, 2014).

Various anthropological theories have emerged since 1994, aiming to elucidate the motivations behind such acts of violence. These hypotheses delve into the notion of a pervasive culture of violence and obedience in Rwanda, alongside the mythical and cosmogonical beliefs prevalent among its populace (Korman, 2014). While these perspectives may initially appear insightful, some tend to adopt a culturalist framework that poses certain challenges (Korman, 2014). According to Korman, it is imperative not to allow the cultural dimension of the violence to overshadow the genocide's inherently political nature (2014). Anthropologist Danielle de Lame contends that the economic and political landscape of the early 1990s alone cannot fully explain the magnitude of the genocide's brutality (Korman, 2014). She proposes several hypotheses, including the existence of historical traditions rooted in cruelty and violence, which she describes as a recurring theme in Rwandan history. De Lame also explores the role of fear and a mythico-religious interpretation of history centered around the figure of the king. According to her analysis, historical periods marked by a weakened monarchy often precipitated violent upheaval among the populace (Korman, 2014). These concepts, intertwined with the political crisis of the early 1990s, have been used to rationalize the violence perpetrated during the genocide. It is noteworthy that defense teams at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda frequently invoke this culturalist hypothesis as a means to contextualize the events of the genocide (Korman, 2014).

## **6.2 Global Response to Rwandan Genocide: Initial Assessments**

In August 1993, President of Rwanda Habyarimana, facing pressure from various quarters including domestic opposition, the RPF, Western donors, and neighboring countries, consented to a comprehensive peace accord with the RPF and civilian opposition factions, aiming for a transition to democracy (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). These agreements, inked in Arusha, Tanzania, delineated power-sharing arrangements across governmental bodies and the military, included provisions for safeguarding human rights, and facilitated the deployment of the UN Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), a contingent of 2,500 UN troops tasked with overseeing the peace process. Despite this, Habyarimana, influenced by hardline elements within his circle, attempted to stall the peace process, which, if successful, would have marginalized extremist Hutu factions politically (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). On April 4, 1994, the UN Security Council voted to retain the UN mission in Rwanda. Subsequently, during a regional summit in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Rwandan President Habyarimana committed to initiating power transfers. However, upon his return to Kigali, extremists within the Presidential Guard orchestrated the downing of his aircraft, precipitating the commencement of widespread violence and within 48 hours of the crisis erupting, France and Belgium mobilized troops to evacuate foreign nationals from Rwanda (Melvern, 2000).

However, the situation quickly deteriorated, culminating in the murder of ten Belgian UN peacekeepers who were attempting to protect the Hutu Prime Minister at the time, Agathe Uwilingiyamana. This incident prompted Belgium and the United States to advocate for the withdrawal of UNAMIR (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Consequently, the force was downsized to 450 personnel, leaving thousands of Rwandans who sought refuge at UN bases vulnerable to violence. This decision sparked international outcry, leading the Security Council to reassess its stance and authorize a new peacekeeping contingent of 5,500 troops

on April 29. Delays ensued in assembling the new peacekeeping force, exacerbated by debates over its mandate and funding, partly influenced by a cautious approach to peacekeeping endorsed by the United States (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). By the time UN troops were operational in July, the interim government had been ousted by the RPF, which had resumed its offensive shortly after the onset of the massacres (de Waal & Omaar 1995).

Based on de Waal & Omaar (1995), the UN's role in Rwanda has drawn substantial criticism, yet this obscures equally significant deficiencies in the response of international humanitarian agencies and while some positive actions were taken and lessons learned, there were also egregious errors made. Critique of humanitarian efforts has often been stifled by the perceived sanctity of aid organizations, hindering public accountability, and impeding necessary reforms. Moreover, relief operations have, in many instances, inadvertently exacerbated violence and oppression rather than alleviating suffering (de Waal & Omaar 1995). This pattern of integration between relief aid and conflict has been observed in various global crises, including Biafra, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. In Rwanda, there was initial hope that humanitarian efforts might circumvent this trend, but unfortunately, relief operations became entangled in the violence, perpetuating a cycle of suffering.

