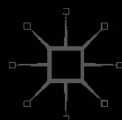


NEGOTIATING GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

THE POLITICS OF HISTORY

PALGRAVE Studies in Oral History

ERIN JESSEE



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Erin Jessee

Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda

The Politics of History

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Erin Jessee
The University of Strathclyde
Glasgow, UK

Palgrave Studies in Oral History
ISBN 978-3-319-45194-7 ISBN 978-3-319-45195-4 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-45195-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016962735

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

To Charles Raymond Jesse (1939–2016)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book owes a great deal to many people. First, I greatly appreciate the contributions of the Rwandans who generously gave so much of their time and energy in contributing their life histories to this project, as well as the four Rwandan research assistants who worked tirelessly to translate and contextualize the resulting narratives. I am also grateful to the countless other Rwandan civilians, community leaders, partner organizations, government officials, and academics who, on a less formal basis, supported and guided my research and analysis in crucial ways. I cannot thank these people by name—in all but a few rare instances, I use pseudonyms in the pages that follow to maintain participants' confidentiality—as many of these individuals felt they might risk government persecution should their often complicated perspectives on Rwanda and its past become public knowledge. I only hope that the end result does justice to their varying perspectives on this matter.

Beyond Rwanda, I am grateful for the institutional support of the Montréal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies and the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University where this project began. I am similarly grateful to the Department of Anthropology at Carleton University, and the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia for hosting me as a postdoctoral fellow. The Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council generously funded this project at both the doctoral and postdoctoral stages, with additional funding from *Le Fonds de recherche du Québec—société et culture*, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Canadian Consortium on

Human Security, the Azrieli Foundation, and the Centre for International Governance Innovation. More recently, my colleagues at the Scottish Oral History Centre and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow—particularly Angela Bartie, Mary Heimann, Arthur McIvor, and David Walker—deserve special mention for being so welcoming and supportive of my research.

I also owe significant intellectual debt to those who contributed their time to reading previous drafts of this manuscript and providing insightful feedback. I am particularly grateful to the manuscript's anonymous reviewers, former series editor Linda Shopes, the editorial team at Palgrave Macmillan's *Studies in Oral History* series, and my former supervisors, Erin Baines, Frank Chalk, Steven High, and Erica Lehrer. I also benefited from valuable feedback on journal publications and conference presentations from Kjell Anderson, Yolande Bouka, Jennie Burnet, Danielle de Lame, Marie-Eve Desrosiers, Sean Field, Villia Jefremovas, René Lemarchand, Rose-Marie Mukarutabana, Catharine Newbury, Julianne Okot Bitek, Annie Pohlman, Susan Thomson, Sarah Watkins, Jan Vansina, and Stacey Zembrzycki. Our conversations, both formal and informal, have been essential for deepening my understanding of Rwandan history, politics, and culture, as well as the practice of oral history in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Finally, I owe a special debt to my family, who have endured, with exceptional patience, far too many serious conversations about genocide and related mass atrocities during otherwise lovely family gatherings. To my sister, Janna Jessee, and my partner, Marc Ellison, in particular: this book would not have been possible without your love and support.

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CHRONOLOGY

Pre-colonial Rwanda

8000 BC	First archaeological evidence of modern human settlement in the region
700 BC–1500 AD	Waves of migration occur
1500–1700	Clan lineages (<i>ubwoko</i>) emerge and begin organizing into kingdoms
1700	Abanyiginya clan gains power, establishing the Kingdom of Rwanda
1853–1895	King Kigeri IV Rwabugiri struggles to unite the kingdom under a centralized military structure

Colonial Rwanda

1858	British explorer John Hanning Speke is the first European to visit the region
1884	Berlin Conference assigns the region to Germany, marking the beginning of the colonial era
1885	German East Africa Company is created to govern German East Africa
1890	Rwanda is formally incorporated into German East Africa
1894	Explorer Gustav Adolf von Götzen becomes the first European to explore the region
1916	Belgian military occupation of Rwanda begins as part of its gains during World War I

- 1922 League of Nations mandate formally assigns Ruanda-Urundi to Belgium
- 1935 Belgian colonial administrators introduce identity cards that include ethnic affiliation as either Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, or naturalized
- 1945 Ruanda-Urundi designated a United Nations Trust Territory under Belgian administration, with a mandate to oversee independence
- 1957 Hutu politicians and academics associated with the *Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu* (PARMEHUTU) publish the “Hutu manifesto” demanding democratic reforms
- 24 July 1959 King Mutara III Rudahigwa dies under suspicious circumstances
- 25 July 1959 Kigeli V Ndahindurwa is named king
- 1 November 1959 Hutu Revolution begins with the public beating of Hutu politician, Dominique Mbonyumutwa (PARMEHUTU), by members of the predominantly Tutsi political party, UNAR
- 25 September 1961 Rwanda holds a referendum on whether the monarchy should be retained and whether Ndahindurwa should remain the King; approximately 80% of Rwandans vote “no” to both questions, prompting Ndahindurwa and an estimated 100,000 supporters to seek refuge in neighboring countries
- 28 January 1961 Dominique Mbonyumutwa becomes the provisional president of Rwanda
- 1 July 1962 Belgium grants Rwanda independence

The First Hutu Republic

- 26 October 1962 Grégoire Kayibanda (PARMEHUTU) becomes the first elected president of Rwanda
- 1963 Militant Tutsi (often referred to as *inyenzi*) who sought refuge from independence-related political violence in neighboring Burundi and Uganda begin conducting attacks with Rwanda in an effort to destabilize the country and secure their right to return

The Second Hutu Republic

- 5 July 1973 Kayibanda is overthrown in a military coup; Juvénal Habyarimana becomes president
- 1978 Habyarimana is formally elected as president of Rwanda, following the ratification of Rwanda's new constitution
- 1979 The Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU) emerges in Uganda to promote the option of Rwandan refugees returning to Rwanda
- 1980 Several members of RANU join Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) in the Ugandan Bush War against then President of Uganda Milton Obote, following the rigged election that brought him to power in Uganda
- February 1982 An estimated 35,000 Rwandan refugees are left in limbo on the border between Uganda and Rwanda after Obote extends citizenship to only 1000, and Rwanda decides to recognize only 4000 as Rwandan nationals
- 1987 RANU renamed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and adopts a more militaristic stance in its dealings with Uganda and Rwanda
- 1988 An estimated 50,000 Hutu refugees arrive in Rwanda, having fled ethnic violence in Burundi
- 30 September 1990 Approximately 4000 Rwandan soldiers and officers desert the NRA

The 1990–1994 Civil War

- 1 October 1990 RPF launches a surprise attack on Rwanda from Uganda; the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR) manages to halt their advance; one week later an estimated 600,000 Rwandans are displaced from communities in the northern areas affected by fighting
- October 1990 *Kangura*, a newspaper funded by Habyarimana's government supporters and designed to promote government interests among the broader Rwandan public, is founded
- December 1990 *Kangura* publishes the "Hutu Ten Commandments," a widely cited example of anti-Tutsi propaganda that condemns Hutu collaboration with Tutsi

- 30 May 1991 Habyarimana agrees to a new constitution that allows multi-party system in Rwanda
- February 1992 *Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (CDR), previously an extremist faction within the *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND), becomes a separate political party known for its extremist Hutu Power platform
- 12 July 1992 Arusha peace talks begin, organized by the United States, France, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU)
- 24 June 1993 Arusha peace talks conclude following power-sharing agreement between the Habyarimana regime and the RPF to establish a transitional government and national assembly to rule Rwanda for 22 months, after which general elections would be held
- 8 July 1993 *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) begins broadcasting content that promotes the Hutu Power agenda and discredits the RPF
- 4 August 1993 Habyarimana and Alexis Kanyarengwe, leader of the RPF, sign the Arusha Accords
- 5 October 1993 UN Security Council Resolution 872 establishes the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to oversee implementation of the Arusha Accords
- 11 January 1994 UNAMIR commander Roméo Dallaire writes the “genocide fax,” warning the UN of potential bloodshed along ethnic and political lines
- 5 April 1994 UN votes to extend UNAMIR due to concerns over deteriorating political climate in Rwanda

The 1994 Genocide

- 6 April 1994 President Habyarimana’s plane is shot down over Kigali; Rwanda’s presidential guard begins assassinating moderate politicians in Kigali
- 7 April 1994 Prime Minister and interim President Agathe Uwilingiyimana and ten UNAMIR soldiers charged with her protection are murdered by members of the presidential guard; violence begins spreading

- beyond Kigali as *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* militias organize roadblocks and begin massacring Tutsi civilians and their supporters
- 9 April 1994 Théodore Sindikubwabo becomes interim president of Rwanda
- 17 May 1994 UN acknowledges that “acts of genocide” may be occurring in Rwanda
- 18 June 1994 The French government announces its intention to establish *Opération Turquoise* to create a safe zone in southwestern Rwanda; internally displaced persons, eventually totaling around two million, use the safe zone to seek refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
- 4 July 1994 The RPF successfully wrestles control of Kigali
- 18 July 1994 The RPF formally defeats the FAR and takes control of Rwanda; an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 Rwandans, most of whom were Tutsi, have been murdered

Post-genocide Rwanda

- 19 July 1994 Pasteur Bizimungu (RPF) is installed as the fifth president of Rwanda; Paul Kagame is installed as Prime Minister
- 8 November 1994 UN Security Council Resolution 955 establishes the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to address serious crimes committed in Rwanda between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994
- 7 April 1995 Rwanda holds its first annual commemoration of the genocide
- 24 October 1996 First Congo War begins with Rwanda’s invasion of Zaire
- 16 May 1997 First Congo War comes to an end; results in dictator Mobutu Sésé Seko being replaced with the rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila
- 2 August 1998 Second Congo War begins after President Kabila forces Rwandan and Ugandan military forces to leave the DRC, prompting renewed bloodshed among Congolese militants and renewed military engagement of neighboring African states

23 March 2000	President Bizimungu is forced to resign over charges of corruption
24 March 2000	Paul Kagame (already the rumored leader of the RPF) is installed as the sixth president of Rwanda
2002	Parliament adopts new law criminalizing “sectarism”; later changed to “divisionism”
18 July 2003	Second Congo War comes to an end following the establishment of the Transitional Government of the DRC under the leadership of President Joseph Kabila
25 August 2003	Paul Kagame wins 95.1% of the vote in the presidential elections
2004	Rwandan government officials begin a campaign against “genocide ideology”
June 2008	Parliament adopts new law criminalizing “genocide ideology”
September 2008	RPF conducts parliamentary elections with no opposition parties participating
10 August 2010	Paul Kagame wins 93.1% of the vote in the presidential elections
September 2013	RPF wins over 76% of the vote in the parliamentary elections, with participating opposition parties limited to those approved by the RPF
October 2013	Parliament revises genocide ideology law
18–21 December 2015	Referendum is held to determine public support for constitutional changes that will allow Kagame to run for a third term, with the potential to stay in power until 2034
21 December 2015	About 98% of Rwandans vote in favor of constitutional revisions
1 January 2016	Kagame announces plan to run for a third term as president

RWANDAN PARTICIPANTS

Agathe	genocide survivor
Aimé	genocide survivor, former government official
Alexandre	convicted génocidaire, religious leader
Aloisea	genocide survivor
Aloys	genocide survivor
Annalise	convicted génocidaire
Aphrodis	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Augustin	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Bernard	genocide survivor
Bernardin	returnee and ex-combatant (RPA)
Bianca	returnee, CBO official
Cécile	convicted génocidaire
Cesare	genocide survivor
Chantelle	genocide survivor, CBO official
Christophe	genocide survivor
Clemente	genocide survivor
Clementine	genocide survivor
Colette	genocide survivor
Consolée	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Daniel	convicted génocidaire
Daphné	genocide survivor, memorial staff
David	convicted génocidaire
Déogratias	returnee, counselor
Devota	convicted génocidaire
Egidie	convicted génocidaire

Eliot	convicted génocidaire
Fabrice	genocide survivor
Félicien	convicted génocidaire
Fidèle	returnee, religious leader
Francine	genocide survivor
Freddy	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Gérard	convicted génocidaire
Ghislaine	returnee, CBO official
Grégoire	returnee, former RPA combatant
Jean-Bosco	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Jean-de-Dieu	genocide survivor
Jeanne	genocide survivor
Ghislaine	returnee, counselor
Hélène	convicted génocidaire
Ignace	genocide survivor
Innocent	genocide survivor
Odette	genocide survivor
Patrick	returnee, former RPA combatant
Paulette	convicted génocidaire
Marguerite	genocide survivor, CBO official
Martin	convicted génocidaire
Maurice	genocide survivor, healer
Maxime	convicted génocidaire
Michel	convicted génocidaire
Olivier	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Patrick	returnee, ex-combatant (RPA)
Pélagie	genocide survivor, healer
Philippe	convicted génocidaire
Roger	convicted génocidaire
Rose-Marie	returnee, civil servant
Rosine	genocide survivor
Sandrine	convicted génocidaire
Samuel	returnee, ex-combatant (RPA)
Serafina	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Solange	genocide survivor, memorial staff
Sosthène	convicted génocidaire
Stephan	returnee, psychologist
Sylvie	genocide survivor
Theoneste	genocide survivor

Thierry	genocide survivor, former government official
Valérie	convicted génocidaire, former RTLM journalist
Venant	genocide survivor
Winnie	returnee, CBO official
Yvette	genocide survivor, civil servant

MAP OF RWANDA



(Getty Images, Credit: [Dorling Kindersley](#))

KINYARWANDA TERMINOLOGY

<i>abacurabwenge</i>	court genealogists
<i>ababejejewe inyuma</i> <i>n'amateka</i>	“those who are left behind by history”; government officials’ preferred term for Rwanda’s indigenous Twa population
<i>abiru</i>	ritual practitioners
<i>akazu</i>	“little house”; refers to those individuals who are part of the leadership’s inner circle
<i>ceceka</i>	keeping silent
<i>gacaca</i>	“justice on the grass”; a locally-conceived system of justice reinvented by the RPF to try alleged perpetrators for genocide-related crimes
<i>génocidaire</i>	a Rwandan term that references those individuals who perpetrated crimes related to the genocide
<i>kuboboza</i>	“to help liberate”; a term applied to women who were taken as sex slaves during the genocide
<i>Kangura</i>	“to wake others”; the name of a Hutu Power newspaper popular from 1990 to 1994
<i>Kinyarwanda</i> <i>kuneena batwa</i>	the indigenous language spoken by Rwandans practices governing social interactions between Hutu and Tutsi and their Twa compatriots
<i>kwibuka</i>	to remember
<i>ibisigo</i>	dynastic poetry
<i>ibitêekerezo</i>	historical narratives

<i>ibyitso</i>	“accomplices of the enemy”; a term used during the Habyarimana regime in reference to suspected RPF collaborators
<i>igipinga</i>	political subversive
<i>inkotanyi</i>	“warriors who fight relentlessly until victory”; another name for the Rwandan Patriotic Front
<i>Imana</i>	deity/divine essence that created the universe
<i>impunyu</i>	Twa forest dwellers
<i>Impuzamugambi</i>	“those who have a common goal”; a Hutu Power militia group responsible for hunting, torturing, and killing Tutsi and their allies during the genocide
<i>Interahamwe</i>	“those who fight/work together”; a Hutu Power youth militia responsible for killing Tutsi and their allies during the genocide
<i>inyangarwanda</i>	enemies of Rwanda
<i>inyenzi</i>	cockroach; derogatory term for Tutsi
<i>inzoka</i>	snake; derogatory term for Tutsi
<i>mwami</i>	king (pl. <i>abami</i>)
<i>shebuja</i>	patron who provides a cow to a client in exchange for their loyalty and labor
<i>ubucurabwenge</i>	dynastic lists
<i>ubuhake</i>	system of cattle exchange between a patron and a client
<i>ubwiru</i>	court rituals
<i>uburetwa</i>	system of labor in exchange for land
<i>ubwoko</i>	clans
<i>umugabekazi</i>	Queen Mother (pl. <i>abagabekazi</i>)
<i>umuganda</i>	communal labor
<i>umugaragu</i>	client who receives a cow in exchange for labor and loyalty
<i>urwibutso</i>	memorial

ABBREVIATIONS

AFDL	<i>Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre</i> (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre)
APROSOMA	<i>Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse</i> (Association for the Social Promotion of the Masses)
AREDETWA	<i>Association pour le Relèvement Démocratique des Twa</i> (Association for the Democratic Restoration of the Twa)
CDR	<i>Coalition pour la Défense de la République</i> (Coalition for the Defence of the Republic)
CNLG	National Commission for the Fight to Prevent Genocide
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAR	<i>Forces Armées Rwandaises</i> (Rwandan Armed Forces)
FDLR	<i>Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda</i> (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
FDU-Inkingi	<i>Forces Démocratiques Unifiées</i> (United Democratic Forces of Rwanda)
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDP	Internally displaced person
KGMC	Kigali Genocide Memorial Center
LIPRODHOR	League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights in Rwanda

MDR	<i>Mouvement Démocratique Rwandais</i> (Democratic Republican Movement)
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINICT	Ministry of Youth, Information and Communication
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MININTER	Ministry of Internal Security
MINISPOC	Ministry of Sports and Culture
MRND	<i>Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement</i> (National Republican Movement for Development)
MRNDD	<i>Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement</i> (National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development)
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
NSGJ	National Service of Gacaca Jurisdictions
PARMEHUTU	<i>Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu</i> (Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement)
PDR	Party for Democratic Renewal (<i>Ubuyanja</i>)
PL	<i>Parti Libéral</i> (Liberal Party)
PSD	<i>Parti Social Démocrate</i> (Social Democratic Party)
RADER	<i>Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais</i> (Rwandan Democratic Rally)
RANU	Rwandese Alliance for National Unity
RDF	Rwandan Defence Forces
RNC	Rwanda National Congress
RNEC	Rwanda National Ethics Committee
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTL	<i>Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines</i> (One Thousand Hills Free Radio and Television)
TIG	<i>travaux d'intérêt général</i> (works for public interest)
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAR	<i>Union Nationale Rwandaise</i> (Rwanda National Union)
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USDS	United States Department of State

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Introduction

“Rwanda has a complex history. Were it not so bloody, it could be likened to a game of chess. Someone who hasn’t followed the game from the outset and doesn’t know the moves can’t follow the subsequent stages.”

—André Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda*

“History is messy for the people who must live it.”

—Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*

Philippe is a victim.¹ He is adamant on this point. He has always been a victim, as has his family, going back many generations. From his perspective, this victim identity is an important part of what it means to be a member of Rwanda’s ethnic Hutu majority population, whether in the present or distant past. He described his grandparents—and indeed, every generation that preceded them since the arrival of the Tutsi minority population in Rwanda—as slaves, forced by Tutsi elites to carry hot pots on their heads and work endlessly in the fields for just enough food to sustain them, while the Tutsi grazed their cattle on the most fertile land. Philippe’s parents experienced a slight improvement in their quality of life with the arrival of the German and Belgian colonists. The Hutu majority—as part of their education by Christian missionaries under Belgian colonialism—were taught for the first time about democracy and human rights, which in turn inspired them to fight for political reforms aimed at overthrowing their colonizers and the Tutsi-dominated monarchy ruling Rwanda. The resulting

1959 Hutu Revolution and the 1960 elections set the stage for Rwandan independence on 1 July 1962 under Hutu President Grégoire Kayibanda (r. 1962–1973), representing an important political opportunity for the Hutu majority. Unlike previous generations from his family, Philippe was able to complete primary and secondary school, train as a teacher, and, by his mid-20s, marry, have children, and purchase a small piece of land to farm.

But the stories of oppression and slavery related to Philippe by his parents and grandparents offered lessons that were difficult for him to forget. On 1 October 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)—the military arm of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), composed primarily of Uganda-based Tutsi exiles whose families had fled previous periods of ethnic violence in Rwanda—invaded Rwanda, triggering a civil war in the north. Philippe was for the first time in his life overwhelmed with an intense fear of the Tutsi. He joined a local youth militia—the *Interahamwe* (those who fight or work together)—with the intention of defending Rwanda from the Tutsi invaders who he believed were determined to re-establish the Tutsi monarchy and re-enslave the Hutu masses. Rumors of atrocities perpetrated by RPA troops against Hutu civilians in the north further convinced Philippe of the legitimacy of his beliefs. When Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana (r. 1973–1994) was then assassinated on 6 April 1994, Philippe did not question the Interahamwe leaders' orders to set up roadblocks and massacre Tutsi civilians who tried to flee. The political elites in his community claimed that the RPF was responsible for Habyarimana's assassination, and Philippe had no reason to doubt them.

Believing that the RPF was now closer than ever to gaining control of Rwanda, Philippe participated willingly in the massacre of Tutsi women, children, and elders who sought refuge in his local church, as well as in the hunting of Tutsi survivors in the fields, forests, and swamps, the raping of young Tutsi women, and the looting of Tutsi homes. The Tutsi were, in Philippe's estimation, the natural enemies of the Hutu people and deserving of their fates. However, he recognized that there were rare exceptions to this statement, and claimed that he did not hesitate to rescue those Tutsi he knew personally were not a threat, providing them with food, information, and shelter during the genocide. He acted simultaneously as a perpetrator, combatant, bystander, and rescuer.

Yet despite the varied roles Philippe took on during the three months of the genocide, Philippe presented himself first and foremost as a victim. He saw himself as a victim of the fear and uncertainty associated with living through three years of civil war; a victim of the greed and opportunism

associated with gaining status and wealth from the Tutsi he helped murder; a victim of the RPF, those “foreign Tutsi” who upon wresting control of the nation held him accountable for the atrocities he perpetrated with their “victor’s justice”; and a victim of the international community whose apathy made it possible for him to be forgotten in a Rwandan prison, in violation of his basic human rights, and without access to adequate legal representation.²

But first and foremost, Philippe perceived himself to be a victim of history. In the rare instances where Philippe approached taking responsibility for his criminal actions during the genocide, he framed them as the inevitable outcome of generations of internalized anger, fear, and resentment toward the Tutsi. This legacy of victimization made it possible for him—a devout Christian man with no criminal record prior to 1994—to participate in the torture, massacre, and mutilation of unarmed Tutsi men, women, and children. Officially, Philippe was a *génocidaire*—a distinctly Rwandan term that references those individuals, most of whom are Hutu, who committed crimes related to the genocide.³ But he expressed little remorse for his criminal actions during the genocide, and instead interpreted his imprisonment as further evidence of the unjust persecution of the Hutu majority by a privileged Tutsi minority, now championed by the RPF.

Philippe’s life history—constructed in a manner that portrays him as a victim of various historical, political, and social injustices, rather than a righteous defender of his people or remorseful perpetrator, for example—is representative of the myriad ethical, methodological, and theoretical challenges facing researchers who conduct fieldwork in Rwanda. While the RPF, and indeed the various regimes that preceded it, has constructed an official history aimed at reinforcing the party’s political legitimacy and promoting national unity, the fact remains that Rwandans internalize, interpret, and adapt these official histories in myriad ways and for varying reasons. In doing so, their life histories respond not only to what official sources tell them is true about their past and the broader political climate that surrounds them, but also to lived experiences and stories that are narrated in private spaces among trusted friends and family. The resulting life histories reveal much about the politics of history in post-genocide Rwanda.

This insight ultimately inspires the research questions that form the foundation of this book: How do Rwandans invoke their nation’s past to make sense of their experiences of genocide and related mass atrocities? And to what end? In post-genocide Rwanda, what can the life histories of government officials, genocide survivors, *génocidaires*, and other Rwandans whose lives were intimately affected by the genocide and related

mass atrocities tell us about the current political climate, and its effect on their ability to envision a peaceful future for their nation that includes collaboration across ethnic, political, socio-economic, and regional divides?

In responding to these questions, the following chapters are informed by “productivist” approach to historical and anthropological inquiry, described by David Cohen as “the processing of the past in societies and historical settings all over the world, and the struggles for control of voices and texts in innumerable settings which often animate the processing of the past.”⁴ To this end, this book’s purpose is not to produce a new “fact-based” history of Rwanda in the conventional empiricist sense—one that might assert historical authority over previous studies of the nation’s extensive past. Rather I seek to bring into conversation the narratives—both official and private—of Rwandans from different backgrounds to explore how Rwandan history is perceived, engaged with, and deployed for a range of purposes in the post-genocide context. Likewise, I will probe some of the critical silences or “formulas of erasure” in these narratives for their deeper meaning in the post-genocide period.⁵ Throughout the resulting analysis, particular emphasis will be placed on the power relations and personal circumstances that inform different Rwandans’ narratives about their nation’s past and present.

ORAL TRADITION AND OFFICIAL HISTORIES IN RWANDA

Before delving into these narratives, however, a brief overview of the relevance of oral traditions and official histories in Rwanda is necessary to acclimatize readers who are unfamiliar with this particular nation to key historical figures and events. A small East African nation, Rwanda has a proud history maintained until recently through oral traditions that have been documented, interpreted, and disseminated in different forms. In the pre-colonial period, Rwandan history was primarily maintained through a combination of *ubwiru* (rituals), *ubucurabwenge* (dynastic lists), *ibisigo* (dynastic poetry), and *ibitêkerezô* (historical narratives). With the exception of the *ibitêkerezô*, these oral traditions were maintained by historians and related practitioners associated with the royal court, constituting Rwanda’s earliest known official histories.⁶ For example, the *ubwiru* were highly secretive, and memorized and performed solely by *abiru*—ritual practitioners and advisors to the *mwami* (king). As such, they were largely unknown to the peasant majority and have been studied primarily through official performances documented by Rwandan historian, philosopher, and Catholic priest Alexis Kagame in

the decades surrounding Rwandan independence.⁷ In comparison, professional or semi-professional storytellers performed *ibitéekerezo* for elites at social events where they served as educators and entertainers. In these settings, *ibitéekerezo* were disseminated to non-elite Rwandans as well, providing court officials with an opportunity to influence how Rwandan civilians perceived the region's past, present, and future. However, ordinary civilians also constructed and shared *ibitéekerezo* in less formal settings, often as a means of documenting ancestral rights to land ownership, meaning this particular form of oral tradition was not regulated solely by the royal court.⁸

Following the arrival of German colonists in the late nineteenth century, Rwanda's oral traditions became a subject of interest and study within and beyond Rwanda. In the process of opening Rwanda to European commerce and the spread of Christianity as part of German East Africa, the Germans pursued a policy of indirect rule through existing social and political hierarchies established by abami associated with the Nyiginya kingdom.⁹ Archival evidence from this period reveals a preoccupation with understanding Rwandan culture and society—limited by the racist and imperialist ideologies common to European nations engaged in the “scramble for Africa”—that permeated German colonialism and continued under Belgian occupation, beginning in 1916. It also reveals a backdrop of political instability, even prior to contact with Europeans, brought about by clan lineages affiliated with the royal court vying for political supremacy. Regional and socio-economic tensions were similarly common, emerging from King Kigeli IV Rwabugiri's (r. 1853–1895) efforts to bring neighboring communities under his control and subsume the civilian population to *ubureetwa*—a controversial system through which Hutu farmers provided unpaid labor in exchange for access to land controlled by Tutsi pastoralists, many of whom were court notables.¹⁰ Similarly problematic, though less oppressive to the Hutu specifically, was the much older, but less extensive practice of *ubuhake*, whereby a *shebuja* (patron) provided an *umugaragu* (client) access to a cow—a symbol of prestige and an opportunity for social advancement—in exchange for the *umugaragu*'s labor and loyalty.¹¹ Such policies provided a foundation for significant and lasting socio-economic tensions between Tutsi elites and their peasant compatriots. Indeed, regional variations aside, in the pre-colonial period, the term “Tutsi” was primarily used in reference to nobles, while the term “Hutu” was reserved for commoners. This meant these labels were primarily socio-economic in nature and were fluid, allowing for the possibility of social mobility among Rwandans, however rare it may have been in practice.¹²

These tensions were exacerbated with the advent of Rwanda's colonial period in 1895. European colonizers interpreted certain elements of Rwandan culture according to pseudoscientific theories about race that were popular at the time in an effort to develop their own official history of Rwanda. In particular, a prominent myth about Kigwa and his three sons—Gatutsi, Gahutu, and Gatwa—provided a narrative justification for the pre-colonial system of leadership and visibly enhanced social status of the Tutsi political elites affiliated with the royal court.¹³ After leaving his sons overnight to guard three calabashes of milk, Kigwa returned to find that Gahutu had spilled most of his milk, while Gatwa had drunk his. Only Gatutsi had completed the task according to his father's instructions, prompting Kigwa to entrust Gatutsi with leadership over his brothers—an action that even in modern Rwanda is occasionally referenced as “divine justification” as to why the Tutsi make more appropriate leaders compared to their Hutu and Twa compatriots.¹⁴

In addition to such mythical explanations of difference between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, European scientists attempted to document perceived morphological differences between them using anthropometric methods. Their observations were merged with the pseudoscientific “Hamitic hypothesis,” which ascribed separate racial origins to the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.¹⁵ Contemporary social scientists concluded that the Tutsi—allegedly distinguished by their superior intellect, fine features, and lighter skin—were descendants of the biblical figure, Ham, and due to these Caucasian origins, were the natural rulers of Rwanda. The Hutu were deemed “true Africans” by virtue of their alleged lesser intelligence, darker skin, and broad features, and denied opportunities for advancement beyond basic missionary education. Finally, the indigenous Twa were dismissed as “an atavistic throwback to the ape.”¹⁶

Upon taking control of Rwanda during World War I to establish the colony of Ruanda-Urundi, the Belgians invested in a Tutsi-dominated political sphere to the extent that in addition to the Tutsi mwami Yuhi V Musinga (r. 1896–1931), any extant Hutu chiefs were replaced with Tutsi equivalents, effectively alienating the Hutu majority from direct political representation and expression.¹⁷ The Belgians further entrenched the Hamitic hypothesis in the everyday lives of Rwandans by introducing identity cards in 1931 that formally identified Rwandans as either Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa, subsuming other important markers of identity, such as clan, lineage, hill, and region, to the “supposed dualist struggle of ‘Tutsi lord’ and ‘Hutu serf.’”¹⁸ From this point forward, ethnicity in Rwanda became static and was inherited patrilineally, and would take on increasing social salience for the Rwandan people.

However, in the aftermath of the World War II, Belgium's responsibilities toward Rwanda as decreed by the newly formed United Nations (UN) shifted to preparing the nation for independence. Recognizing that the disenfranchised Hutu majority were a substantial impediment to ongoing Belgian interests in an independent Rwanda, the Belgian administration facilitated the emergence of multiple political parties and began supporting the Hutu majority in their pursuit of democracy. Many Hutu found common cause with the platforms promoted by *Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu* (PARMEHUTU) and to a lesser extent, *Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse* (APROSOMA). These parties opposed the Tutsi monarchy and advocated for the inclusion of Hutu leaders in positions of power as a means of ending the exclusionary tactics associated with the Tutsi monarchy. Conversely, those who supported the monarchy—most of whom were Tutsi elites affiliated with the royal court—supported *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (UNAR). Political moderates rallied around *Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais* (RADER), which favored ethnic inclusivity alongside the empowerment of a constitutional monarchy.

Following the mysterious death of King Mutara III Rudahigwa (r. 1931–1959) on 25 July 1962, the court abwiru named his half-brother, Kigeli V Ndahindurwa (r. 1959–1961), as his successor without consulting the Belgian colonial administration or the Hutu majority. In response, the Belgians decided to move forward their plans for Rwandan independence, and organized communal elections.¹⁹ In the lead-up to the elections, a group of youth affiliated with UNAR attacked the popular PARMEHUTU activist, Dominique Mbonyumutwa, prompting PARMEHUTU and APROSOMA to attack Tutsi chiefs and known members of UNAR.²⁰ This marked the start of the Hutu Revolution. Faced with sudden overt political unrest, the Belgian authorities declared support for majority rule, shifting their allegiance from the existing Tutsi political elites to the Hutu counter-elites associated with PARMEHUTU and APROSOMA. Despite warnings that democratic elections would result in widespread violence against Rwanda's Tutsi minority, the elections took place in 1960. Hutu-dominated parties won over 83% of the vote for communal representation and established the Rwanda Provisional Government led by PARMEHUTU's Dominique Mbonyumutwa. Once the elections were over, many of the victorious Hutu politicians threatened the Tutsi they were replacing with arbitrary arrests and imprisonment unless they accepted exile in a less desirable region of Rwanda or neighboring country.²¹ In response, many Tutsi elites and their supporters, including the recently proclaimed king, Ndahindurwa, fled the country.²²

Rwanda's independence was then achieved almost exclusively under Hutu leadership on 1 July 1962, with PARMEHUTU's Grégoire Kayibanda (r. 1962–1973) as president.²³

Just as the Belgians had invested in the creation and dissemination of an official history of Rwanda that justified their decision to privilege Tutsi court notables over their Hutu and Twa compatriots, the Kayibanda regime quickly asserted its own official history to justify its leadership. As part of their struggle to unite the Hutu majority—a still disparate cohort within which regional and clan loyalties often took precedence—the Kayibanda regime used the threat of *inyenzi* (cockroach) incursions.²⁴ The term *inyenzi* referenced a handful of rebels previously associated with UNAR who, as a result of the political violence that surrounded Rwandan independence, were forced into exile in neighboring countries. These rebels organized incursions into Rwanda aimed at attacking, wherever possible, Hutu and European officials to promote regional insecurity. The Kayibanda regime's response to these incursions included incarcerating influential Tutsi and Hutu political moderates and establishing local militias to guard against attacks. The accompanying violence resulted in the massacre of an estimated 10,000 Tutsi civilians, and prompted between 130,000 and 300,000 refugees to flee Rwanda.²⁵ It also served to unite Hutu political leadership across Rwanda, at least in the early years of the Kayibanda regime, and provided a political rationale for implementing an ethnic quota that sought to limit Tutsi involvement in Rwanda's government, military, and other positions.²⁶

In the latter years of Kayibanda's presidency, however, complaints of corruption and regional favoritism toward Hutu elites from southern Rwanda—Kayibanda's home region—led to a resurgence of regional political divides. Kayibanda attempted, as he had in the past, to use the threat of *inyenzi* incursions to unite the population. However, the 1972 genocide in Burundi prompted a mass of Hutu refugees to flee to Rwanda, bringing with them stories of the brutality they had endured at the hands of Burundi's Tutsi political and military elites.²⁷ In an effort to reduce growing political tensions, Kayibanda created a public safety commission to ensure ethnic quotas were being adequately enforced, forcing most Tutsi students out of Rwandan schools and the national university. The commission further served to intimidate his growing political opposition—Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa alike—into submission.²⁸

Amidst this backdrop of political instability, Major General Juvénal Habyarimana—a Hutu from northern Rwanda who had previously served as Kayibanda's Army Chief of Staff—enacted a “bloodless coup.”²⁹

Habyarimana enjoyed a high degree of public support initially due to his stated commitment to ending the corruption and ethnic divisionism associated with the Kayibanda regime. He immediately banned political parties as a means of preventing further ethnic and political bloodshed, and securing his regime. In 1975, he then established the *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND) as the national party of Rwanda in which all Rwandans were automatically members. He also opted to preserve Kayibanda's quota system, which allowed Habyarimana to further limit the number of Tutsi in prominent political and military positions, while placing a disproportionate number of northern Hutu political elites in positions of power. Habyarimana then invested in creating a centralized state apparatus to monitor and control the population through processes of registration at the commune level, *umuganda* (voluntary communal labor), and other initiatives aimed at encouraging civilian accountability to the state.³⁰

As Habyarimana's leadership continued, however, he faced criticisms related to his continued privileging of his wife Agathe Kanziga's northern Abagesera clan, which arguably exercised great power within his regime.³¹ Simultaneously, economic decline caused by a drop in coffee prices in 1987 and 1989, and a famine resulting from drought and crop failures in southern Rwanda in 1989 forced him to adopt an increasingly totalitarian leadership style.³² The final nail in the coffin emerged from Habyarimana's inability to placate the growing cohort of militarized Rwandan refugees living in neighboring Uganda, who were increasingly considering a return to Rwanda by force should diplomatic measures fail.