According to humanitarian law, requesting a cease-fire constitutes a political action that charitable organizations are neither legally nor morally obligated to undertake. It does not fall within the realm of human rights advocacy, nor is the UN mandated to demand a cease-fire in conflicts (as seen in the case of Kuwait, where it sanctioned a war). However, a more appropriate human rights stance would have entailed urging both conflicting parties to adhere to the Geneva Conventions and to take all necessary measures to halt the genocide, including potential military intervention (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Nonetheless, in the Rwandan context, the UN consistently called for a cease-fire, prioritizing procedural neutrality over the fundamental principle of human justice upon which the organization ostensibly stands. The sluggish pace of the UN's investigations into human rights violations in Rwanda seriously underscores these systemic deficiencies. Certain international NGOs also advocated for a cease-fire. For instance, Oxfam called for a cessation of hostilities alongside political negotiations for several reasons: a) a cease-fire was deemed essential for the deployment of UN troops, b) the ongoing conflict inflicted significant human suffering and impeded the delivery of humanitarian aid and c), failure to advocate for a cease-fire

might have been interpreted as compromising the neutrality of the organization (de Waal & Omaar, 1995).

Oxfam's advocacy for a cease-fire during the Rwandan genocide reflected the organization's institutional priorities, predominantly focused on emergency relief efforts. By incorporating human rights and conflict resolution into its appeal, Oxfam conveyed the impression that its proposed actions aligned with the broader interests of Rwanda. However, this representation was misleading as it masked Oxfam's primary aim of providing immediate relief rather than addressing the underlying causes of the conflict comprehensively (de Waal & Omaar, 1995).

A cease-fire, had it been implemented, would likely have impeded the Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF) efforts to halt the genocide. Oxfam's position ultimately had little impact due to the RPF's military victory (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Had an internationally supervised cease-fire been established, along with the deployment of UN troops, the conflict dynamics would have likely shifted. The RPF would have controlled less territory, while the government and Interahamwe militia retained significant influence. It is conceivable that killings, albeit on a reduced scale, would have persisted under such circumstances (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Furthermore, a cease-fire implies a pursuit of negotiated conflict resolution, with potential outcomes ranging from political settlement to renewed hostilities. The former scenario, involving an agreement between the government and the RPF, might have resulted in the political rehabilitation and impunity of those responsible for genocide. Alternatively, both sides could have regrouped for future conflict, potentially leading to a more protracted and bloodier war, as observed in other contexts such as Angola or other African countries. Thus, while Oxfam's advocacy may have temporarily shielded a small number of Tutsis and Hutus opposing the regime, it is likely that Rwanda would have descended into a prolonged state of political crisis. (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). International military intervention, under the guise of humanitarianism, could have inadvertently perpetuated impunity for genocide rather than addressing its root causes.

The failure to address the escalating refugee crisis before 1990 by both the Rwandan and Ugandan governments significantly contributed to the conditions that precipitated future conflicts. The growing tensions that culminated in the 1990 invasion by the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) were inadequately monitored (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). Despite the

onset of civil war, it catalyzed a robust and effective diplomatic process that eventually resulted in a peace agreement. This process, led by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and regional states, particularly Tanzania, garnered considerable international attention and support. The United Nations (UN) assumed formal responsibility for implementing the subsequent Arusha Accords but failed to adequately utilize the OAU and local African states in this capacity. Consequently, a disconnect emerged between the mediation and implementation phases, undermining the efficacy of the Accords.

Insufficient attention was paid to warnings from human rights organizations and other sources indicating that extremist forces linked to the regime were organizing and arming themselves to disrupt the peace process and target the minority group for massacre (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996).

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), mandated to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement, was structured and financed in a manner that appeased a cost-conscious United States, increasingly reluctant to support UN peacekeeping efforts. The force was inadequately supported and deployed slowly, despite warnings that rapid action was crucial to maintain the peace process's momentum. UNAMIR lacked the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, such as the crisis in neighboring Burundi in October 1993. In January 1994, unequivocal warnings reached the UN regarding a planned coup, an assault on UN forces, provocations to resume the civil war, and detailed plans for genocide. This critical intelligence was recorded in a separate Black File and circulated within the UN Secretariat (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). However, senior officials questioned the information's validity and made no contingency plans for worst-case scenarios. Similar intelligence failures were evident at the state level, particularly in France and Belgium, both of which had substantial capacity for intelligence gathering in Rwanda at the time. The UN Secretariat interpreted UNAMIR's mandate narrowly and repeatedly denied the Force Commander permission to search and seize arms caches. As developments in early 1994 further eroded the peace accords, the Secretary-General and the Security Council threatened to withdraw UNAMIR, thereby emboldening extremist factions (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996).

When the crisis escalated on April 6, 1994, there was a lack of decisive leadership at the UN headquarters in New York. The Secretary-General misread the nature of the conflict. The killing of ten Belgian soldiers led to political pressure in the Security Council to

withdraw, contrary to recommendations from UNAMIR's Force Commander and African countries contributing troops. According to Adelman and Suhrke (1996), the genocide's scale became undeniable, the UN reversed its position and accepted an obligation to protect civilians. However, the realization of this mission (UNAMIR II) was hindered by the reluctance of key Council members to fund or provide troops and to equip African troops expeditiously. The force was deployed only after the genocide and civil war had ended. The French Operation Turquoise was executed with speed and efficiency, but the decision to intervene came only two and a half months after the genocide began, when the civil war was nearly over (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). This intervention stemmed the mass outflow of refugees in the southwest but was compromised by France's close ties to the former regime (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996).

When large numbers of refugees, retreating government forces, and genocide perpetrators crossed into Zaire and Tanzania between April and July 1994, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warned the UN in New York of the security problems this posed. The Secretariat took the unprecedented step of examining the issue in a peacekeeping context, but the Security Council provided no support. The matter fell back to the UNHCR, which devised a novel and reasonably effective solution to police the refugee camps. However, according to Adelman and Suhrke (1996), this arrangement could not address the broader security threats posed by militarized exile communities. Domestically, similar problems arose with large concentrations of internally displaced persons in southwest Rwanda, culminating in the violent closure of the Kibeho camp in April 1995. Despite the efforts and planning that coordinated UN agencies, NGOs, and the Rwandan government, these initiatives were ultimately inadequate.

The report aims to elucidate why early warnings were ignored or not translated into effective conflict management. Based on Adelman and Suhrke (1996), several factors contributed to these failures: The UN, as a universal membership organization, is ill-suited for collecting and flagging information about human rights violations and potential genocides in member states. Both the UN system and the NGO community failed to link human rights reports to dynamic analyses of social conflict. Key actors were predisposed to deny the possibility of genocide, as acknowledging it would necessitate altering their courses of action (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). The success of the Arusha Accords and the failure of the Somalia intervention skewed objective analysis of Rwanda. Other global crises distracted

world leaders, creating a substantial noise that overshadowed the situation in Rwanda. Confusion between genocide as a legal term and its popular association with massive murder contributed to the inadequate response (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). A general desensitization to mass slaughters and disbelief that a massive genocide could occur further hindered effective action (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). The media, as well, with few exceptions, played an irresponsible role in reporting on Rwanda. The failure to accurately and adequately report on the unfolding genocide significantly contributed to international disinterest and the inadequate response (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996).

As confirmed by Adelman and Suhrke (1996), the refugee outflows from Rwanda did not merely constitute the typical flight of civilians amidst warfare but rather, they were largely orchestrated by those culpable for the genocide. Some of these refugees, including the main perpetrators of violence, were well-armed and organized, seeking sanctuary abroad to regroup and potentially launch further attacks on Rwanda. The scale of these exoduses, with hundreds of thousands fleeing to Tanzania and millions to Zaire, marked egregious abuses of international relief mechanisms (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). The extremists behind the genocide exploited the predictable response of the international relief community, knowing that material assistance would flow readily, with little effort to isolate them from the refugee population (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Consequently, they inflicted additional suffering on those compelled to flee, while leveraging assistance from relief agencies to consolidate their power (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Most relief organizations and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) fell into this trap. Initially, there was reluctance to confront the situation directly, with a focus on establishing aid distribution systems rather than addressing the presence of killers among the refugees (de Waal & Omaar, 1995). Even when this deception was getting widely recognized, efforts to neutralize the extremists were hampered by their access to security and resources.

Furthermore, the refugee crisis shifted the international response away from the internal conflict in Rwanda towards humanitarian concerns and others. Relief agencies felt compelled to respond, albeit with a primarily humanitarian focus. However, this response was politically naive, as it delegated authority within refugee camps to individuals complicit in the genocide, thereby facilitating their control over the camps. Additionally, the presence of NGOs alongside these individuals made it challenging to hold them accountable for their

crimes. In this context, there was also competition among NGOs for humanitarian funds, further complicating efforts to address the political dimensions of the crisis. Thus, while the refugee crisis demanded urgent humanitarian action, the failure to address its political underpinnings perpetuated the cycle of violence and impunity in Rwanda.