Composed primarily of Tutsi who had fled previous periods of ethnic and political tension in Rwanda, these refugees had at times been welcome in Uganda. However, their presence fomented larger regional and socio-economic tensions among Ugandans, in part because the refugees provided a base for the inyenzi incursions unsettling Rwanda in the 1960s, and in part because many native Ugandans resented the benefits the refugees received from the UN, and feared the alliance the refugees established with Uganda's ethnic Hima minority population.³³ In an effort to protect their interests in Uganda, the refugees formed the Rwanda Refugee Welfare Foundation in 1979, soon renamed the Rwanda Alliance for National Unity (RANU). As the larger community of refugees debated between securing either Ugandan citizenship or the right to return to Rwanda, a small cohort formed an alliance with Yoweri Museveni to overthrow then-President Milton Obote (r. 1980–1985).³⁴ When Museveni ascended to the presidency (r. 1986 to present), his Rwandan supporters were rewarded

with key posts in government, business, and the army, prompting concerns among Ugandans that the Tutsi refugees were receiving special treatment. Faced with growing anti-Tutsi sentiments among his civilian support base, Museveni approached Habyarimana in 1988, urging him to allow the Tutsi refugees to return to Rwanda. However, faced with this opportunity to negotiate, the RPF pushed for not only the right to return to Rwanda, but also a power-sharing agreement with Habyarimana. In order to subvert rumors of an RPF invasion, Habyarimana legalized opposition political parties and agreed to pursue UN assistance in drawing up a list of proposed returnees. However, the RPF pre-empted these initiatives by invading northern Rwanda on 1 October 1990, triggering a civil war.³⁵

As the civil war gained momentum, waves of Hutu refugees fled northern Rwanda, bringing with them stories of atrocities perpetrated by RPA troops that served to radicalize many Hutu political elites and the general public against the RPF. The international community pushed Habyarimana to find a democratic solution to the conflict, prompting him to accept a power-sharing agreement with the RPF negotiated via the Arusha peace talks.³⁶ In doing so, however, Habyarimana alienated an increasingly powerful “Hutu Power” cohort within his regime, who as early as 1993 had begun training Hutu civilians to defend their nation against the RPA through two key youth militias, the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi.³⁷ They also invested in virulently anti-Tutsi propaganda, most notably through a popular newspaper *Kangura* and *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM), to inculcate the Rwandan public with their Hutu Power agenda.

Then, on the evening of 6 April 1994, Habyarimana’s plane was shot down as it attempted to land in Kigali, killing him and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi.³⁸ Within hours of Habyarimana’s assassination, the Presidential Guard began murdering the political opposition, regardless of ethnicity, and organizing local Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi to establish roadblocks throughout Kigali. In the days and weeks that followed, the violence spread throughout central and southern Rwandan communities not occupied by RPA troops, with Hutu Power extremists encouraging the torture, murder, and mutilation of unarmed Tutsi civilians, as well as Hutu and Twa civilians who attempted to stop the violence. Over the next three months, an estimated 500,000–800,000 Rwandans were brutally murdered, most of whom were members of Rwanda’s minority Tutsi population.³⁹ In addition, the Hutu Power extremists had used rape as a weapon of war—against Tutsi women primarily as punishment for their perceived superior beauty, among other factors, but also against Hutu and Twa women who had married or had children with

Tutsi men—resulting in an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 victims of sexual assault.⁴⁰ These assaults resulted in an estimated 2000 to 5000 children born of rape, many of whom were subsequently stigmatized by their communities as “little *Interahamwe*,” among other stigmatizing labels.⁴¹ Taken together, these atrocities were legally recognized by the international community as the first clear example of genocide—best summarized as an attempt to annihilate, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group—since the atrocities perpetrated against Jewish and other undesirable minority populations in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II, as well as the more commonly applied legal prohibitions against crimes against humanity and war crimes.⁴² As a result, the United Nations Security Council created the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1995 to prosecute high-level military and government officials and other community leaders for their criminal responsibility in planning and inciting the genocide, among other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in 1994.⁴³ An additional two million Rwandans fled the RPA advance for the eastern DRC, forming a substantial refugee population that included both ordinary Hutu civilians and perpetrators of the genocide.⁴⁴ The *génocidaires* reorganized in the refugee camps and began recruiting under the name of the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) with the goal of eventually launching a military invasion of Rwanda to retake the nation from the RPF. In doing so, the foundations for two decades of regional political instability, mass atrocities, and intermittent war were established.

By 18 July 1994, the RPF had successfully wrestled control of Rwanda, effectively ending the genocide. The following day, a new Government of National Unity was sworn in under the leadership of Hutu President Pasteur Bizimungu (r. 1994–2000), who, despite having been a member of Habyarimana’s MRND for many years, had joined the RPF in 1990. However, Bizimungu was widely rumored to be a puppet president, with Vice President and Minister of Defence Paul Kagame—previously the commander of the RPA—wielding genuine political power.⁴⁵ Perhaps in response to these rumors, Bizimungu grew increasingly critical of Kagame’s oppressive response to alleged political dissidents within Rwanda, particularly those who attempted to hold the new regime responsible for its many human rights violations against Hutu civilians in Rwanda and the DRC since 1994.⁴⁶ But in 2000, amid all-too-familiar allegations of corruption, Bizimungu resigned and Kagame (r. 2000 to present) ascended to the presidency. Bizimungu established a new political party, *Parti Démocratique pour le Renouveau-Ubuyanja* (PDR-Ubuyanja), to challenge Kagame.⁴⁷

However, in 2003 he was arrested on charges of threatening national security, embezzling public funds, and fomenting ethnic divisions among the Rwandan people. He was found guilty in 2004 and sentenced to 15 years in prison, though Kagame subsequently pardoned him in 2007.⁴⁸

OFFICIAL HISTORY IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

Having provided a brief overview of key events and actors in Rwanda's past, it is important to consider the political and social processes that inform and complicate the production of Rwanda's history in the present, as well as the myriad ways that it is disseminated by Rwandans according to personal and political motives. For indeed, Rwanda, like many transitional nations, has been characterized as a "highly politicized research setting" in which the government seeks to control—at times aggressively—how people speak about the nation's past, present, and future.⁴⁹ Foreign and Rwandan scholars, and indeed Rwandans more generally, remain divided between interpreting the Kagame regime as Rwanda's salvation for having stopped the genocide and led the nation into a period of remarkable economic development on one hand, and condemning the Kagame regime for its excessive human rights violations in the region on the other.

Under the leadership of Kagame and the RPF, Rwanda boasts remarkable development and economic progress. Among its many successes, the Kagame regime boasts a solid track record of attracting international donors and investors, accounting for as much as 40% of its annual budget, and counts among its supporters an impressive array of international celebrities and politicians, including former Heads of State Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, who publically champion its many positive attributes.⁵⁰ International funding is, quite appropriately, channeled into a range of programs and policies aimed at improving the overall lives of the Rwandan people. Under the banner of its ambitious "Vision 2020" platform, the RPF has initiated broad educational reforms aimed at ensuring literacy and a basic level of education, healthcare initiatives aimed at reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS, a reduction in population growth, the adoption of gender equality policies that have led to a majority representation of female parliamentarians, and is transforming the nation into an information technology (IT) hub for the Great Lakes region of Africa, if not the continent.⁵¹ The RPF has also taken on the generous task of training and providing Rwandan Defence Force (RDF) soldiers to serve as peacekeepers elsewhere in the region, most recently, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Darfur region of Sudan.⁵²

Simultaneously, in an effort to reduce ethnic tensions between its Hutu majority and Tutsi and Twa minority populations and ensure “universal accountability” among those responsible for planning, inciting, and perpetrating atrocities against Tutsi during the genocide, the RPF has launched an ambitious multi-pronged transitional justice program.⁵³ Disapproving of the UN’s decision to charge the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) with prosecuting people who bore primary responsibility for the genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda in 1994, the RPF tasked Rwanda’s newly reconstructed national criminal courts with prosecuting the remaining mid-level *génocidaires*.⁵⁴ Upon realizing that the national courts could not address the estimated 150,000 alleged *génocidaires* awaiting trial in a timely manner, the RPF reinvented *gacaca*—a pre-colonial dispute resolution mechanism that relied upon mediation by community elders—to address the overflow by trying the cases of low-level *génocidaires*.⁵⁵ Over a decade, an estimated 1,958,634 genocide-related cases were tried through *gacaca*.⁵⁶

In addition to these legal initiatives, the RPF invested in an ambitious program of nationalized mourning and commemoration.⁵⁷ In 1995, the Rwandan government sponsored its first commemorative event to acknowledge the genocide and honor its victims, recognizing Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa casualties. In subsequent years, this fledgling effort proliferated with the creation of an annual week of commemoration, the formal opening of several state-funded genocide memorials starting in 2004, and the creation of the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG) in 2007. Together, these institutions and events support remembrance and research surrounding the genocide, and educate the Rwandan public, as well as foreigners, about Rwanda’s genocidal past.⁵⁸

A final crucial element of Rwanda’s transitional justice program is the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) which has been mandated to create initiatives like *Ndi Umunyarwanda* (“I am Rwandan”), which encourages *génocidaires* to offer public apologies as a means of encouraging genocide survivors to forgive, and promoting discussion of Rwanda’s genocidal past.⁵⁹ NURC has also adapted *ingando* and *itorero* to educate Rwandans about its mandate and their role in the new Rwanda.⁶⁰ The term *ingando* means “halting normal activities to find solutions to national challenges” and was used by pre-colonial kings and military institutions to prepare the people to address natural disasters and war.⁶¹ In modern Rwanda, the term *ingando* may be applied to either solidarity camps where politicians, civil society, church leaders, and university students undergo “a form of political indoctrination for those who occupy,

or will occupy, leadership positions,” or mandatory re-education camps for confessed génocidaires and other criminals who are preparing to return to their communities.⁶² The term *itorero*, meanwhile, once referenced institutions wherein Rwandans studied Kinyarwanda and their indigenous culture, including sports, dance, music, and national values.⁶³ In 2009 *itorero* was also reintroduced by the RPF as competitive leadership development centers attended by Rwandan civilians to support cell-level public works projects.⁶⁴ One of the key mandates of these centers is to teach Rwandans to eschew the ethnic labels of the past and identify—first and foremost—as Rwandans working together for the improvement of the “New Rwanda.”⁶⁵

Rwanda’s transitional justice program has allowed the RPF to create and disseminate a powerful official history that is intended to overwrite the official narratives that previously dominated Rwanda’s public sphere, thereby diminishing ethnic divisions among its populace. However, experts on Rwanda are divided regarding the extent to which the RPF’s official narrative is actually serving to reinforce, rather than diminish, tensions among the population.⁶⁶ Numerous human rights organizations and scholars have documented a growing atmosphere of fear among Rwandans civilians, many of whom express anxiety regarding the consequences of publicly contradicting or criticizing the RPF and its policies. For example, in a 2010 press release, Amnesty International’s Africa Programme Director, Erwin van der Borgh, stated that “Rwandans live in fear of being punished for saying the wrong thing. Most take the safe option of staying silent.”⁶⁷ Jennie Burnet has criticized the RPF’s program of nationalized commemoration for creating a “shibboleth of genocide” that permits people to speak publicly about their experiences of the genocide only in terms that uphold the dichotomous official narrative in which Tutsi are victims and Hutu are perpetrators.⁶⁸ Similarly, Susan Thomson has documented the everyday practices of “staying on the sidelines, irreverent compliance, and withdrawn muteness” through which Rwandan civilians demonstrate resistance to the RPF’s policies of national unity and reconciliation, recognizing the inadequacies of these policies to resolve the problems they face in the post-genocide period.⁶⁹

Under these circumstances, oral historians and other qualitative researchers who study post-genocide Rwanda must proceed with caution. The narratives being produced by Rwandans in the everyday can be both polarized and polarizing, and require substantial contextualization to reveal their deeper meaning for how Rwandans make sense of their post-genocide lives. To this end, both Rwanda’s official histories and the private narratives of its citizens are perhaps best approached as “mythico-

histories”—a term coined by Liisa Malkki in reference to those narratives that are “not only a description of the past, not even merely an evaluation of the past, but a subversive recasting and reinterpretation of it in fundamentally moral terms.”⁷⁰

Indeed, Philippe’s narrative indicates that not only are not all Rwandans accepting of the RPF’s official narrative, but that many of those who are inspired to speak against it do so to assert a politically charged counter-narrative that challenges the RPF’s legitimacy. In Philippe’s case, narrating his life history to a foreign researcher provided him with an opportunity to present his crimes surrounding the genocide as justified given his family’s history of oppression under Tutsi leadership. He then framed his prosecution and imprisonment for these crimes as a manifestation of victor’s justice and evidence that Tutsi hegemony had once again overwhelmed Rwanda. However, as the following chapters will reveal, there are many ways to experience post-genocide Rwanda and myriad ways to relate to the RPF’s official narrative, from outright rejection to absolute adherence and everything in between. These varied responses to the RPF’s official narrative are complex and inevitably informed by the lived experiences of the Rwandans I interviewed, as well as the often contradictory official narratives and inherited memories to which they have been exposed throughout their lives.

ON METHODOLOGY

To this end, the methodology underlying this book is predominantly informed by the practice of oral history. Like Lynn Abrams, I approach oral history as both a research methodology and an end result.⁷¹ As a methodology, oral historians typically rely on the collection, analysis, and dissemination of interviews as a means of engaging with those versions of the past that are largely absent from official sources of historical knowledge, resulting in an intimate “view from below.” In my case, I used a combination of life history interviews and thematic interviews, meeting with each participant a minimum of two and as many as eight times, depending on their schedule and level of engagement during eight months of fieldwork in 2007 and 2008, and shorter follow-up trips in 2011 and 2012.

I worked closely with Rwandan research assistants to recruit participants, starting at the state-funded genocide memorials in order to learn culturally and politically appropriate ways to ask people about their experiences surrounding the genocide. Once my research assistants and I had achieved a suitable level of sensitivity for working with survivors and other parties to the conflict, we approached Rwandan community-based

organizations (CBOs) and government ministries to acquire the permissions necessary to conduct further interviews with survivors, ex-combatants, génocidaires, bystanders, and officials. As fieldwork progressed, we then began recruiting potential interviewees using word of mouth.

In each instance, informed consent was established prior to the start of interviews and revisited throughout our work together to ensure interviewees were aware of their rights surrounding the research project, and could make informed decisions regarding the degree of confidentiality they wanted and whether they needed to place any special conditions upon the future use of their interviews.⁷² The informed consent process also allowed them to determine whether they would permit me to make audio recordings of our encounters.⁷³ Wherever Rwandans consented to participate in the project, the interviews began with me encouraging participants to narrate their life history in as little or as much detail as they thought necessary in order to impart to me a solid understanding of who they were and what they had experienced. During these initial life history interviews, I asked few questions. Once participants felt they had sufficiently narrated their life histories, we would move on to thematic interviews, in which I asked questions specific to my research interests and informed by the events and encounters they had previously mentioned. This interview process took anywhere from 2 to 12 hours.

In most instances, participants preferred to be interviewed in Kinyarwanda, with a research assistant providing simultaneous translation in English. Wherever participants consented to being recorded, a second research assistant transcribed and translated everything that was said in Kinyarwanda to double-check the quality of the simultaneous translation, while I transcribed everything that was said in English. If participants were unwilling to be recorded, I kept thorough notes during our conversations based on the simultaneous translation, which I checked with them in subsequent interviews to minimize errors in the translation and make sure I was not misinterpreting their life histories and experiences.⁷⁴

In total, I interviewed 57 Rwandans from a range of ethnic, political, religious, regional, and economic backgrounds, most of whom self-identified, at least in part, according to the occasionally overlapping categories of survivor, génocidaire, ex-combatant, returnee, official, and bystander. In post-genocide Rwanda, each of these categories carries an inherent social and political meaning that warrants further discussion. As noted by Rachel Ibreck, the term “survivor” is used in public discourse in reference to Rwandans “who either experienced and escaped the genocide, or whose immediate families lived in Rwanda in 1994 while they were temporarily abroad.”⁷⁵ Because official discourse in Rwanda currently references this

period as the “1994 genocide of the Tutsi,” the term “survivor” effectively encompasses only Tutsi civilians, and eliminates formal recognition of Hutu and Twa civilians who were murdered for attempting to rescue Tutsi civilians, or because, in the absence of identity cards, they were mistaken for Tutsi during the genocide, among other reasons.

The term *génocidaire* is similarly restrictive and politicized, treated in official discourse as synonymous with Hutu civilians who were responsible for perpetrating atrocities during the genocide, effectively eliminating the possibility of Twa and Tutsi perpetrators. The term “ex-combatant,” meanwhile, is reserved in official discourse for those individuals who fought with the RPA during the civil war and have since been demobilized or incorporated into the RDF. Most ex-combatants identified as Rwandan Tutsi prior to the RPF victory, but had spent much, if not all, of their lives prior to the civil war and genocide outside Rwanda. The often overlapping label of “returnee” then references those individuals—most of whom again would have previously identified as Tutsi—who lived most or all of their lives prior to the genocide in exile in neighboring countries after their families fled ethnic and political violence as early as 1959.⁷⁶ The label “government official” seems fairly self-explanatory as an indicator of profession. But again, Rwandans often interpret this label as synonymous with returnee on the grounds that most government officials in the immediate aftermath of the genocide—and certainly those who exercised the most power—were long-term RPF loyalists, if not actual Tutsi returnees.⁷⁷ Finally, those remaining Hutu and Twa civilians who were alive during the genocide, but cannot be classified as either survivors or *génocidaires*, are often classified as bystanders. In many instances, even though they did not play a direct role in the genocide, their lives were nonetheless intimately affected.

I analyzed the resulting interviews using a distinctly ethnographic lens that emerged through immersing myself in everyday life in post-genocide Rwanda. To this end, I understand the practice of ethnography as:

[a] family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions ... It results in richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience... acknowledges the role of theory... as well as the researcher’s own role... and views human as part object / part subject.⁷⁸

During my first fieldwork trip to Rwanda, I was based in a neighborhood called Nyamirambo near downtown Kigali. However, I made near-daily trips

to more rural communities in order to access a wider range of experiences and interpretations.⁷⁹ In each community I visited, I engaged Rwandans in casual conversations about their day-to-day lives and kept thorough fieldnotes on these interactions. I likewise sought out “organic intellectuals”—community leaders with expertise in regional histories, storytelling, and culture—in addition to more formally recognized experts with whom I could discuss my preliminary findings. Once again, I kept fieldnotes on these encounters.⁸⁰ I later analyzed my fieldnotes to better comprehend the impact of intersubjectivity—described by Jennie Burnet as “the dialogue and interactions between the anthropologist, her research topic, and her research participants as well as between the conflicting points of view of her research participants”—on my research.⁸¹ I also drew upon human rights reports, newspaper articles, photographs, and secondary literature to triangulate the life histories and fieldnotes I collected and bring them into conversation with a broader body of literature on Rwanda. This allowed me to better contextualize the narratives to which I was exposed as well as identify and analyze the various “amplified silences” and erasures I encountered during my fieldwork.⁸²

As an end result, oral historians privilege publications, presentations, and other forms of dissemination that retain as much as possible the original voice of their participants—most commonly in transcript form, though audio and video recordings are also increasingly embedded in our outcomes—as distinct from that of the oral historian. To this end, wherever possible I draw upon excerpts from recorded interviews that have been edited only to maintain participants’ confidentiality—obscuring, for example, any names, places, and other details through which the interviewee might be identified. Where I was unable to record—such as in the prisons where I was not permitted to bring recording devices and when interviewing participants who wanted to discuss ideas that might be considered politically sensitive and were nervous about their voices being recognized—I rely instead on handwritten notes and fieldnotes to reconstruct participants’ narratives in as much detail as possible. I also include photographs that show some of the memorials where I conducted fieldwork, but do not include images or descriptions of participants or their immediate surroundings to further preserve their confidentiality.