The Rwandan genocide illustrates critical lessons regarding the limitations of international response mechanisms in a world of multiple crises. The disinterest of major Western states and the unilateral actions of France significantly influenced the policy field, with detrimental consequences. The cumulative fault lines in the international system resulted in a genocide of immense proportions, highlighting the need for structural reforms to prevent such tragedies in the future (De Waal & Omaar 1995).

### **6.3 Recovery initiatives – Post-war**

The genocide in Rwanda, marked by mass rape and sexual slavery, resulted in numerous births, abandoned children, internal displacement affecting hundreds of thousands, and millions of refugees. This also led to the severe disruption of the social fabric, including institutions like the church, school, families, clans, friends, and government in Rwandan society. The immediate response to this crisis involved humanitarian aid and peacekeeping. Donor nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) swiftly dispatched food, supplies, and personnel to various refugee camps, with a focus on rebuilding critical infrastructures like banking, finance, the Constitution, and agriculture (White, 2009). Another response aimed at fostering peace and justice was the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda, although its effectiveness and legacy are subject to debate. Additionally, efforts were made to reconstruct the country's judicial system, including the implementation of village-level hearings known as *gacacas*, to prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity (White, 2009). In July 1996, the Tribunal initiated a Sexual Assault Committee to coordinate investigations into gender-based violence, recognizing the widespread rape, torture, and mutilation of Tutsi women before their murders (White, 2009). The United Nations also established the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, tasked with protecting and promoting human rights, as well as investigating human rights violations in the country. Notably, the Rwandan government responded by making public announcements over former "killer" radio stations to downplay ethnic differences. This



included removing ethnic references from identity cards and avoiding discussions of ethnic quotas (Drumtra, 1994).

As part of a concerted effort between the government and UNICEF, comprehensive reeducation seminars were initiated to foster ethnic unity and combat the dissemination of racist propaganda (White, 2009). These seminars served as vital platforms for promoting reconciliation and tolerance among communities deeply affected by the genocide (White, 2009). Through these initiatives, individuals were provided with the necessary tools and insights to challenge harmful stereotypes and prejudices, thereby paving the way for a more inclusive and harmonious society (White, 2009). A key aspect of these seminars was the training of teachers, with UNICEF playing a pivotal role in equipping 7,500 educators with the knowledge and skills needed to address sensitive issues related to ethnicity and promote mutual understanding among students (White, 2009). By empowering teachers as agents of change within their communities, these initiatives aimed to instill values of respect, empathy, and acceptance among the younger generation, thus laying the foundation for a future built on principles of unity and shared humanity. Moreover, the reeducation seminars provided a platform for open dialogue and exchange, allowing participants to engage in constructive conversations about the root causes of ethnic divisions and explore strategies for fostering genuine reconciliation. Through interactive workshops, participants were encouraged to challenge preconceived notions and embrace diversity as a source of strength rather than division (White, 2009).

#### **6.4 The Gacaca Courts: Grassroots Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda**

Following the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Rwanda faced the overwhelming task of addressing the atrocities committed during the 100 days of mass violence. An estimated 800,000 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands were implicated in the crimes. Rwanda's traditional justice system was unprepared to handle the immense backlog of cases, and the international justice system, represented by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), could only process a limited number of high-profile cases. In response, the Rwandan government reintroduced the Gacaca courts in 2001, a traditional form of dispute resolution rooted in pre-colonial Rwandan society. These community-based courts were seen as a practical response to the challenges of prosecuting large numbers of perpetrators, while also promoting societal reconciliation and healing (Corey & Joireman, 2004).

The Gacaca courts operated on the principles of community justice, with local citizens, often respected elders or community members, serving as judges rather than professional legal practitioners. This system allowed for greater community participation, both in terms of gathering testimonies and in deciding verdicts. Offenders were encouraged to confess their crimes, which could result in reduced sentences. This mechanism was designed not only to expedite the judicial process but also to promote forgiveness and the reintegration of offenders into society, which was critical in a nation still deeply scarred by the genocide (Corey & Joireman, 2004).