This methodology allowed me to access a range of Rwandan experiences and perspectives on Rwandan history and its interpretation over time, and document the often shifting perspectives individual Rwandans entertained regarding various aspects of their nation’s past and present. It further enabled me to better contextualize the narratives that emerged not in terms of true or false, historical accuracy or inaccuracy, but instead as crucial for

revealing of what was psychologically true for participants as they worked toward constructing their life histories in a manner that facilitated equanimity or psychic comfort—what Graham Dawson has termed “composure.”⁸³

ETHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

This is not to say, however, that the process has not been fraught with ethical and methodological challenges. When I arrived in Rwanda in 2007, few researchers were talking openly about the tensions that surrounded research projects that investigated subject matter deemed “sensitive” by officials tasked with anticipating the best interests of the state. Likewise, few researchers seemed willing to discuss the ramifications of not heeding the often well-intentioned warnings of these officials.⁸⁴ Much to my surprise, throughout my time in Rwanda I was repeatedly offered guidance by government officials about different aspects of my research that they considered politically sensitive, such as my determination to speak with convicted *génocidaires*, whom I was told would only want to indoctrinate me with lies.⁸⁵ Similarly, I was frequently warned by officials against placing too much importance upon the narratives of rural Rwandans, whom officials claimed would seek to lead me astray with inaccurate depictions of life outside Kigali.

There was an element of truth in government officials’ concerns regarding my work with *génocidaires*: throughout my research in the prisons, I struggled to listen for the deeper meaning in *génocidaires*’ narratives when faced with the sometimes graphic depictions they offered of the violence they perpetrated against their victims, as well as their efforts to justify the crimes they committed during the genocide with competing claims of victimization under past and present Tutsi leadership.⁸⁶ I also struggled with “sharing authority” with these individuals, recognizing that their narratives were often constructed in a manner that was intended to inspire me to adopt their truths and imbue them, via my perceived status as an international expert, with “the halo of objectivity and impartiality that [my] academic stature entailed”—a phenomenon Antonius Robben has termed “ethnographic seduction.”⁸⁷ However, this challenge influenced not only my research among *génocidaires*, but also my interactions with survivors, ex-combatants, government officials, returnees, and, indeed, practically every Rwandan with whom I spent any significant amount of time.⁸⁸

Participants’ trauma and related mental health challenges proved to be a similar point of tension throughout my fieldwork. As part of receiving ethics approval from my institution, I was required to present strategies for

minimizing harm for any research participants who might be struggling with psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Psychological trauma, as understood by mental health and medical practitioners, refers to a range of psychological and psychosomatic symptoms that interfere on a temporary basis—usually less than a month—with “normal functioning” of the mind and nervous system, resulting from an experience “so overwhelmingly frightening and life threatening that [the mind] cannot come to terms with it.”⁸⁹ PTSD, conversely, is more formally defined via the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as a disorder involving “clinically significant distress or impairment of an individual’s social interactions, capacity to work or other important areas of functioning” resulting from “exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation.”⁹⁰ Behavioral symptoms of PTSD typically include spontaneous and involuntary re-experiencing of the traumatic event through dreams, flashbacks, avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts or feelings related to the traumatic event, persistent negative moods or thoughts resulting in markedly diminished interest in activities, and arousal, marked by aggressive or self-destructive behavioral, insomnia, and hypervigilance.

Among the small cohort of oral historians invested in the study of narratives resulting from conflicted and post-conflict communities, valuable contributions have been made regarding trauma’s ability to impact processes of memory creation and narration—particularly in terms of what must be silenced by our interviewees in the process of narrating difficult experiences.⁹¹ However, there is a tendency in this literature to focus solely on trauma in a manner that overwhelms the wider range of possible emotional responses that people have to traumatic events, including the potential for resilience.⁹² When I began my fieldwork in Rwanda, I was aware of the possibility that in asking people to narrate their experiences surrounding the genocide, I was compromising their mental health to the point that they might experience retraumatization. My concerns led me to limit my initial fieldwork to the state-funded genocide memorials, where I hoped to learn culturally appropriate ways of talking to people about the genocide so as to minimize harm for the research assistants and participants with whom I would work. As my fieldwork expanded, trauma was an ever-present feature of each conversation and interview, and research participants—survivors, bystanders, officials, ex-combatants, and perpetrators alike—often exhibited powerful emotions, many of which I was not qualified as an oral historian to diagnose with any degree of accuracy.⁹³

Further complicating the situation, many of the Rwandans I interviewed—having been exposed in the post-genocide period to human rights discourses and counseling opportunities that decried the high rates of trauma and PTSD among the population—identified as being traumatized or having PTSD.⁹⁴ Survivors and returnees, in particular, often expressed anxiety around recognition of their trauma—a dualist concept in the modern Rwandan context that combines chronic depression, mood swing, and withdrawal (*ihungabana*) with acute episodes of hallucinations and seizures (*ihabamuka*)—motivated in part by genuine trauma, but also occasionally by the belief that its expression afforded their narratives greater legitimacy.⁹⁵ However, I quickly realized that this focus on trauma often belied the wide range of emotions that people exhibited in discussing their experiences of genocide. This realization has prompted me to refrain throughout this book from writing in terms of trauma except in instances where trauma was explicitly referenced by individual research participants, with the intention of better encapsulating the range of emotional responses I observed during our encounters. This seems a more accurate and ethical approach, particularly given the remarkable resilience—even in the midst of grief, anger, frustration, and other emotions—demonstrated by the majority of the Rwandans with whom I worked. Indeed, the better I got to know interviewees, the more inappropriate it seemed for me to solely reference their experiences surrounding the genocide as traumatic.

An additional ethical concern arises from the pressures I have had to navigate from Rwandan government officials and their supporters to avoid certain avenues of research or resist publishing elements of my research that could be perceived as critical of the Kagame regime or its policies. Within Rwanda, I have encountered seemingly harmless but overly enthusiastic interest from police and intelligence officials who have turned up at my meetings with government officials, or visited me throughout my fieldwork to check my progress. Toward the end of my fieldwork in 2008, I had a permit informally revoked for refusing to share the names of my research participants and accompanying recordings and fieldnotes with an inquiring official who, while polite and professional during all encounters, refused to accept that the terms of my institutional ethics approval meant that I was not permitted to share the data resulting from my fieldwork, except in its final, anonymized published form.

Beyond Rwanda, I have been frequently approached by Rwandan government officials and their supporters—and to a lesser extent, their detractors—when giving public presentations at public events and conferences, who seek to correct my analysis, offer advice, or accuse me of some

wrongdoing. While most of these encounters have been harmless, and indeed, have been very instructive for me, others have been of a more hostile and unsettling nature. Following a presentation I gave on Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials, for example, a high-level representative of the Rwandan government who had been incensed by the talks given by me and the other panelists warned me that, based on the content of my talk, I would no longer be welcome in Rwanda. I was, in his words, clearly not a friend of the Rwandan government, because I acknowledged that in some communities the state-funded genocide memorials were a source of spiritual violence and emotional distress for the surrounding community, due in large part to the disrespectful ways that the human remains representing the genocide's deceased victims were being treated and the belief that the bodies of Tutsi victims of the genocide were being displayed alongside the bodies of Hutu victims of RPA atrocities perpetrated as the RPA wrested control of the country toward the end of the genocide.⁹⁶

Upon returning to Rwanda a few weeks later to continue this line of inquiry, I encountered difficulties in securing new research permits, despite what appeared to be enthusiastic support from the relevant country partners. Previously, I had been given verbal permission to conduct a preliminary study in one community while I drafted my project materials for approval by the Rwanda National Ethics Committee (RNEC) for a country-wide version of the project.⁹⁷ However, when it came time to submit the application to RNEC, I encountered a series of bureaucratic obstacles: most notably, a request for a previously unnecessary second letter of support from the Ministry of Justice that proved impossible to obtain without which RNEC then claimed it was impossible to review my application. During my next trip—the purpose of which was to secure additional letters of support from my various contacts and country partners in the hopes of assuaging the RNEC committee's concerns—I was informed by an official at passport control in the airport in Kigali that my multiple entry tourist visa had been declared invalid. While I was permitted to enter Rwanda, I was given three weeks to secure the necessary research permits or leave. I was further instructed that I was to have no contact with the general population, beyond the handful of government meetings I had already scheduled. These restrictions convinced me that further study of Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials could not at that time be pursued without putting my Rwandan research assistants and participants, if not myself, at risk of government persecution.⁹⁸

None of these experiences are particularly uncommon when working in conflict and post-conflict settings, and indeed, Rwanda is in some

respects one of the safer transitional societies in which foreign researchers can work. However, as a highly politicized research setting in which the government has been increasingly criticized for its human rights record in the region, foreign research—particularly that which engages with human rights-related topics—risks, at minimum, being overwhelmed by bureaucratic challenges. Rumors abound of foreign researchers being surveilled and deported for the slightest perceived infraction of their immigration visas or research permits, or for blogging or even exchanging private texts messages that are critical of government policies. With the exception of the public conflicts between the late Alison Des Forges and René Lemarchand and the Rwandan government that resulted in both scholars being declared *persona non grata*, Susan Thomson’s publications on being sent to ingando for re-education after a government official decided she was being exposed to too many negative accounts of post-genocide Rwanda, and a handful of comparatively minor incidents that happened to people I knew while in Rwanda doing fieldwork over the years, most of these rumors are impossible to verify.⁹⁹ However, they contribute to a general sense of insecurity and paranoia that speaks volumes about the kind of relationship that researchers risk having with the Rwandan government should they tackle politically sensitive subject matter in their fieldwork, and the challenges that they may continue to face even after their fieldwork in Rwanda is completed. Publications and presentations, in particular, become stressful endeavors, with many foreign researchers—myself included—engaging in various forms of self-censorship in the hopes of ensuring that they be able to return to Rwanda to continue their research without placing themselves, their research assistants, and their participants at risk of government persecution.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

With these challenges in mind, the following chapters endeavor to complicate what is commonly held true about post-genocide Rwanda and its past by analyzing the often contradictory life history narratives of Rwandans from a range of backgrounds. My fieldwork reveals that Rwandans draw upon past and present official narratives, inherited memories, and personal experiences, as well as a range of external social and political factors in different ways, but in a manner that often reflects political agendas that are common to others who identify, at least in part, as survivors, génocidaires, ex-combatants, returnees, government officials, and bystanders. The resulting narratives, in turn, reveal an underlying reservoir of ethnic

and political tensions that impacts people's everyday lives in post-genocide Rwanda in positive and negative ways, and has important ramifications for the nation's long-term political stability.

Chapter 2 presents the current official history dominating post-genocide Rwanda as disseminated via state-funded genocide memorials located throughout the country. Drawing upon data collected from the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre (KGMC) and, to a lesser extent, the rural state-funded memorial sites at Ntarama, Nyamata, Nyarubuye, Bisesero, and Murambi, among others, I argue that these sites are an essential part of the RPF's broader program of nationalized commemoration. Together, they present to the public an oversimplified version of Rwandan history surrounding the genocide that serves a political purpose that often overwhelms and undermines their stated humanitarian and commemorative functions.

In Chapter 3, I begin to bring the life histories of individual Rwandans into conversation with Rwanda's current official narrative to exemplify the myriad ways that Rwandans adapt official histories according to their personal circumstances. This chapter focuses on the narratives of professional survivors—genocide survivors who worked at the state-funded memorials on a part-time or full-time basis, having received formal government training in how to educate visitors about the genocide. These professional survivors often presented themselves as occupying precarious positions in the communities where they worked. Typically, survivors of the massacres that had occurred at the sites where the memorials had been created—at least during my initial fieldwork—they were well-known and often respected members of their communities. Yet, simultaneously, memorial staff were cognizant of being alienated from the wider communities in which they worked due to their status as potential government agents, working as they did to uphold and disseminate an official history that rarely matched the lived experiences of ordinary Rwandans, including, in many instances, their own. Nonetheless, most professional survivors upheld and disseminated the RPF's official narrative with pride, believing that the continued political supremacy of the RPF prevented ethnic and political violence from once again overwhelming the nation.

Chapter 4 then examines the life histories of genocide survivors who were not formally affiliated with the state-funded genocide memorials. While I anticipated that there would be a high level of support for the Rwandan government and its official narrative among survivors, the situation was once again more complex. While many genocide survivors expressed support for the RPF—largely again due to the belief that the RPF was uniquely capable of maintaining peace and political stability in

Rwanda—in private conversations they proved quite critical of the RPF’s official narrative and policies. Several survivors expressed nostalgia for the monarchy and even the leadership of the previous president, Habyarimana. Others expressed fears for the future, arguing that the RPF’s tendency to give preferential treatment to the Tutsi—particularly returnees from Uganda—while condemning the Hutu majority as *génocidaires* were fomenting ethnic and political tensions among Rwandans. Many genocide survivors lived with the fear that the RPF’s policies would ultimately result in further bloodshed at the expense of Rwanda’s minority Tutsi population, as this was a pattern many had seen play out in Rwanda’s recent past.

Chapter 5 brings the narratives of convicted *génocidaires* like Philippe into the conversation. Most of the *génocidaires* I interviewed had, at some point during their incarceration, been required to attend *ingando* and so were well-versed in the RPF’s official history. Their initial narratives clearly demonstrated this familiarity, but over time they often reverted to the previous official narratives that were promoted by the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, particularly when attempting to make sense of their criminal actions. However, this chapter also considers the cases of two individuals who were unique among the *génocidaires* I interviewed for their unflinching adherence to and support for the RPF’s official narrative during our encounters.

Chapter 6 then focuses on encounters with Rwandan returnees, most of whom simultaneously identified as ex-combatants, government officials, and/or community-based organization employees. Occupying relatively privileged positions within Rwandan society, particularly those who returned to Rwanda from Uganda having nurtured long-term relationships with the RPF, they often cast themselves as protectors of Rwandan interests, despite having spent much of their lives abroad. Though they often acknowledge the inaccuracies of the RPF’s official history in relation to their own lived experiences, they typically maintained that it was nonetheless essential to “sensitize the population” to the benefits of RPF leadership and policies to prevent future bloodshed. In doing so, they often expressed in private their nostalgia for Rwanda’s monarchy, while exaggerating negative stories regarding the regimes of Hutu Presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana and their oppression of Rwanda’s Tutsi minority population.

Finally, Chapter 7 explores key silences that emerge from the life histories explored in the preceding chapters, particularly as they relate to Hutu genocide survivors, Tutsi *génocidaires* and the fates of Rwanda’s minority Twa civilians surrounding the genocide. I argue that while there are Rwandans who can and will speak to these amplified silences and erasures, the political climate in post-genocide Rwanda at present makes it nearly impossible

for researchers to access these experiences in an ethical manner: specifically, without placing their participants at heightened risk of government persecution. Their life histories, however, are nonetheless important for providing additional context to the genocide, and Rwandan history more broadly.

The conclusion then ties these narratives together to respond to the research questions articulated above. Having demonstrated the myriad ways that Rwandans from a range of backgrounds draw upon appropriate elements from past and present official narratives in narrating their life histories and discussing Rwanda's past and present, I then explain the relevance of this phenomenon for understanding Rwanda's current political climate. I argue that not only is the RPF's official narrative only genuinely considered appropriate by a minority of Rwandans, but its existence is widely interpreted as a negative presence in the everyday lives of Rwandans, exemplifying many of the same mistakes made by regimes prior to the RPF's rise to power. As such, it is contributing to the maintenance of a powerful reservoir of ethnic and political tensions that, if left unchecked, could threaten the long-term political stability of the nation.

NOTES

1. Philippe, interview by author. I use pseudonyms throughout this book, in tandem with the withholding of personally identifying information, to protect research participants' confidentiality.
2. Fieldnotes 2008.
3. Indeed, in the context of post-genocide Rwanda, terms such as *génocidaire* are often understood and used in popular culture as being synonymous with Hutu. It is rare for Twa, and particularly Tutsi, perpetrators of the genocide to be acknowledged. For more information, see Jennie Burnet, *Genocide lives in us: Women, Memory and Silence in Rwanda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 31, 110.
4. David Cohen, *The Combining of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 4.
5. In his work on foreign accounts of the Haitian revolution, Michel-Rolph Trouillot uses the phrase "formulas of erasure" to encapsulate those official discourses or tropes that erase directly the fact of the Haitian revolution. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, there are several related erasures in the various official histories that have dominated Rwanda at different points in time.

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 96.
6. Notable historians specializing in the Nyiginya kingdom include Jan Vansina, Alexis Kagame, Catharine Newbury, David Newbury, Jean-Pierre Chrétien, and Marcel d'Hertefelt, among others.
 7. In addition to his many accomplishments, Kagame was descended from the Singa clan, from which many abiru were descended, permitting him unprecedented scholarly access to these oral traditions. For more information, see Erin Jessee and Sarah Watkins, "Good Kings, Bloody Tyrants, and Everything In Between: Representations of the Monarchy in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *History in Africa* 41 (2014), 39–40; Alexis Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'ethno-histoire du Rwanda*, (Burtare: Éditions universitaires du Rwanda, 1972); André Coupez and Marcel d'Hertefelt, *La Royauté Sacrée de l'Ancien Rwanda: Texte, Traduction et Commentaire de son Rituel*, (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1964); and Jan Vansina, "Useful anachronisms: The Rwandan esoteric code of kingship," *History in Africa* 27 (2000), 415–416.
 8. Jan Vansina, "Historical tales (*Ibitéekerezo*) and the History of Rwanda," *History in Africa* 27 (2000), 378–379.
 9. The Rwandan monarchy was hierarchical with the Tutsi abami delegating tasks to an intricate network of chiefs, sub-chiefs, and other court notables who were responsible for ensuring that their will was carried out among the population.
 10. Catharine Newbury, "*Ubureetwa* and *Thangata*: Catalysts to Peasant Political Consciousness in Rwanda and Malawi," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 14(1) (1980), 100. See also Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 134.
 11. Pierre Gravel, "The Transfer of Cows in Gisaka (Rwanda): A Mechanism for Recording Social Relationships," *American Anthropologist* 69(3–4) (1967), 322–331.
 12. For more on the much-earlier origins of *ubuhake* under Ndori Ruganzu—a semi-mythical figure who is referenced in Rwanda's oral traditions as the founder of the Nyiginya kingdom in the seveneenth century—see Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 47.
 13. Each of Kigwa's sons symbolizes a different socio-economic group in Rwanda, with Gatutsi representing the predominantly pastoralist Tutsi minority, Gahutu representing the predominantly

- agriculturalist Hutu majority, and Gatwa representing the predominantly hunter-gatherer Twa minority.
14. Personal communication, Rose-Marie Mukarutabana. See also J.J. Carney's recent book, *Rwanda Before the Genocide*, which refers to the importance of this myth for communicating an "inherent moral hierarchy" implying Tutsi superiority over the Hutu and Twa. J.J. Carney, *Rwanda Before the Genocide: Catholic Politics and Ethnic Discourse in the Late Colonial Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 11. See also Josias Semujanga, *Origins of the Rwandan Genocide* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2003), 87–88. In Semujanga's version of the myth, the father-figure is identified as Gihanga, which translates as "the creator."
 15. British physician and ethnologist Charles Seligman was a key proponent of the Hamitic hypothesis. His 1930 book *Races of Africa* distinguishes between Hamite pastoralists who were of European descent, and "two other African stocks, the Negro and the Bushman." Charles Seligman, *Races of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 96. For additional information, see Edith Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective," *Journal of African History* 10(4) (1969), 521–532.
 16. Alison Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 36–37.
 17. Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi Information and Public Relations Office, *Ruanda-Urundi: Geography and History* (Bruxelles: Office de l'information et des relations publiques pour le Congo belge et le Ruanda-Urundi, 1960), 72. See also Christopher Taylor's *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (New York: Berg, 1999), 55–97.
 18. Carney, *Rwanda Before the Genocide*, 14. See also Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," *Africa Today* 45(1) (1998): 11.
 19. The circumstances surrounding Rudahigwa's death are the source of great controversy within and beyond Rwanda. Many former monarchists believe that the Belgians assassinated Rudahigwa, though his official cause of death was reported as a brain hemorrhage. Catharine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 193.
 20. Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 48.

21. Catharine Newbury and Mary Catharine Atterbury, *Revolution in Rwanda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 76.
22. Ndahindurwa was declared the next king of Rwanda by the abiru without consultation, setting the stage for further political tensions among Rwandans, and between the royal court and Belgian colonial administrators. Carney, *Rwanda Before the Genocide*, 107; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 54.
23. Kayibanda was briefly preceded in 1961 by interim President of Rwanda, PARMEHUTU's Dominique Mbyonyumutwa.
24. According to Stephen Kinzer, the Tutsi exiles first introduced this term in the early 1960s "to symbolize their nocturnal habits and their conviction that no amount of effort would eliminate them. Later their enemies began to use it, arguing that it was appropriate because the rebels, like cockroaches, were filthy invaders who defiled clean places." Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's rebirth and the man who dreamed it* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), 34.
25. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 225.
26. The success of the ethnic quotas that sought to limit Tutsi to 9% of the total number of seats in schools, the civil service, and the private sector, is debatable. René Lemarchand, Catharine Newbury and Filip Reyntjens have argued that because only Tutsi elites had access to formal education during Rwanda's colonial period, they continued to hold a disproportionate number of these jobs under Kayibanda. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 260; Catharine Newbury, "Rwanda: Recent Debates Over Governance and Rural Development," in *Governance and Politics in Africa*, ed. Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1992), 197; and Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda* (Teruven: Musée royale de l'Afrique centrale, 1985), 501. Most recently, Marie-Eve Desrosiers' analysis of Kayibanda's public speeches and the PARMEHUTU manifesto suggests that while the Kayibanda regime is often portrayed as fiercely ethnocentric, the rhetoric Kayibanda relied upon to garner public support for his leadership and policies in the face of substantial economic and political challenges was largely moderate. Specifically, Kayibanda focused on presenting PARMEHUTU as an absolute break from the "'feudal-colonial' system that had preceded the Republic" and clearly distinguished between the "terrorists" associated with the inyenzi incursions and

- Rwanda-based Tutsi civilians, whom he encouraged to “accept the brotherhood you have with the Hutu.” Marie-Eve Desrosiers, “Rethinking Political Rhetoric and Authority During Rwanda’s First and Second Republics,” *Africa* 84(2) (2014), 210, 212.
27. René Lemarchand estimates that 100,000 to 200,000 civilians, most of whom were members of Burundi’s Hutu minority population, were murdered during the 1972 genocide by Burundi’s predominantly Tutsi military. For more information, see René Lemarchand, “Genocide in the Great Lakes: Which Genocide? Whose Genocide?” *African Studies Review* 41(1) (1998), 3–16; and René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
 28. Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda*, 504.
 29. Though referred to as a bloodless coup, over the next two years many of Kayibanda’s inner circle were executed or permitted to die in prison, while Kayibanda was intentionally starved to death. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 82.
 30. For more on Habyarimana’s policy of “ethnic and regional equilibrium” and his creation of a highly centralized state apparatus, see Andrea Purdeková, “‘Even if I am not here, there are so many eyes’: Surveillance and State Reach in Rwanda,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 49(3) (2011), 475–497; and Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 71–72.
 31. Agathe Kanziga is also commonly referenced as Agathe Habyarimana in much of the literature on Rwanda. In this book, I have chosen to use her maiden name to avoid confusion with her husband. Kanziga was part of the prestigious and influential Abagesera clan from northwestern Rwanda. This region had remained a small autonomous kingdom on the borders of the Nyiginya kingdom until the arrival of superior German weaponry and other factors associated with the advent of colonialism in the early twentieth century convinced its leadership to accept incorporation into German East Africa. Despite this dramatic shift in the local political sphere, Kanziga’s ancestors were able to maintain a high degree of local power and influence throughout Rwanda’s colonial period and the First Hutu Republic. Ultimately, it was this influence that Kanziga rallied in support of her otherwise relatively unknown husband’s efforts to orchestrate the “bloodless coup” that deposed President Kayibanda in 1973. As her husband’s presi-

- gency took shape, Kanziga increasingly exercised political power from behind the scenes by ensuring that trusted members of her immediate and extended family were placed in positions of influence within Habyarimana's inner circle. For more information, see André Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide: Criminal Politics in Rwanda, 1990–1994* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 50; and Sarah Watkins, "Iron Mothers and Warrior Lovers: Intimacy, Power, and the State in the Nyiginya Kingdom, 1796–1913" (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2014), 214–215.
32. Philip Verwimp, "The Political Economy of Coffee, Dictatorship, and Genocide," *European Journal of Political Economy* 19(2) (2003), 161–181; and Philip Verwimp, "Agricultural policy, crop failure and the 'Ruriganiza' Famine (1989) in Southern Rwanda: A Prelude to Genocide?," Centre for Economic Studies Discussion Paper Series, accessed 24 February 2014, <https://merode.econ.kuleuven.ac.be/eng/ew/discussionpapers/Dps02/Dps0207.pdf>.
 33. Alan Kuperman, "Provoking Genocide: A Revised History of the Rwandan Patriotic Front," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1) (2004), 65. See also Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 159–184.
 34. Kuperman estimates that 3000 of Museveni's 14,000 troops during this period were Rwanda-born Tutsi. Kuperman, "Provoking Genocide," 66.
 35. For more background on the RPF's action in Uganda and its efforts to negotiate Rwandan refugees' right to return to Rwanda, see Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 159–184.
 36. For more on the Arusha peace process and its impact on the civil war in Rwanda, see Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 159–191.
 37. This extremist faction—also referred to as Zero Network (*Réseau zéro*)—is frequently associated with the *akazu* (little house) or *clan de madame* that had taken shape around Agathe Kanziga. The term "Hutu Power" references an extremist fringe among Hutu political elites who were vehemently anti-RPF and anti-Tutsi. René Lemarchand, "The Rationality of Genocide," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 23(2) (1995), 10. For more on the ideologies underlying

- Hutu extremists surrounding the genocide, see Alison Des Forges, "The Ideology of Genocide," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 23(2) (1995), 44–47.
38. Controversy has emerged over which parties to the conflict are responsible for Habyarimana's assassination. Soon after Habyarimana's death, a Belgian journalist reported that two French soldiers were responsible for the assassination, while Etienne Sengegera, the Rwandan ambassador to the DRC alleged that Belgian peacekeepers were to blame. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 213–214. RPF supporters allege that Habyarimana's inner circle had him assassinated following his decision to sign the Arusha Accords because they felt he had betrayed the Hutu cause. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 182. In 2010, the Rwandan government released the Mutsinzi Report, which argues that the Rwandan Armed Forces were responsible for engineering and implementing Habyarimana's assassination. Republic of Rwanda, "Report of the investigation into the causes and circumstances of and responsibility for the attack of 06.04.1994 against the Falcon 50 Rwandan Presidential Aeroplane, registration number 9XR-NN." (Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 2010). These findings were loosely confirmed by the preliminary Trévidic report, though critics have noted that both the Mutsinzi and Trévidic reports failed to take into consideration the testimonies of ex-RPF combatants who claim Kagame was responsible for orchestrating Habyarimana's assassination. Marc Trédivic and Nathalie Poux, "*Rapport d'expertise: destruction en vol du Falcon 50*" (Paris:) 2012, accessed 27 February 2014, <http://ddata.over-blog.com/xxxyyy/2/93/44/38/rapport-ballist-attentat-contre-habyarimana-6-4-19-copie-1.pdf>; and Hugh Schofield, "Rwanda Genocide: Kagame 'cleared of Habyarimana crash,'" *The BBC*, 10 January 2012, accessed 8 February 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16472013>. To this end, André Guichaoua, a sociologist and expert witness for the ICTR, has concluded based on evidence collected and verified by ICTR prosecutors that the RPF was most likely responsible. Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide*, 144–145.
 39. The number of victims of the 1994 genocide is similarly controversial, with conservative estimates—including the one cited by Alison Des Forges, which is adhered to in this instance—concluding that between 500,000 and 800,000 Rwandans died. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 15–16. Conversely, the Rwandan government

- maintains that over one million Rwandan Tutsi were murdered during this period. See, for example: National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG), “Genocide,” 2013, accessed 27 February 2014, <http://www.cnlg.gov.rw/-Genocide-.html>.
40. For further information on the specific forms of gender-based violence endured by Rwandan women during the genocide, see Erin Baines, “Body politics and the Rwanda crisis,” *Third World Quarterly* 24(3) (2003): 479–493; René Degni-Ségui, “Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Rwanda, submitted by Mr. René Degni-Ségui, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, under paragraph 20 of Resolution S-3/1 of 25 May 1994,” United Nations Commission on Human Rights, <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/commission/country52/68-rwa.htm> (accessed 19 December 2016); Binaifer Nowrojee, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996); and Christopher Taylor, “A gendered genocide: Tutsi women and Hutu extremists in the 1994 Rwanda genocide,” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 22(1) (1999): 42–54.
 41. Marie Consolée Mukagendo, “Caring for Children Born of Rape in Rwanda,” in R. Charli Carpenter (ed.) *Born of War: Protecting Children of Sexual Violence Survivors in Conflict Zones* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2007), 42.
 42. The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide formally defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” For more information, see United Nations, “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,” 9 December 1948, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf> (accessed 29 December 2016). This legal prohibition was intended to complement previously existing legal prohibitions against crimes against humanity and war crimes. Crimes against humanity have most recently been defined in the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as “any of the

following acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: (a) murder; (b) extermination; (c) enslavement; (d) deportation or forcible transfer of population; (e) imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; (f) torture; (g) rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; (h) persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national ethnic, cultural, religious, gender . . . or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the court.” War crimes have likewise been defined in the Rome Statute as “grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention: (i) wilful [sic] killing; (ii) torture or inhumane treatment, including biological experiments; (iii) wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health; (iv) extensive destruction and appropriate of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly; (v) compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power; (vi) wilfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial; (vii) unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement; (viii) taking of hostages.” For more information, see International Criminal Court, “Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,” 1 July 2002, https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/ea9aeff7-5752-4f84-be94-0a655eb30e16/0/rome_statute_english.pdf (accessed 29 December 2016).

43. The ICTR concluded its primary work—delivering trial judgments—in 2012, but due to several appeals did not formally close until December 2015. For more information on the ICTR, see United Nations Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, “The ICTR in Brief,” <http://unictr.unmict.org/en/tribunal> (accessed 29 December 2016).
44. This mass flight of refugees was in large part made possible by *Opération Turquoise*, a French peacekeeping initiative that was allegedly intended to provide protection to civilians in eastern

- Rwanda, but which in reality created a safe corridor for Hutu elites responsible for organizing and inciting the genocide to flee Rwanda and, at least momentarily, escape the RPF. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 682–684.
45. See for example, Renée Hagesteijn, “Early States and ‘Fragile States’: Opportunities for Conceptual Synergy,” *Social Evolution and History* 7(1) (2008), 82; Gérard Prunier, “From Fatigues to Three-Piece Suits: East African Guerrillas in Power” *South African Institute of International Affairs Occasional Paper Series* 37 (2009), 6, accessed 12 March 2014, <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/29485/1/SAIIA%20Occasional%20Paper%2037.pdf>; and Carla Schraml, *The Dilemma of Recognition: Experienced Reality of Ethnicised Politics in Rwanda and Burundi* (Marburg: Springer, 2011), 156.
 46. Robert Gersony, Alison Des Forges, and more recently, the United Nations have documented a range of atrocities perpetrated by the RPF against Hutu civilians and alleged génocidaires in the aftermath of the genocide. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 705; United Nations High Commission for Refugees, “Summary of UNHCR Presentation Before Commission of Experts,” 10 October 1994, accessed 27 February 2014, http://richardwilson-author.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/gersony_report.pdf; and United Nations, “Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003,” August 2010, accessed 27 February 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/ZR/DRC_MAPPING_REPORT_FINAL_EN.pdf. The RPF has, in rare instances where it acknowledges these atrocities occurred, dismissed them as individual revenge killings by undisciplined RPA troops, rather than evidence of a systematic plan conceived by the RPF to terrorize Hutu civilians. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 714.
 47. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “*Rwanda: Parti démocratique pour le renouveau (PDR-Ubuyanja)*, y compris ses objectifs, ses fondateurs, ses statuts, sa structure organisationnelle, ses membres et ainsi que sa carte de membre (2000-mars 2003),” 24 March 2003, RWA41034.F, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f7d4e121c.html> (accessed 12 March 2016).

48. Filip Reyntjens, *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 14–15.
49. See, for example, Erin Jessee, “The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings,” *Oral History Review* 38(2) (2011), 287–307; and Susan Thomson, “Getting Close to Rwandans Since the Genocide: Studying Everyday Life in Highly Politicized Research Settings,” *African Studies Review* 53(3) (2010), 19–34.
50. For more on the use of donor funding in Rwanda, see Haley Swedlund, “From Donorship to Ownership? Budget Support and Donor Influence in Rwanda and Tanzania,” *Public Administration and Development* 33(5) (2013), 362. Regarding celebrity support for Kagame’s leadership, see Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills*, 3, 309. See also interviews by former Heads of State Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, for example: BBC News, “Tony Blair defends Rwanda’s role in DR Congo,” 27 February 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21608906> (accessed 12 March 2016); and BBC News, “20 minutes with Bill Clinton—up against ‘big poppa,’” 12 August 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21608906> (accessed 12 March 2016).
51. See, for example, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Scientific Research (MINEDUC), “Education Sector Policy,” July 2003, http://www.mineduc.gov.rw/IMG/pdf/EDUCATION_POLICY.pdf (accessed 27 February 2014); Tina Rosenberg, “In Rwanda, Health Care Coverage That Eludes the U.S.,” *The New York Times*, 3 July 2012, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/03/rwandas-health-care-miracle/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1 (accessed 27 February 2014); Dayo Olopade, “The Fairer Leaders,” *The New York Times*, 10 July 2012, http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/10/african-states-ahead-of-the-west-in-female-political-representation/?_r=0 (accessed 27 February 2014); Masimba Tafirenyika, “Information Technology Super-Charging Rwanda’s Economy,” *Africa Renewal Online*, April 2011, <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2011/information-technology-super-charging-rwandas-economy> (accessed 27 February 2014); and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), “Rwanda Vision 2020,” 2000, http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/General/Vision_2020/Vision-2020.pdf (accessed 27 February 2014).

52. For an overview of Rwandan involvement in UN peacekeeping missions, see Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations, "UN Peacekeeping," 2016, <http://rwandaun.org/site/un-peacekeeping/>, (accessed 12 March 2016).
53. Gerald Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda: Accountability for Atrocity* (London: Routledge, 2013): xxxviii. The field of transitional justice was formally defined in the early 1990s in response to international determination to promote development, democratic reforms, social repair, and social justice in the aftermath of mass atrocities. For more on the foundation and aims of transitional justice, see Alexander Hinton, 'Introduction: Toward an Anthropology of Transitional Justice' in *Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence*, ed. A. Hinton (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 1–24; and Naomi Roht-Arriaza, 'The New Landscape of Transitional Justice' in *Transitional Justice in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. N. Roht-Arriaza and J. Mariezcurrena (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–16. For an overview of Rwanda's particular approach to transitional justice in the post-genocide period, see Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda*.
54. Oliver Dubois, "Rwanda's National Criminal Courts and the International Tribunal," *International Review of the Red Cross* 321 (1997): 717–731.
55. Gacaca Community Justice, "About," 2016, <http://gacaca.rw/> (accessed 16 March 2016). For more information on gacaca, see Kristin Doughty, "Law and the architecture of social repair: Gacaca days in post-genocide Rwanda," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21 (2015): 419–437; Bert Ingelaere, "'Does the truth pass across the fire without burning?': Locating the short circuit in Rwanda's gacaca courts," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47(4) (2009): 507–528.; Susan Thomson and Rosemary Nagy, "Law, Power, and Justice: What Legalism Fails to Address in the Functioning of Rwanda's Gacaca Courts," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5(1) (2011), 11–30; and Lars Waldorf, "Mass Justice for Mass Atrocity: Rethinking Local Justice as Transitional Justice," *Temple Law Review* 79(1) (2006), 1–87.
56. Théoneste Rutayisire and Anemiek Richters, "Everyday suffering outside prison walls: A legacy of community justice in post-genocide Rwanda," *Social Science and Medicine* (2014), 2.