### **6.5 Case Study: The Role of Gacaca in the Murambi Massacre**

One significant case that highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the Gacaca system occurred in the Murambi district, where thousands of Tutsis had sought refuge in a technical school, believing they would be safe. On April 21, 1994, the school became the site of one of the most infamous massacres, where over 40,000 people were killed by Interahamwe militias and local citizens. After the genocide, many of those involved in the massacre were put on trial through the Gacaca system. One notable aspect of the Murambi Gacaca trials was the sheer number of perpetrators implicated, including individuals who had previously been regarded as trustworthy members of the community. The trials offered the survivors and families of the victims an opportunity to hear confessions, obtain details about the events, and, in many cases, locate the bodies of their loved ones for proper burials (Corey & Joireman, 2004).

The Murambi trials also illustrated the system's limitations. In many instances, local conflicts and personal grudges influenced accusations, which led to concerns about the fairness of the proceedings. The absence of legal representation for the accused compounded these concerns, as did the fact that many confessions were strategically made to secure lighter sentences rather than out of genuine remorse. Survivors, too, had mixed feelings about the outcomes. While some valued the opportunity for truth-telling and reconciliation, others felt that the leniency shown to those who confessed undermined the justice that should have been delivered for such horrific crimes (Corey & Joireman, 2004).

Based on Corey & Joireman (2004), although the Gacaca courts were initially framed as a retributive justice mechanism, their focus gradually shifted toward a “restorative approach” (2004). The courts emphasized confessions, apologies, and community service over harsh disciplinary measures. According to earlier archives, perpetrators who admitted to their crimes, cooperated with the authorities, and sought forgiveness were often granted reduced sentences or were required to perform some form of community service. This structure allowed for the reintegration of offenders into society and helped promote healing in communities that had been torn apart by the genocide (Verhoeven, 2012). However, the focus on reconciliation and leniency sparked debates about whether justice was truly being served, particularly for the survivors of the genocide. Some critics argue that the Gacaca system

risked trivializing the importance and the seriousness of the crimes by allowing perpetrators to receive light sentences in exchange for their confessions, often leaving survivors feeling that their suffering was not fully acknowledged, which according to the source, only caused further trauma. In some cases, even when perpetrators confessed, they were not fully forthcoming about the extent of their involvement in this event, which complicated the court's ability to provide a full account of what had occurred (Corey & Joireman, 2004).

Despite these criticisms, the Gacaca courts processed an extraordinary number of cases - over 1.2 million between 2001 and 2012 (Corey & Joireman, 2024). The system, though imperfect, contributed significantly to Rwanda's broader post-genocide recovery. By blending both retributive and restorative justice elements, the Gacaca courts allowed Rwanda to confront its violent past while fostering community reconciliation. In many instances, the courts succeeded in giving survivors a platform to voice their grievances, and perpetrators an opportunity to confess and take responsibility for their crimes. Though not without flaws, the Gacaca courts represented a unique effort to balance the demands for justice and the need for societal healing in the aftermath of mass violence (Corey & Joireman, 2004).

Ultimately, the Gacaca courts reflect the complex nature of post-genocide justice in Rwanda. While they played a crucial role in addressing the enormous backlog of cases and fostering reconciliation, they also faced significant criticisms related to fairness, the reliability of testimonies, and the leniency of sentences. Despite these challenges, the Gacaca system stands as a groundbreaking example of a localized, community-driven response to mass atrocity, one that offered both justice and the possibility of healing in a deeply divided nation.

## **7. Limitations and Future Research**

### **7.1 Limitations**

Despite the insights gained from this research on post-conflict development in ethnically divided societies like Rwanda, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study's reliance on semi-structured interviews with a small sample size presents a significant limitation. Although the interviews provided rich, qualitative data, the small number of participants—two Rwandans who are now living abroad—limits the generalizability of the findings. The perspectives of Ngabo, a 32-year-old teacher in Germany, and Gasore, a 21-year-old student in Budapest, offer valuable insights, but they may not fully represent the broader experiences and views of Rwandans who remained in the country. Additionally, their experiences living abroad might have influenced their perceptions, introducing a potential bias that could affect the interpretation of the data.

Second, the study was conducted within a specific timeframe and context, which may affect the relevance of the findings to other post-conflict societies or to Rwanda in a different era. The ongoing evolution of Rwanda's socio-political landscape means that the findings may become less applicable over time, particularly as new policies are introduced, or existing ones are modified. This temporal limitation suggests that the conclusions drawn here may need to be reassessed in future research as the country continues to develop and change.