57. In referencing nationalized mourning and commemoration, I am building upon a conversation initiated by Jennie Burnet. For more information, see Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 92–109; and Jennie Burnet, “Whose Genocide? Whose Truth? Representations of Victim and Perpetrator in Rwanda,” in Alexander Hinton and Kevin O’Neill (eds.) *Genocide: Truth, Memory, and Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 80–110.
58. The state-funded genocide memorials will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.
59. Robert Mbaraga, “State pushes campaign that critics say it is ethnically divisive,” *The East African*, 16 November 2013, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/Rwanda/News/Mixed-reactions-to--Ndi-Umunyarwanda-initiative--/1433218/2075366/-/6kctmf/-/index.html> (accessed 3 March 2015).
60. As noted by Paul Nantulya, *ingando* has a long history in Rwanda, but in the past was used by the Rwandan king during periods of upheaval as a communal retreat where “people shared in decisions on war and peace and how Rwanda was governed.” Paul Nantulya, “African Nation-Building and Reconstruction: Lessons From Rwanda,” *Conflict Trends* 1 (2006): 48. http://kmsl.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/104570/ichaptersection_single_document/0BD42989-F354-44DA-9361-657C79AFF11D/en/Chapter11.pdf (accessed 6 May 2015).
61. *Ibid.*, 47.
62. Susan Thomson, ‘Reeducation for Reconciliation: Participant Observations on *Ingando*’, in Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (eds.) *Remaking Rwanda: State-Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 334.
63. For more information on *itorero*, see Molly Sundberg, *Training for Model Citizenship: An Ethnography of Civic Education and State-Making in Rwanda* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); and Jennifer Melvin, “Correcting history: Mandatory education in Rwanda,” *Journal of Human Rights in the Commonwealth*, 2 (2013), 14–22.
64. Andrea Purdeková, ““Even if I am not here, there are so many eyes,”” 475–497.
65. This is a key element of post-genocide Rwanda’s constitution. While it is not illegal for Rwandans to speak in terms of ethnic identities, doing so places people at risk of being accused of having internalized the genocide ideology promoted by Hutu Power

- extremists in the lead-up to the genocide. As a result, discussing one's identity in terms of ethnicity has become taboo in public settings, the sole exception being around commemoration of the "1994 genocide of the Tutsi." That said, in my experience, most Rwandans freely include these old labels of ethnicity among the many markers of identity they reference when speaking privately. See also Laura Eramian, "Ethnicity without labels? Ambiguity and excess in 'postethnic' Rwanda," *Focaal* 70(14) (2014): 96–109.
66. See, for example, Jennie Burnet's assessment of Rwanda's program of nationalized commemoration, Gerald Gahima's overview of transitional justice in Rwanda, and Susan Thomson's evaluation of the state's policy of national unity and reconciliation. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*; Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda*; Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*.
 67. Erwin van der Borgh, cited in Amnesty International, "Rwanda: 'Living in fear of saying the wrong thing,' Amnesty International UK Press Release, 30 August 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/rwanda-living-fear-saying-wrong-thing> (accessed 11 March 2014).
 68. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 128.
 69. Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 9.
 70. Lisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 54. While Malkki intended this term to reference the community of Burundian refugees she studied in Tanzania, since its publication it has been widely applied to other nations in the Great Lakes of Africa region. For more information, see: Yolande Bouka, "(Oral) History of Violence: Conflicting Narrative in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 33 (2013), 7; Jennie Burnet, "Whose Genocide? Whose Truth? Representations of Victim and Perpetrator in Rwanda," 96; Elisabeth King, "From Data Problems to Data Points: Challenges and Opportunities of Research in Postgenocide Rwanda," *African Studies Review* 52(3) (2009), 127–148; Elisabeth King, *From Classrooms to Conflict in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13; and Marc Sommers, "Review of Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*," *American Anthropologist* 99(1) (1997), 218.
 71. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 2.

72. This informed consent process was based on Canada's Tri-Council policies for social scientific research with human subjects and further recommendations offered by the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Concordia University. For more information on Canada's Tri-Council policies, see Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans," (2010), http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL (accessed 26 September 2015).
73. At the end of each interview, we revisited the informed consent sheet to confirm that they were comfortable with the conditions they had selected for the recording and subsequent use of their interview. Each informant was also provided with my research assistant's mobile number and email address, and informed that they had until I left Rwanda to contact us if they wanted to make any changes to the conditions surrounding their consent to participate in the research project. My research assistant was given phone credit cards on a weekly basis to cover any expenses they might incur.
74. In many instances, participants were happy to be interviewed, but reluctant to be recorded lest the recordings somehow become public and be recognized by family, friends, or local authorities, creating problems for them if something they said was interpreted as critical of the government. Though it was not part of my research design to ever make these interview recordings public—only anonymized excerpts from the transcripts—some participants argued that if the government became interested in my research, they would find a way to get the recordings and any other research materials I collected, and that if participants' voices were recognizable and making critical statements about the "New Rwanda," they risked government persecution.
75. Rachel Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Memory Studies*, 3(4) (2010), 341.
76. These individuals as also sometimes referred to as old caseload returnees. For more information, see Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 237n3.
77. For that matter, many of the Hutu who advanced to senior positions within the new government of national unity were later found to be puppet figures, answering to Tutsi politicians at equivalent or more senior levels in the government on most matters – a practice

- that continues at present. For more information, see United States Embassy in Rwanda, "Viewing cable 08KIGALI525, Ethnicity in Rwanda – Who Governs the Country?" 5 August 2008: <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08KIGALI525.html> (accessed 26 February 2014).
78. Karen O'Reilly, *Key Concepts in Ethnography* (London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2009), 3 (emphasis in original).
 79. In seeking out the narratives of rural Rwandans, I was attempting to address an important criticism articulated by David and Catharine Newbury that most studies of Rwanda tended to obscure peasant experiences in their focus on elite history and politics. David Newbury and Catherine Newbury, "Bringing the peasants back in: Agrarian themes in the construction and corrosion of statist historiography in Rwanda," *The American Historical Review* 105(3) (2000), 832–977.
 80. This group included healers, religious leaders, elders, and other prominent figures in the everyday lives of the rural Rwandans with whom I worked. For more on organic intellectuals, see Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
 81. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 35.
 82. Jennie Burnet uses this term in reference to the "intense public silence surrounding RPF-perpetrated violence experienced by Rwandans of all ethnicities," though in my experience, and as will be described in greater detail in the following chapters, RPF-perpetrated violence is one of many subjects that remains taboo to discuss in public in post-genocide Rwanda. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 111. See also, Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 96–98.
 83. Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), 22–23.
 84. As of 2010, several researchers have begun writing about their experiences with government surveillance and interference in Rwanda. For example, see Purdeková, "'Even if I am not here, there are so many eyes,'""; Marc Sommers, *Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2012); and Thomson, "Getting Close to Rwandans Since the Genocide." In addition, human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have become increasingly vocal about the government interference their

researchers and others have endured in their efforts to document human rights violations in Rwanda, a common theme in their annual reports on Rwanda.

85. My focus on the narratives of convicted génocidaires was the direct outcome of the ethics review process at my institution. To ensure that I would not be called upon to testify against génocidaire participants or advocate for reductions in their sentences, the institutional review board at my university required that I only interview génocidaires who had completed their trial and appeals process. While I agreed to this provision immediately, I quickly learned it was difficult to adhere to. Due to the nature of the transitional justice system in post-genocide Rwanda, it was not uncommon for génocidaires to go through sentencing for a particular crime during the genocide, only to have new charges raised against them as they neared completion of their sentence. In most instances, I only learned of these new charges after we had conducted several hours of interview, presumably after participants felt comfortable divulging their status in the transitional justice system more accurately. As a result, I adapted my informed consent process to include statements that people should not discuss any crimes with me related to active investigations, and that I was unable to influence any trial outcomes. This was intended to make up for the fact that some of the “convicted” génocidaires I interviewed were still undergoing investigation for crimes related to the genocide, despite having already been charged, tried and convicted for others.
86. For more on génocidaires competing claims to victimization, see Erin Jessee, “Rwandan women no more: Female génocidaires in the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide,” *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research* 1 (2015): 60–80.
87. Antonius Robben, “Ethnographic Seduction: Transference and Resistance in Dialogues About Terror and Violence in Argentina,” *Ethos* 24, no. 1 (March 1996): 84. Michael Frisch first introduced the concept of shared authority in 1990. This term has since been replaced by the more dynamic and process-oriented concept of “sharing authority,” which implies an ongoing collaborative relationship and shared decision-making between the interviewer and the interviewee. For more information on its original conception, see Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University New York Press, 1990). For more information on later adaptations

- of the concept, see Steven High, Lisa Ndejuru, and Kristen O'Hare, ed., "Special Issues on Sharing Authority: Community-University Collaboration in Oral History, Digital Storytelling, and Engaged Scholarship," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2009).
88. For more information, see Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 287–307.
 89. Babette Rothschild, *Trauma Essentials: The Go-To Guide* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 18.
 90. American Psychiatric Association, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," 2013, <http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/PTSD%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf> (accessed 13 March 2016).
 91. See for example, Nanci Adler, Selma Leydesdorff, Mary Chamberlain, and Leyla Neyzi (eds.), *Memories of Mass Repression: Narrating Life Stories in the Aftermath of Atrocity* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011); Sean Field, *Oral History, Community, and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Henry Greenspan, "The Unsaid, the Incommunicable, the Unbearable, and the Irretrievable," *Oral History Review* 41(2) (2014), 229–243; Mark Klempner, "Navigating Life Review Interviews with Survivors of Trauma," *Oral History Review* 27(2) (2000), 67–83; Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014); Wendy Rickard, "Oral History—'More dangerous than therapy'?": Interviewees reflections on recording traumatic or taboo issues," *Oral History* 26(2) (1998), 34–48; and Kim Lacy Rogers and Selma Leydesdorff (eds.), *Trauma: Life Stories of Survivors* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004).
 92. Indeed, experts on trauma such as psychologist Charles Bonanno, counselor Louise Harms, and psychiatrist Judith Herman are quick to point out that the majority of people do not experience long-term psychological trauma following an traumatic event, meaning the PTSD and other related disorders are but one possible response that a person can have. Resilience is, in fact, far more common. Charles Bonanno, "Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely adverse events?" *American Psychologist* 59(1) (2004), 20–28; Louise Harms, *Understanding Trauma and Resilience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*:

The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

93. I attempted to compensate for this lack of training on my part by working exclusively with Rwandan research assistants who had some background in trauma counseling.
94. According to a 1996 study conducted by UNICEF, almost one-third of Rwanda's civilian population exhibited PTSD. For more on how this diagnosis of mass trauma has played out in the context of post-genocide Rwanda in the years since this determination, see Federica Guglielmo, "Medicalizing violence: Victimhood, trauma, and corporeality in post-genocide Rwanda," *Critical African Studies* 7(2) (2015), 148; and Phuong Pham, Harvey Weinstein, and Timothy Longman, "Trauma and PTSD Symptoms in Rwanda: Implications for Attitudes Toward Justice and Reconciliation," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 292(5) (2004), 602–612.
95. Guglielmo, "Medicalizing violence," 156.
96. The Canadian Centre for International Governance Innovation has since published this presentation as a policy brief and discussion paper. Erin Jessee, "Promoting reconciliation through exhuming and identifying victims in the 1994 Rwandan genocide," *Africa Initiative Discussion Paper Series* 4 (2012): 1–24; and Erin Jessee, "Promoting reconciliation through exhuming and identifying victims in the 1994 Rwandan genocide," *Africa Initiative Policy Brief* 2 (2012): 1–14.
97. I outline the process for applying for ethics approval and a formal research permit in Erin Jessee, "Conducting Fieldwork in Rwanda," *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 33(2) (2012): 266–274.
98. Erin Jessee, "Rwanda's Subtle Forms of Intimidation," *Times Higher Education*, 19 December 2013, available at: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/comment/opinion/rwandas-subtle-forms-of-intimidation/2009974.article> (accessed 22 July 2014).
99. See, for example, Human Rights Watch, "Rwanda: Allow Human Rights Watch to Work," <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/04/23/rwanda-allow-human-rights-watch-work> (accessed 1 October 2014); and Susan Thomson "This is not what we authorized you to do": Access and Government Interference in Highly Politicized Research Environments," in C. Sriram, J. King, J. Mertus, O. Martin-Ortega, and J. Herman (eds.) *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations* (London: Routledge, 2009), 108–124.

An Official History: Commemorating “the 1994 Genocide of the Tutsi”

Historical clarity is a duty of memory that we cannot escape. Behind the words “Never Again,” there is a story whose truth must be told in full, no matter how uncomfortable.

—Paul Kagame¹

The fieldwork underlying this book began at Rwanda’s state-funded genocide memorials. This was a calculated decision: as a foreigner to Rwanda, it was important that I learn how to broach the subject of the genocide and related mass atrocities in a culturally sensitive manner, and probe Rwandan civilians’ life histories without inflicting undue emotional distress upon those research participants who might find it difficult to revisit their pasts. The state-funded genocide memorials seemed like an ideal place to begin gaining this cultural and political fluency, as their exhibits had been carefully designed to educate people about the events surrounding the genocide, and their staff had been formally trained in how to address the often insensitive or misinformed questions and expectations of foreigners.

Initially, my fieldwork was primarily ethnographic. I spent several days at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre (KGMC) documenting the exhibits, chatting with memorial staff and visitors, and observing the day-to-day activities at the site. Eventually, I began arranging interviews with willing memorial staff about the purpose of the KGMC and its role in relation to Rwanda’s program of national unity and reconciliation.²

Once I had obtained a solid understanding of the KGMC and some of its staff, I then secured permission to interview employees affiliated with the smaller state-funded genocide memorials around Rwanda, particularly at Ntarama, Nyamata, Nyarubuye, Bisesero, and Murambi.³

These rural memorials share several important features. During the genocide, they were all sites where Tutsi civilians were encouraged by local officials to seek refuge. Within days, Hutu Power extremists and their civilian collaborators surrounded the sites and proceeded to murder the refugees with a startling degree of efficacy. In each instance, there were few survivors: typically, the only people who survived were children and youth who escaped by either fleeing in the first minutes of the attack or hiding under the bodies of the victims until the attackers left. In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, some of these survivors then banded together to lobby the Rwandan government and other relevant institutions—such as the Roman Catholic Church—to transform these sites into formal memorials.⁴ The Rwandan government then worked in tandem with these survivors to determine the specific form taken by each memorial.

The first sites were opened to visitors in 1995 and 1996 and recognized Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa victims of the genocide. According to officials affiliated with the Ministry of Sports and Culture (MINISPOC)—the body responsible for overseeing the memorials—they were designed to provide survivors with a safe place to remember their missing and murdered loved ones, educate the Rwandan public about events surrounding the genocide and the dangers of ethnic divisionism and bad governance, and provide irrefutable evidence in the form of graphic displays of anonymous human remains that the violence that overwhelmed Rwanda in 1994 was indeed genocide. Over the years, however, Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials—and the larger program of nationalized commemoration in which they are but one, highly visible part—have been increasingly politicized. As will be discussed below, these sites are increasingly used by the Rwandan government to disseminate a version of Rwandan history that serves to legitimize the Kagame regime through, among other features, preservation of an overly simplistic dichotomy of “Tutsi victims” and “Hutu génocidaires.” Indeed, in a nation where the government has criminalized “genocide ideology” as a means of preventing the resurgence of old ethnic hatreds, the memorials are perhaps the only public space in which the old labels of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa can be uttered without risk of prosecution.⁵

THE KGMC

By all accounts, the KGMC is the crowning achievement in the Rwandan government’s efforts to memorialize the “1994 genocide of the Tutsi,” as it is referenced in official parlance (Fig. 2.1). It is a two-million-dollar collaboration between the Kigali City Council in Rwanda and the UK-based Aegis Trust. According to its 2012 audio tour, the KGMC serves four interrelated purposes, all of which are in keeping with the benefits of commemoration cited in the transitional justice and memory studies literatures.⁶ First, the KGMC provides a respectful place of burial for victims of the genocide, where survivors can pay their respects to missing and murdered loved ones. Second, the KGMC contains poster-based exhibits in Kinyarwanda, English, and French aimed at educating visitors about the genocide. Third, the memorial is intended to provide support to survivors of the genocide, particularly widows and orphans. Finally, the memorial is home to the National Documentation Centre of the Genocide, where Rwandan and foreign researchers, teachers, and students can come to learn about the genocide from an impressive and ever increasing range of primary and secondary sources.⁷ To this end, the KGMC and its exhibits



Fig. 2.1 The Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, with cement-capped mass grave in foreground

are dynamic, evolving subtly in accordance with new research and developments in the field of genocide studies and Rwanda's political climate, among other factors. The description that follows primarily details the KGMC as it existed from 2007 to 2012.

The KGMC's main exhibit provides an overview of Rwandan history related to the genocide. The exhibit begins with Rwanda's pre-colonial period, when Rwanda was a peaceful nation whose civilians prospered under a monarchy. The first posters and accompanying images focus on "the unifying quality and harmony that existed before the colonial take-over." While the audio guide acknowledges that pre-colonial Rwanda was not a perfect society, it stresses that the tensions that existed were in no way related to the violence that overwhelmed the nation in 1994. To further this point, a poster reminds visitors: "We are one people. We speak one language. We have one history." The utopian nature of this period in Rwanda's past is further exemplified by the outdoor Garden of Unity, which the 2012 audio tour noted signifies the "Rwanda of ancient times, when the country was united and at peace."

The arrival of German and later Belgian colonists, however, spelled disaster for the Rwandan people. The exhibit stresses that Rwandans did not choose to be colonized, nor did they accept colonization without resistance.⁸ While the stated benefits of colonization included the spread of Christianity, improved infrastructure, such as roads, clinics, and formal education, and international trade, the colonizers are accused of misunderstanding Rwandan society. The exhibit notes that while Rwandans identified themselves first and foremost according to one of 18 clan lineages, the German and later Belgian colonists preferred to distinguish them as either Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa—terms that referenced relatively unimportant and occasionally fluid socio-economic categories that indicated an individual's livelihood as an agriculturalist (Hutu), pastoralist (Tutsi), or hunter-gatherer (Twa). The Belgians, in particular, are highlighted as guilty of misinterpreting these terms, which they subsequently transformed into permanent markers of ethnicity by including them on Rwandan identity cards introduced in 1932.

Likewise, the Catholic Church is highlighted in the exhibit as bearing special responsibility for the internalization of the new markers of ethnicity in Rwanda. As various missionary groups took an interest in Rwanda in the early twentieth century, schools were created to ensure widespread conversion to Christianity. As part of this education, missionaries taught their students the aforementioned Hamitic hypothesis, which situated the

Tutsi as descendants of the biblical figure, Ham. This alleged Caucasian heritage was then used to justify the colonial administration's decision to invest in the Tutsi as the natural leaders of Rwanda at the expense of their Hutu and Twa compatriots. According to the exhibit, it was then just a matter of time before the Rwandan people internalized not only their new ethnic identities as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa, but also the racist ideology that accompanied them.