Third, the study focused primarily on qualitative data, limiting the ability to statistically analyze the impact of various factors on post-conflict development. While qualitative methods are well-suited to exploring the nuanced experiences of individuals, they do not allow for the kind of rigorous, quantitative analysis that could more definitively establish causal relationships between different variables. As a result, the findings should be seen as exploratory rather than conclusive, with the potential for further validation through quantitative research.

Finally, the research was also constrained by the available literature, which is predominantly focused on either the immediate aftermath of the Rwandan genocide or broader theories of post-conflict development that may not fully capture the unique complexities of Rwanda's current situation. The scarcity of recent studies on Rwanda's long-term development post-genocide means that some of the theoretical frameworks applied in this research may not entirely align with the realities on the ground today. This gap in the literature highlights the need for ongoing research that keeps pace with Rwanda's evolving context.

## **7.2 Future Research**

Given these limitations, several areas for future research emerge. First, expanding the sample size to include a more diverse group of Rwandans—both those who remained in the country and those who left—would provide a more comprehensive understanding of post-conflict development in Rwanda. Including participants from different age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnic identities would also help to capture a wider range of experiences and perspectives, making the findings more generalizable.

Second, future research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. While qualitative interviews offer depth and context, quantitative methods could provide statistical evidence to support or refute the patterns observed in the qualitative data. For instance, surveys or longitudinal studies could be used to track changes in community cohesion, economic development, or perceptions of government policies over time, providing a more robust analysis of Rwanda's post-conflict progress.

Third, comparative studies between Rwanda and other post-conflict societies could offer valuable insights into the generalizability of the findings. By examining the similarities and differences between Rwanda and countries with different histories of conflict, researchers could identify which aspects of Rwanda's development model are unique and which could be applied elsewhere. Such studies could also explore how different cultural, political, and economic contexts influence the success of post-conflict development strategies.

Finally, future research should continue to explore the long-term impact of Rwanda's reconciliation policies, particularly the role of youth and education in sustaining peace. As the younger generation, who did not directly experience the genocide, begins to take on leadership roles, it will be crucial to understand how their perceptions and attitudes shape the country's future. Investigating how education systems, community programs, and government policies are preparing this generation to manage ethnic diversity and foster national unity could provide valuable insights for Rwanda and other post-conflict societies.

In conclusion, while this study offers important contributions to the understanding of post-conflict development in Rwanda, it also highlights the need for further research that addresses its limitations and builds on its findings. By broadening the scope, employing mixed methods, and making comparative analyses, future research can continue to shed light on the complexities of rebuilding ethnically divided societies in the aftermath of conflict.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation explored Rwanda's post-conflict development following the 1994 genocide, which predominantly targeted the Tutsi population. The genocide left Rwanda deeply scarred, impacting not only its social fabric but also its identity, economy, politics, and spirituality. Over the past two decades, efforts to reconcile, rebuild, and promote sustainable development have been central to the nation's recovery, but challenges remain due to the deep-rooted ethnic divisions between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority—divisions that were significantly exacerbated by Rwanda's colonial history under Belgian and German rule.

The literature review illuminated the persistent impact of the genocide on Rwanda's society, with trauma permeating every level, and mistrust and segregation between ethnic groups remaining significant barriers to development. The colonial legacy entrenched these ethnic tensions, creating a narrative of division that played a critical role in the lead-up to the genocide. As suggested by scholars like Mamdani, this conflict cannot be fully understood without recognizing the colonial context, which framed Tutsis as privileged alien settlers and fueled ethnic animosity between them and the Hutu majority.

Despite government efforts to foster unity and reconciliation, these divisions continue to shape Rwanda's governance, social cohesion, and development strategies. While Rwanda has made significant strides in economic reforms, these have not fully addressed the



underlying social and psychological wounds left by the genocide. The work of authors like de Heusch (1995) and White (2009) suggests that, although economic policies have been relatively successful, they remain insufficient without deeper social healing and reconciliation efforts.

In conclusion, this dissertation underscores the importance of addressing both the economic and social dimensions of post-conflict development in Rwanda.

Ethnic divisions, reinforced by colonial legacies, continue to play a critical role in shaping the nation's development. While economic progress is necessary, it is not enough on its own to achieve lasting peace and unity. Rwanda's post-genocide development depends on continued efforts to transform ethnic identities, foster reconciliation, and promote inclusive growth. Future research should continue to explore the intersection between economic policies and social reconciliation, with particular attention to reducing socio-economic disparities and addressing the collective trauma that still affects Rwanda today. By doing so, scholars and policymakers alike can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of what it takes to rebuild a nation from the ashes of conflict.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Personal interview with participant A (Ngabo)**

**A: Interviewer**

**B: Interviewee**

A: Can you tell me a little bit about what was it like growing up in Rwanda after or during the genocide?

B: Where do I start... It's a difficult thing to talk about because I don't remember a lot of things but growing up in Kigali during the 1994 genocide was a nightmare. I was born in 1991 so I was a child, and I was not understanding what was going on in my environment, I have a lot of foggy memories and memories that did not make sense for a long time, it took time to figure out what people in my environment are going through... My family and I were constantly on the move, mostly hiding, and I often did not understand why, until much later. But my family was safe during this period because we had extended family living in Kampala, and we went over before the genocide happened... After the conflict, we returned to our city that was barely recognizable, with so much destruction and I remember seeing a lot of chaos, people traumatized from what happened and I remember a lot of military men around, I remember seeing white people from the first time in my life... uh... they came to help through some agency I believe, handing out food, toiletries and some clothes. Everyone was in shock. For me, it was hard to understand what happened. It was not easy for the next couple of years, I remember our family friends went missing, I have never seen some of my friends either so, you can imagine what happened. Growing up I just channeled my energy into becoming a teacher and eventually moved to Germany to teach. But even from afar, I stayed connected with my roots and Rwanda is still my home. But a lot of people just like me decided to leave Rwanda...

A: Thank you for telling me that so openly. If I were to ask you about how did the local community look like after the event in question, how would you describe that?

B: My old neighborhood has changed so much since the genocide. There's a stronger sense of community now and people who used to live in fear are now part of various rebuilding projects from what I know. The government and local organizations have also done a lot to

mend the broken pieces, and you can see that in how neighbors interact and support each other, there are local communities, support groups for families, for the elderly.. it's really nice what they've done. People stick together now more than ever.

A: I see, thank you for sharing that with me. Would you also say that this is how you see everyday interactions between people? Does ethnicity still play a role in Rwanda, or do people still focus on ethnicity at all?

B: When I visit Rwanda, it's heartening to see how people from different backgrounds are trying to move past old divisions. In Germany, I often share stories with my students about how my community is working hard to bridge gaps. It's not perfect, but there's a genuine effort to understand and accept one another and you really can't compare it to the situation from 20 years ago...

A: You also mentioned the government in one of your previous answers, can you tell me more about the role of government in rebuilding the country and strengthening relationships – of course if you know anything about this?

B: So the Rwandan government has really pushed for unity and rebuilding over the years. Programs like the Gacaca courts, where communities could address crimes from the genocide, have helped many people I know find some form of closure. The focus on education and economic development has also been crucial in creating opportunities and fostering a sense of normalcy for people in Rwanda...

A: Thank you, can you also tell me about education and how that helps with healing or rather recovering from the collective trauma of genocide? As an educator, your opinion would be greatly appreciated.

B: Education is everything when it comes to rebuilding our future. It's so important for children to learn about our history in a way that promotes healing and unity. In my classes, I emphasize how education can be a powerful tool for change, drawing from my past experiences and I also give lectures to students in Kigali when I'm around. I like collaborating with the local teachers because they're also aware that this topic affects Rwandans all over the world – as many of us received asylum in different countries, from

Africa to Europe – and we give each other tips, and share experiences from the classroom. I love being an educator because I know that I’m making a difference to these young people that I talk to. And they also engage with me quite a lot, and this is great to see.

A: Thank you. Do you have any specific hopes for Rwanda’s future?

B: My biggest hope is that Rwanda becomes a place where ethnic divisions are a thing of the past. I want to see my country to be a place where everyone has equal opportunities and where the next generation grows up with a strong sense of unity and pride. It’s a long road, but I believe we’re on the right path.

A: We’re all hoping for this. Finally, can you share with me why did you decide to agree to participate in this interview today?

B: I agreed to participate because I believe that sharing my personal experiences is crucial for understanding the complexities of what happened in Rwanda and how is my country recovering from this 20 years later. My journey, from living through the genocide as a child to now teaching in Germany, is one that reflects both the pain of our past and the hope for our future I would say. By contributing to this research, I hope to provide insights that might help others understand the importance of reconciliation, education, and community building. It’s also a way for me to stay connected to my roots and continue contributing to Rwanda’s ongoing story, even from afar and I’d also say that I’m happy to see that a new piece of literature about this topic is coming out soon. I’ve mentioned this before, but there isn’t enough attention paid to this topic.