However, as increasing numbers of Rwandan Hutu converted to Catholicism, the European missionaries allegedly became sympathetic to the discrimination endured by the Hutu majority, and began promoting Hutu equality. In doing so, the exhibit notes that the Rwandan Catholic Church, with the support of the Belgian colonial administration, abandoned the Tutsi minority and took on an active role in Rwandan politics, encouraging its followers to fight for the demise of the Rwandan monarchy and the establishment of an independent democracy in which the Hutu majority would exercise real political power. As the shift toward Rwandan independence became a reality, the emerging political parties divided according to ethnicity.

The KGMC exhibit describes Rwanda's first experiment with democracy as flawed from the start. With the start of the 1959 Hutu Revolution, ethnic violence forced thousands of Tutsi to flee Rwanda alongside the remnants of the Tutsi monarchy, and from this point forward, Rwanda is portrayed as headed on an inevitable and steady course toward genocide. The regime of the new president, Grégoire Kayibanda, is described as characterized by corruption and oppression of the Tutsi, noting that he encouraged anti-Tutsi sentiments to distract the people from his regime's corruption. To emphasize this point, the exhibit includes a quote—presumably by Kayibanda—that states:

The Hutu and Tutsi communities are two nations in a single state. Two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy, who are ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings, as if they were inhabitants of different zones or planets.

To this end, the exhibit highlights the continuity between the two regimes of Kayibanda and his successor, Juvénal Habyarimana, in terms of their oppressive policies and penchant for violence and oppression of the Tutsi. Kayibanda is cited as the father of these policies, while Habyarimana is accused of misleading the Rwandan public by prom-

ising peace and stability while simultaneously empowering his inner circle—referred to as the *akazu*—to organize and implement the worst ethnic violence the nation would ever see.⁹ Their motives for treating the Tutsi poorly are not explained in the exhibit: there is only a brief mention of Tutsi refugee's struggle to return to Rwanda following independence, and these are described as "peaceful efforts." Later, with the rise of the RPF and its invasion of Rwanda in 1990, Habyarimana's anti-Tutsi sentiments—now attributed to a reluctance to share political power with the Tutsi refugees—allegedly led him to adopt an increasingly extremist attitude toward Rwanda's Tutsi minority population. As the RPA fought its "War of Liberation," as it is referenced in official parlance in Rwanda, the Habyarimana regime tried different tactics to intimidate and control Rwanda-based Tutsi. The KGMC exhibit notes that between 1990 and 1992, an estimated 2000 Tutsi civilians died in anti-Tutsi massacres and from government neglect in the drought-ridden region of Bugesera.

Having established a history of anti-Tutsi violence under Hutu leadership, the exhibit shifts to the genocide. It cites Habyarimana's assassination on 6 April 1994 by the increasingly extremist *akazu* as the trigger. In the hours following his murder, the Presidential Guard began assassinating members of the political opposition in Kigali. By the following morning, roadblocks had sprung up throughout the city with the purpose of killing Tutsi who attempted to flee. In the following weeks, the genocide then spread throughout Rwanda as Hutu Power extremists mobilized Hutu civilians to kill their Tutsi neighbors at roadblocks, and in the churches, schools, administrative offices, and swamps and forests where they sought refuge.

In particular, the exhibit highlights the role of Rwandan religious institutions in promoting anti-Tutsi violence during the genocide. Specific religious leaders are accused of facilitating or even directly participating in the torture and murder of Tutsi men, women, and children. Meanwhile, churches—once places of refuge during previous periods of violence—became sites of brutal massacres of unarmed civilians who sought sanctuary. The exhibit notes: "Rwanda had turned into a nation of brutal, sadistic, merciless killers and innocent victims, overnight." And unlike previous periods of ethnic violence in Rwanda's history, the exhibit stresses that Tutsi women, children, and elderly people were specifically targeted for a range of genocidal violence, including rape, torture, murder, and mutilation. An array of weapons used by the Hutu extremists is displayed,

followed by posters that highlight a handful of Rwandan heroes who, despite great pressure to participate in the genocide, chose to rescue Tutsi instead.

Finally, the last set of posters tells the story of Rwanda after the genocide. In addition to the one million people dead, the posters acknowledge the estimated two million Rwandans who were displaced by the violence, most of whom fled to refugee camps just across Rwanda's border with the DRC. Once established in the camps, the *génocidaires* among them continued to espouse anti-Tutsi rhetoric, recruiting new soldiers from among the refugees and engaging in a form of genocide denial whereby they presented themselves as victims of genocide at the hands of the RPF. For this reason, the exhibit explains, Rwandan government is forced to remain vigilant in its fight against genocide ideology, wherever it may occur.

To further emphasize the human cost of the genocide, the exhibit concludes with a series of small circular rooms. The first room contains photos of the victims of the genocide laid out along the walls using string and metal clips. The second room contains human remains—mostly crania, with a few long bones—representing anonymous victims of the genocide. The third room contains displays of the clothing of the victims of the genocide recovered from mass graves around the city. As visitors examine these artifacts of the genocide, survivor testimonies are projected upon on a large screen. Visitors are encouraged to reflect upon the needless loss of innocent lives—a point made all the more powerful given the memorial is staffed by survivors of the genocide whose loved ones are presumed to be among the 250,000 anonymous victims interred in the KGMC's cement-capped mass graves.

DECONSTRUCTING THE KGMC OFFICIAL NARRATIVE

Taken as a whole, the KGMC exhibit exemplifies the official narrative currently dominating Rwanda, inculcating its visitors with several important messages. First, the exhibit perpetuates in many regards what has been officially labeled "the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi"—a label that, while increasingly common, is not without controversy.¹⁰ By presenting the genocide as an event that specifically targeted Tutsi, the exhibit has been criticized for silencing discussion of non-Tutsi Rwandans who were caught in the crossfire: particularly, the suffering endured by Hutu political moderates who were brutally murdered in the hours immediately following Habyarimana's assassination, and those Hutu and Twa civilians who were

murdered in the months that followed as a result of their efforts to resist the violence or rescue their Tutsi compatriots. It similarly obscures recognition of those who died because they were mistaken for Tutsi. Prunier has termed this phenomenon the “Tutsification of the genocide.”¹¹ Those Rwandans who died as a result of RPF war crimes and crimes against humanity are similarly “erased from the national imagination.”¹² Their experiences are not included in the RPF’s official narrative, forcing those who wish to remember them to do so in private. Anyone who publically acknowledges Hutu and Twa deaths surrounding the genocide is aggressively silenced, often under the threat of being charged with the crimes of genocide ideology, ethnic divisionism, or minimizing the genocide.

For example, the leader of the opposition party *Forces démocratiques unifiées* (FDU), Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza, was sentenced to eight years in prison by the High Court of Kigali for having conspired against the country through terrorism and war, and genocide denial.¹³ These charges were made following her speech at the KGMC on 16 January 2010, during which Ingabire critiqued nationalized commemoration for only memorializing Tutsi victims of the genocide. Following her statement that “[w]e know very well that there was a genocide, extermination,” she said:

If you look around you realize that there is no real political policy to help Rwandans achieve reconciliation. For example, if we look at this memorial, it only stops at people who died during the Tutsi genocide. It does not look at the other side—at the Hutu who died during the genocide. Hutu who lost their people are also sad and they think about their lost ones and wonder, “When will our dead ones be remembered?”¹⁴

In voicing these sentiments publicly, Ingabire was essentially acknowledging what many Rwandans already know—that there is an imbalance in nationalized commemoration in Rwanda as conceived by the RPF that is fomenting ethnic, political, and social tensions among Rwandans. However, the RPF has taken the position that acknowledging that Hutu and Twa civilians also suffered surrounding the genocide diminishes the suffering endured by Rwanda’s Tutsi minority, while providing fodder to Hutu extremists who engage in genocide denial within and beyond Rwanda’s borders. As a result, Ingabire’s speech prompted the RPF to begin investigating Ingabire as a potential threat to Rwandan security. Within weeks, additional allegations emerged that she was providing financial support to FDLR terrorists in the DRC with the goal of overthrowing the RPF and

destabilizing the nation. Following a trial that was roundly criticized as unfair and lacking in proper legal procedure, Ingabire was initially found guilty of two charges—conspiring to harm the country through war and terror, and minimizing the genocide—and was sentenced to eight years in prison.¹⁵ In December 2013, her sentence was increased upon appeal to 15 years for trying to undermine the state and minimizing the genocide.¹⁶ Her trial and sentencing are widely interpreted by Rwandans and foreign experts as a warning against public discussion of the suffering endured by Hutu and Twa victims in the genocide, among other forms of political dissidence.

Second, visitors are directed by memorial staff and exhibit posters to consider criminal accountability and complicity in the genocide, a shame that is not only cast upon the Hutu Power extremists who were responsible for orchestrating and implementing the genocide or those Hutu civilians who directly engaged in violence, but also cast upon the Hutu majority as a whole for having failed to intervene to protect their Tutsi compatriots. Aside from a handful of Hutu civilians who are praised in the KGMC exhibit for acting as rescuers during the genocide, the Hutu are condemned for allowing themselves to be manipulated by the genocide ideology promoted by the *akazu* and for having assisted the killing by participating in attacks or turning a blind eye to the suffering of their Tutsi neighbors.

However, this interpretation of mass Hutu complicity in the genocide is once again surrounded by controversy for being overly reductive and incapable of adequately representing the varied and often complex roles that civilians on all sides of the conflict played in the violence. Scott Straus estimates that no more than 210,000 Rwandans out of an estimated population of ten million actively participated in the genocide, meaning official efforts to label the Hutu majority as *génocidaires* are greatly exaggerating the nature and extent of civilian participation and criminal culpability in the genocide.¹⁷ Meanwhile, Villia Jefremovas, Lars Waldorf, and Paul Conway have all provided evidence that many Hutu rescued Tutsi at great risk to themselves and their families.¹⁸ Other Hutu—demonstrating the complexity of people's participation in the genocide—acted simultaneously as perpetrators and rescuers, killing those Tutsi they did not know or with whom they had a history of interpersonal conflict, but hiding Tutsi friends and family members, or whose survival somehow benefitted their would-be attacker.¹⁹ Similarly, a rarely discussed angle on the genocide—and one that is wholly absent from the KGMC exhibit—is that some Tutsi

killed during the genocide, either under duress or in a calculated effort to demonstrate solidarity with the Hutu Power extremists, as part of negotiating their survival.²⁰

Third, the official narrative promoted by the KGMC highlights the international community, broadly defined, as bearing special responsibility for the genocide. The exhibit emphasizes the catastrophic impact of European theories of race and the Catholic Church on relations between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, as well as the capitalist greed and related interests that led nations like France to support the akazu's genocidal plan by selling weapons to the extremists, and providing military training and support. Meanwhile, the international community at large is rightly accused of apathy for failing to intervene at the first signs of ethnic violence in Rwanda. These aspects of the exhibit suggest that the genocide cannot be properly understood without first probing the negative legacies of colonial and post-colonial interference in Rwanda—a position that while accurate, only accounts for a fraction of the factors that made the genocide possible.

To this end, a common theme in the work of notable historians such as Alison Des Forges, Catharine Newbury, David Newbury, and Jan Vansina, among others, is that Rwanda's history is far more complex and marked by political and economic tensions, for which European colonizers and the international community cannot be held solely accountable.²¹ Their work supports an image of pre-colonial Rwanda as frequently marked by warfare associated with territorial expansion and power struggles within the monarchy, as well as among regional political elites. In his introduction to Des Forges' book, *Defeat Is the Only Bad News*, David Newbury highlights the "intense military activity" of King Kigeli IV Rwabugiri (r. 1867–1895) and the burden continual warfare placed on the Rwandan people, both in terms of providing material to support Rwanda's military and in terms of sowing the foundations for regional tensions and uprisings against the Rwandan monarchy in the years following Rwabugiri's death.²² At the grassroots level, both Des Forges and Catharine Newbury provide ample evidence to suggest that the communities "united" by Rwabugiri were heterogeneous in terms of political affiliations, social structure, and heritage, resulting in regional tensions and conflict, some of which persist in modern Rwanda.²³

Similarly, Jan Vansina and Catharine Newbury argue that Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were far from social equals in pre-colonial Rwanda. Vansina highlights the existence of *ubuhake*—a practice whereby a client labored

on behalf of their typically Tutsi patron in exchange for access to a cow—as a form of structural violence that frequently disadvantaged the client but which simultaneously had the potential to allow the client a degree of social mobility.²⁴ Perhaps more damaging, however, was *uburetwa*, a form of forced labor developed by Rwabugiri in the late 1900s that explicitly disadvantaged Hutu civilians by forcing them to provide unpaid manual labor to their local Tutsi authority, who enjoyed the support of the royal court.²⁵ Similarly, Rwandan origin myths such as the aforementioned story of Kigwa and his sons suggest that while the initial conceptualization of the Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa communities might have been more fluid prior to the colonial period, there was nonetheless an existing social hierarchy within Rwanda that functioned, in part, to justify Tutsi leadership of the kingdom. Under the circumstances, it is evident that some of the structural violence that eventually made the genocide imaginable for the perpetrators likely pre-dated colonialism in Rwanda.

In relation to Rwanda’s more recent history, meanwhile, the KGMC exhibit similarly fails to account for the full range of parties that bear responsibility for the genocide. As described in Chapter I, the RPF played an important role in radicalizing Hutu Power extremists by invading Rwanda in October 1990, triggering civil war. As noted by Scott Straus, many Hutu civilians were motivated to participate in the genocide out of genuine fear that RPF rule would mean a return to what many Hutu remembered as a period of oppression for the Hutu masses, rather than a specifically genocidal intent to exterminate in whole or in part Rwanda’s Tutsi minority population.²⁶ Having internalized family stories about the oppression and suffering experienced by Hutu under the Tutsi monarchy—a period widely interpreted as slavery by Hutu civilians—many Rwandans interpreted the RPF invasion as an aggressive attempt to reintroduce Tutsi hegemony to Rwanda. Hutu extremist political elites created media outlets to disseminate information about the atrocities allegedly perpetrated by RPA soldiers against Hutu civilians in the north to fuel this civilian paranoia. This in turn prompted many civilians to participate in, or at least serve as bystanders to, the genocide, including the massacre of Rwandan Tutsi who were broadly accused of collaborating with the RPF on the basis of their shared ethnicity—a finding that emerged from my own interviews with convicted *génocidaires*.²⁷ Thus, a more balanced discussion of responsibility for the genocide would go beyond merely blaming the international community and the Hutu masses to consider in a more

nuanced manner the complicity of individual Hutu political elites, as well as the RPF.

A fourth resounding message inherent in the KGMC exhibit is that it is possible for Rwandans to be reconciled and live in harmony once again, as they allegedly did prior to the arrival of the German and Belgian colonists. For this to be accomplished, however, the RPF's official narrative maintains that Rwanda requires strong leadership that is committed to national unity and reconciliation, and promoting the well-being of all Rwandans, regardless of ethnicity. To this end, the KGMC exhibit encourages Rwandans to eschew ethnic identities and embrace their shared Rwandan heritage—a point that is reinforced by the Rwandan constitution and legal prohibitions against promoting genocide ideology and ethnic divisionism. It also celebrates the RPF as the champion of the Rwandan people for having ended the genocide by using military power, positive propaganda, and good governance to overwhelm genocide ideology made popular under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes and restore peace.²⁸

While the RPF is responsible for ending the genocide, and in its aftermath has made impressive advances in the reconstruction of Rwanda's economy and infrastructure, its progress in terms of democratic reforms, civil rights, and reconciliation is contested. Rwanda's presidential elections have been consistently condemned by human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch due to allegations that the RPF is muzzling the political opposition, coercing voters, and even blatantly tampering with election results.²⁹ The nation's civil rights record has been similarly marred by evidence of strict state control of the press, forced disappearances of Rwandans who criticize RPF policies, and other abuses of state authority.³⁰ Finally, the success of the RPF's policy of national unity and reconciliation is debatable, with experts like Susan Thomson maintaining that Rwandans remain divided not only by ethnicity, but by social and political hierarchies that privilege returnee urban elites, particularly those who spent much, if not all, of their pre-genocide lives in Uganda, over rural Rwandans.³¹ Regional divisions and clan loyalties, among other markers of identity, also persist in the present, intermingled with ethnicity, all of which further complicate the RPF's efforts to unite Rwandans around their shared national heritage.³²

A fifth, more subtle theme evident in the KGMC exhibit is the inherent dangers of Western models for democracy, particularly the coexis-

tence of multiple political parties in Rwanda. At several points in the exhibit, the role of political parties in inciting ethnic violence is highlighted, particularly surrounding the nation's independence. It is at this point that the Tutsi first fell victim to political violence in Rwandan history, as PARMEHUTU and UNAR divided civilian support along ethnic lines. A similar division occurred with Habyarimana's decision in the early 1990s to open Rwanda's political arena to multiple political parties, contributing to increased ethnic tensions. The KGMC exhibit thus reinforces a perspective often voiced by Kagame in his public appearances that free political expression is dangerous for Rwandans given their violent past.

To this end, Kagame has recognized the need to adopt democratic principles as part of "Vision 2020," the RPF's ambitious national development program, within which one stated goal is "to construct a united, democratic and inclusive Rwandan identity, after so many years of authoritarian and exclusivist dispensation."³³ In practice, however, the RPF limits democratic reform by muzzling genuine political opposition, limiting the freedom of the press, and otherwise discouraging civil society from publicly addressing and thereby moving beyond the failures of pre-genocide state policy. Kagame justifies this position by arguing that Western principles of democracy are not applicable to Rwanda due to the nation's recent history of ethnic tension and bad governance.³⁴ As a result, visitors are left questioning whether Western models for democracy are applicable to Rwanda, particularly given the RPF's success in maintaining stability against all odds and in the absence of Western democratic reforms, such as freedom of the press and the promotion of genuine political opposition.

A final message disseminated by the KGMC is "never again." Visitors are urged to tell others what they have witnessed at the memorial to combat the genocide denial that is occurring within and beyond Rwanda. Many of the worst organizers and perpetrators of the genocide are said to be living as political refugees in nations like the DRC, France, the United States, and Canada, where they are allegedly spreading rumors aimed at demonizing Kagame, the RPF, and the Tutsi people more generally. The exhibit implies that Kagame and the RPF remain the best means of ensuring Rwanda's long-term political stability and preventing further bloodshed. Visitors are often reminded by memorial staff that they should tell others what they have seen at the memorial, as a means of resisting the spread of genocide denial in their countries, offering a tidy conclusion to the official narrative.