#### Appendix B – Personal interview with participant B (Gasore)

**A: Interviewer**

**B: Interviewee**

A: Can you tell me about your story? What is your background?

B: I was born in 2003 so I was not there to witness this event, but the stories my family told me paint a clear picture of unimaginable things that happened. I was growing up in Butare and I only saw the aftermath of the conflict, but things were already moving forward then. But I don't remember much from that period, as a child, it was very difficult to understand what had happened and I was too young to know about such things. I went to elementary and high school in my hometown, and I remember being around 12 or 13 when they took us to different memorial sites for the first time and when they really started to teach us about the genocide. I was also told by my older siblings that taking students to memorial sites only started a few years back, because they did not experience it. Most of my siblings lived through it anyway but what I'm trying to say is that the curriculum regarding the ethnic relations and our history is a lot more precise today. It's actually something I'm proud of. I was shocked to hear the things I did about my own country. Rwanda is headed forward in my opinion but since high school, I just wanted to travel and see the world and a lot of young people feel the same way back home – and my dream was always to study overseas as an international student – so now as a 21-year-old, I'm studying mechanical engineering here in Budapest.

A: Thank you for sharing that. From the time that you spent in your hometown, can you recall any significant changes that took place and even you as a child registered them?

B: I remember that the place I was born in has undergone a lot of changes. I remember my aunt and uncle going to a community center where people used to get together and talk. They would also serve food, there were always lots of families, but our family never went there. My parents had other things to worry about as we didn't have much money but we also lived in a neighborhood where you could feel a strong sense of unity I'd say. People would just help each other out like they're family. The sense of unity and community support has really grown stronger over the years. People have also come together to rebuild, creating new opportunities for young people and families, and that's nice to see. My siblings all still live in Butare and everything seems to be going well.

A: A strong sense of community sounds like this is exactly what Rwanda needs. Since you mentioned this, can you tell me if you remember anything about interactions between different communities? From what I understood, ethnicity was a no-go topic to be brought up after the genocide.

B: I remember how tense things used to be, but now, whenever I go back home, I see people from different ethnic groups chatting, working together, and even celebrating together. It's a big change from what I heard about the past. But like I said, it's constantly changing. The community centers helped a lot, education has helped a lot and young people are actually interested in having good relations and upkeeping them.

A: Can you share something about the work opportunities and livelihood? You also mentioned that growing up, your family didn't have a wealthy background.

B: For my family and many others, I think, finding stable work after the conflict was really tough. My siblings and I never really felt like we didn't have everything we need but we knew our parents were struggling. I remember my dad used to go to work for 2 weeks shifts to South Africa as a mechanic, so he'd be gone for 2 weeks, then he'd be home for 2 weeks with us. My siblings also started working young, my sister who's 35 now actually moved to Nigeria for a while and worked there in a hotel, I remember she used to send us money whenever she could. But slowly, with the help of local projects and international aid, people started to rebuild their lives. My own journey to study abroad was supported by these efforts, and I see many of my peers finding new opportunities too. All my siblings that were abroad at some point returned home too and my brother has a really successful career in IT.

A: Do you agree that the role of education in recovery from the genocide is crucial?

B: Education is key to our future. I've seen how schools teach not just academic subjects but also values of unity and togetherness. It's so important for children to grow up understanding the past but focused on building a better future.

A: Do you have any hopes for the future Rwanda?



B: I dream of a Rwanda where ethnic divisions are a thing of the past, and everyone has equal opportunities. I really hope to return after my studies and contribute to this vision, helping to build a united and prosperous country, bring in new knowledge, experiences, and opportunities.

A: Finally, can you share with me why did you agree to participate in this interview?

B: I decided to participate because, as a young Rwandan, I feel a responsibility to share my perspective on how our country has changed and where it's headed. Growing up back home and now studying abroad, I've seen firsthand how education and unity can transform lives. I wanted to contribute to this research to help people understand the progress we've made and the challenges we still face. It's important to me that the voices of young people like me are heard, especially when it comes to the future of Rwanda. I also think that what you're doing is great because I know how important this topic is to us Rwandans and seeing someone who's very foreign to this make research about it and dedicate this much energy to it feels really good.