RURAL STATE-FUNDED GENOCIDE MEMORIALS

The state-funded genocide memorials at Ntarama, Nyamata, Murambi, Nyarubuye, and Bisesero have then been designed to complement the official narrative disseminated by the KGMC by providing personal testimonies and other forms of evidence specific to massacres that occurred in rural communities during the genocide. The stated purposes of these rural memorials are aligned with those cited for the KGMC—providing survivors with a safe space to remember their missing and murdered loved ones, and educating the public about “the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi” and the dangers of bad governance and genocide ideology. However, in pursuing these objectives, the tours offered by guides at these memorials tended to focus on the events immediately surrounding the genocide as they relate to each site, providing visitors with a more intimate understanding of how the genocide took shape in specific communities, and without as much background information about Rwanda’s history, more generally.

Ntarama and Nyamata

The rural state-funded genocide memorials at Ntarama and Nyamata are located approximately 40 kilometers south of Kigali along a near-perfect paved road in the arid Bugesera district. Along with a visit to the KGMC and gorilla-trekking excursions, they are widely regarded by foreigners as a mandatory part of any trip to Rwanda, whether for tourism or for professional purposes. At these memorials, visitors learn about how two churches—once sites of sanctuary for Tutsi during periods of ethnic tension and violence—became sites of major massacres as part of Hutu Power extremists’ broader efforts to undermine the RPF’s perceived support base in the country and exterminate the Tutsi.

At Ntarama, visitors are guided through the remains of a small Roman Catholic Church where an estimated 5000 unarmed Tutsi men, women, and children were massacred by Hutu extremists in the first weeks of the genocide. The church has been intentionally preserved in a state of disrepair: while covered with a metal roof to protect the structure from the elements, its walls are full of holes where the attackers removed bricks to allow them to throw grenades inside, and its floors, walls, and ceiling are stained with dried blood and pockmarked with shrapnel (Fig. 2.2). Tours typically begin at the back of the church, where shelves exhibit the bones of the anonymous victims of the massacre (Fig. 2.3). Visitors are then led



Fig. 2.2 Ntarama Church



Fig. 2.3 Human remains on display at Ntarama

between the pews, around which the walls and rafters have been covered with clothing recovered from the bodies of the victims of the massacre. The altar at the front of the church then exhibits the personal effects, from shoes to rosary beads, left behind by the victims. Guides typically highlight the presence of bags of dried beans and other food items as evidence that the people who were murdered at the church were not combatants, but unarmed Tutsi women, children, and elderly people.

To help visitors make sense of what they are seeing, guides offer brief overviews like the following:

The site was a Catholic Church before the genocide. In 1994, when the genocide started, people from Habyarimana's political party claimed that Tutsi were responsible for shooting down Habyarimana's plane. People began killing each other. In Ntarama, people began killing Tutsi and eating their cattle. One leader met with the local Tutsi and advised them to seek refuge at the church so they could be protected. This was a way of gathering all Tutsi in the same place, but the Tutsi trusted their leaders and so they did as he asked.

Three days later, three buses arrived filled with Presidential Guard and Interahamwe from Kigali. They began attacking the church, and the Tutsi ran inside and closed the doors. The attackers broke down the doors so that they could kill the people hiding inside. They threw grenades into the church and people started to die. Then, the attackers entered with machetes, spears, guns, and other weapons and began killing the people. The attackers also cut big holes in the walls, and began throwing bricks at the people inside. Small children were killed by being thrown against the walls. People were killed without any respect. Then, the bodies were burned using gasoline and mattresses to feed the fire. This is why the church became a memorial.³⁵

The nearby memorial at Nyamata bears similarities with Ntarama in that it also used to be a Roman Catholic Church where Tutsi civilians—mostly women, children, and the elderly—were encouraged to seek refuge in the first days of the genocide. In this instance, Hutu extremists massacred an estimated 11,000 Tutsi civilians. But as in the case of Ntarama, the church has been preserved to exhibit evidence of the attack, including blood-stained floors, shrapnel-pocked walls and ceilings, and masses of the victims' clothing. In addition, it includes crypts within and outside the church where human remains are displayed.

Tours typically begin at the front doors of the church, where a warped metal gate bears witness to the grenades the attackers used to force their

way inside. Once inside, visitors are instructed to take note of certain artifacts and features that further testify to the brutality of the massacre: a statue of the Virgin Mary has a bullet wound following one extremist’s alleged decision to shoot her because she had a “Tutsi nose”; the corrugated metal ceiling has been pierced by countless shrapnel fragments; the altar cloth remains stained by the blood of murdered civilians; and a blood-smeared brick wall testifies to how the attackers killed babies and toddlers by slamming their heads against the hard surface (Fig. 2.4).

In the center of the room, a small crypt contains a glass pyramid filled with skulls and other human remains. The pyramid houses in its base a single coffin containing the body of a woman, frequently described as a saint, who died during the genocide. Memorial guides explain to visitors that the occupant was a young Tutsi mother who, during the massacre, was pulled aside by the Hutu extremists and taken into the church courtyard, along with a handful of beautiful young Tutsi women. The attackers took turns raping these women, before eventually murdering them using machetes and other farming implements. However, the young mother—due to her exceptional beauty—was subject to a special form of symbolic violence. Her attackers impaled her with sharpened sticks and threw her



Fig. 2.4 Inside Nyamata Church

body—along with that of the baby she carried—into the church latrine. Her body was recovered a few years later as part of local survivors' efforts to rebury with respect the victims of the genocide. Unlike the other victims, however, this particular woman's body allegedly showed no signs of decomposition. For this reason, the local community of survivors honors her as a saint, whose torture, sexual violation, and death are representative of the excessive brutality with which Tutsi women were treated during the genocide.³⁶

Meanwhile, behind the church lies a series of cement and tile-capped crypts containing the bodies of the victims of the genocide from the Bugesera region (Fig. 2.5). Visitors can enter these crypts via a short staircase. The crypts contain a number of coffins draped in purple and white cloth—the official colors of Rwanda's genocide memorials—as well as shelves containing thousands of stacked human bones.

Guides offer visitors the following context:

... this place used to be a Catholic Church. It was a parish. During the 1994 genocide, Tutsi came to seek refuge in this church, hoping no one would touch them in this holy place. They all came as refugees. They included not only Catholic believers, but also Muslims and Protestants. They all trusted they would be safe here. They entered the church and stayed for some days.



Fig. 2.5 The crypts at Nyamata

After four days, Gako camp soldiers, backed by many Interahamwe militias, arrived here. The church had no fence at the time. It was surrounded by barbed wire. So they entered and threw hand grenades and started shooting. However, most victims were killed with machetes because when they shot and threw grenades, people fell down [but were not necessarily killed]. Interahamwe used machetes to finish the job. Around 11,000 people were killed in one single day. The killers came back the following days to ascertain nobody was still alive. When they noticed that somebody was still breathing, they would finish him or her. They made sure no one survived.

Before that, in 1992, anti-Tutsi violence had resulted in many killings. Initially, people ran from their homes out of fear and gathered at the church or at other places. They were not massacred; they were denied food. An Italian lady came to help the starving crowd, and she helped as much as she could. She was killed because of that.

As a matter of fact, the genocide really started in 1992. Even though there was no mass killing at that time, they selected particular people and accused them of collaboration with the RPF, and they would be assassinated. 1994 was the final stage of the long process.

This place became a memorial because many people were killed here, starting from 1992 to 1994. Initially church leaders opposed the idea of transforming the church into a memorial. But the survivors and the government insisted it should remain a memorial. These remains include people who were killed inside this church, as well as those who were killed across this area and who remain were later brought here. We keep collecting the remains whenever we find them. We now have over 40,000 people in this memorial. That's our history.³⁷

Murambi

After Ntarama and Nyamata, Murambi is perhaps the next most commonly visited of Rwanda's rural state-funded genocide memorials (Fig. 2.6). A newly constructed technical school, in the first days of the genocide the district level authorities told concerned Tutsi from the surrounding communities that those who gathered at the school would be spared. As a result, an estimated 50,000 Tutsi sought refuge there, where they were allowed to remain unharmed for approximately two weeks. Then soldiers and Interahamwe, after ensuring that any concerned Hutu refugees had been removed, proceeded to massacre the remaining Tutsi around the school. They deposited their victims' bodies in mass graves, one of which was allegedly covered over with a basketball court by soldiers affiliated with the French peacekeeping mission, *Opération Turquoise*, some weeks



Fig. 2.6 Classrooms at Murambi Genocide Memorial

later—an act that local survivors still recall with bitterness.³⁸ In 1996, the government exhumed one of the largest graves, preserved its contents in lime, and placed the human remains on display throughout Murambi's classrooms as a particularly graphic form of evidence of the genocide (Fig. 2.7). Several survivors were then hired and an exhibit created within a larger memorial complex to educate visitors about what happened. But due to the scale of the massacre and the preservation of the victims' bodies, Murambi is widely acknowledged to be the most disturbing of Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials.

Guides offer tour narratives like the following:

The site was not intended to be a memorial, but instead a technical secondary school. When the genocide started, Tutsi who sought refuge at the local church were told to come to the school so that they could be protected. When the refugees arrived, they didn't receive protection. After two weeks—April 18th—the refugees weren't receiving water, and they saw soldiers coming to attack the school. The refugees tried to protect themselves using stones, because they had been disarmed. The soldiers withdrew because the Tutsi were too strong at this time. The soldiers returned on April 21st at 3am, and surrounded the school. The soldiers began shooting into the compound and local prisoners began attacking using spears, nail-



Fig. 2.7 Human remains on display at Murambi

studded clubs, axes and machetes... The people who had sought refuge in the classrooms had been killed using grenades. I managed to escape, and fled to the neighboring hill. From my hiding place, I saw heavy machinery digging big holes, and Interahamwe with dogs hunting for survivors. I decided to head toward — by hiding during the day and traveling by night... When I returned... after the genocide, I saw that the mass graves that had been created at Murambi had been covered over with a basketball court.³⁹

Nyarubuye

Far off the tourist track in eastern Rwanda, Nyarubuye is a large religious complex that has been converted into a memorial in honor of the estimated 20,000 Tutsi who were massacred there during the genocide. In 2007, when I first started conducting fieldwork in Rwanda, the relative scarcity of visitors meant that Nyarubuye had no full-time staff beyond the one or two individuals charged with maintaining the grounds. When visitors arrived, local survivors would be summoned to the site to provide tours, making them different in content from what might otherwise be expected from the staff at some of the more accessible genocide memorials. As a result, I found the tour narratives at Nyarubuye were frequently less scripted and more informed by personal experiences in comparison

with the tours offered at the KGMC, Ntarama, Nyamata, and Murambi. Another important difference at Nyarubuye was the unwillingness of the guides and other staff to have their stories recorded, citing concerns that “people might recognize their voices.”⁴⁰

The memorial at Nyarubuye testifies to yet another massacre wherein local Hutu Power extremists once again lured unarmed Tutsi civilians to the church grounds with the promise of sanctuary, only to murder them once they had gathered together. Survivors lead visitors through the convent grounds, pausing in different rooms to explain the specific path taken by the massacre. One room exhibits long wooden troughs originally used to make banana beer, but guides explained that during the genocide, they were used to collect the blood of Tutsi civilians as evidence that even though the Tutsi drank milk, their blood was still red like that of the Hutu. Another room contains human bones neatly stacked on shelves, many of which bear evidence of sharp and blunt force trauma consistent with the use of machetes, nail-studded clubs, and other weapons. Across from these human remains stand two tables: one containing a selection of personal effects belonging to the victims of the massacre; and a second that exhibits weapons used by the attackers to murder their Tutsi compatriots.

Unlike the other church-based genocide memorials described in this chapter, the church at Nyarubuye has been cleaned of all evidence of the massacre and is still used for services on a regular basis (Fig. 2.8). Across from the church, however, a large cemetery contains the bodies of those victims with surviving families who could afford a proper burial for their murdered loved ones. In addition, visitors can observe the remains of the original mass grave created by the perpetrators to dispose of their victims’ bodies.

Bisesero

Finally, Bisesero is perhaps the most remote of Rwanda’s main state-funded genocide memorials. It is a strikingly artistic memorial high in the mountains of western Rwanda near Kibuye, where an estimated 50,000 Tutsi—members of a predominantly Tutsi pastoral community known as the Abasesero—engaged in armed resistance during the genocide. Because Bisesero is far off the beaten path like Nyarubuye, it too receives few visitors. As a result, survivors from the surrounding community are often called upon to provide a guided tour when visitors



Fig. 2.8 Nyarubuye Church

appear, and they too express reticence about having their narratives recorded.

It is the overall landscape that is exhibited at Bisesero, rather than a particular building where a specific massacre occurred, as the surrounding mountains were witness to some of the most drawn-out genocidal violence in Rwanda. The presence of the aforementioned French peacekeeping mission, *Opération Turquoise*, and the steady flow of refugees its soldiers allegedly sought to protect meant that the RPF did not take military control of the region until late July 1994. Under the auspices of *Opération Turquoise*, many local survivors claim that the genocide was permitted to continue unchecked for weeks, and in some instances was facilitated by French soldiers, forcing the Abasesero to fend for themselves.

Tours typically begin just outside the entrance to the site, in a small building containing shelves covered with human bones—the remains of those who died during the genocide. From there, visitors are directed to a large monument dedicated to those who died at Bisesero during the genocide, having had only stones, crude weapons, and farming implements with which to defend themselves (Fig. 2.9). Visitors are then directed to the summit of Muyira hill. As they climb, the guides explain symbolic features in the site’s design: the sudden sharp turns in



Fig. 2.9 The monument at Bisesero

the path signify the victims' efforts to avoid ambushes, while the gradually narrowing path is representative of the dwindling Tutsi resistance. A series of bunker-like structures offer rest stops along the way, each housing bones of the victims and other evidence of the genocide. At the summit, visitors are invited to contemplate a series of cement and tile-capped mass graves. The smaller graves in the center contain the bodies of an elderly man and his son who organized the resistance at Bisesero by teaching people how to swarm their attackers to create confusion and acquire weapons.

DECONSTRUCTING THE RURAL STATE-FUNDED GENOCIDE MEMORIALS

The Rwandan government values the rural state-funded genocide memorials for their ability to provide visitors with localized narratives of the genocide from around Rwanda, and exhibit additional physical evidence of the massacres. These memorials are, without exception, graphic and compelling, as well as constantly in a state of flux. In addition to the visibly

violenced landscapes and structures in which they are located, they also include displays of anonymous human remains that bear clear evidence of the violence of the genocide, most commonly in the form of bones that have been damaged by blunt and sharp force trauma. This evidence is intended to work in tandem with the tour narratives offered by memorial guides, particularly at the more popular genocide memorials, to reinforce the RPF’s official narrative and reiterate several themes of political importance.

First, in their tour narratives, guides were generally quick to label events in 1994 as “genocide,” the victims of which were implied, if not directly stated, to have been Tutsi. In 2007 and 2008, when most of the tour narratives cited in this chapter were documented, this was entirely appropriate. However, in subsequent research trips to Rwanda in 2011 and 2012, it became apparent that many of the state-funded genocide memorial guides have been replaced over the years by Rwandan youth, often English-speaking descendants of returnees, who had formal training in genocide studies or related fields. This new generation of guides tended to adhere to a recent shift in official parlance, referencing the genocide as “the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi.” In this manner, the victims of the genocide are more immediately identified as Tutsi, upholding the RPF’s official narrative and effectively eliminating public discussion of those Hutu and Twa who might have died for their moderate political beliefs, for their so-called Tutsi appearance, or for attempting to protect Tutsi family and friends, for example. It also effectively erases from history those Rwandans who died as a result of RPA-perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Second, the tour narratives consistently identify those responsible for perpetrating these genocidal massacres as government soldiers, members of the Presidential Guard, and members of the Interahamwe or Impuzamugambi youth militias. Given the context, wherein Tutsi have been clearly delineated as the victims of the genocide and the Hutu are broadly condemned as the perpetrators, each of these labels infers the Hutu ethnicity of the attackers and their affiliation with the dangerous genocide ideology of the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. Indeed, in post-genocide Rwanda, where ethnic divisionism and genocide ideology laws have made public discussion of ethnicity taboo, most Rwandans interpret and apply these terms as synonymous with the Hutu masses even if they do not explicitly state this connection. Thus, the RPF’s official narrative of Tutsi victims and Hutu perpetrators is upheld.

Third, many of the tour narratives emerged from the rural state-funded genocide memorials are critical of the international community's complicity in the genocide. Dissatisfaction with the international community is particularly evident at Bisesero and Murambi, where collective memory of *Opération Turquoise* has—understandably—embittered local survivors and fostered lingering anti-French sentiments. At both sites, the tour narratives and accompanying evidence highlighted the role of the French soldiers in allowing the genocide to not only escalate unchecked, but also continue longer than in other regions of Rwanda where foreign interference did not actively prevent the RPF from taking control more rapidly. At Bisesero, several guides and memorial staff recalled negative memories of *Opération Turquoise*. The most common complaint was that upon arriving at Bisesero, the French soldiers gathered the surviving Tutsi together and confiscated the weapons they had managed to acquire in exchange for French protection from the Hutu Power extremists. The next day, however, the French soldiers allegedly abandoned the now unarmed survivors to the Hutu extremists to be massacred. At Murambi, the French soldiers allegedly built a basketball court atop one of the mass graves—something memorial staff consistently cited as evidence that the French were not only backing the Hutu Power extremists, but had also internalized the Hutu extremists' genocide ideology such that they believed the Tutsi somehow deserved their genocidal fate.

Finally, the message “never again” is evident at each of the rural state-funded genocide memorials. Memorial staff repeatedly appealed to visitors to take the knowledge they gained and the evidence they witnessed back to their communities, whether in Rwanda or abroad, to confront genocide denial and ensure the prevention of future genocidal violence. During my initial fieldwork in Rwanda, I was encouraged by memorial staff to take photographs of the memorials to show to my students, friends, and family in Canada. At the time, I was told that images of the genocide were essential for combating genocide denial beyond Rwanda, and to not take photographs was considered by the memorial staff as disrespectful. However, this practice has since ceased: visitors are now required to obtain a permit from the CNLG to photograph the memorials.

These initial requests to document the physical evidence of the genocide were often coupled with pleas that visitors make people in their communities aware of the Rwandan genocide, so that genocide may never happen again in Rwanda or elsewhere. For example, one guide concluded his guided tour by making the following request: “I ask you to tell the

world, through your writings and your speeches, what you have seen, so that what happened here does not repeat itself anywhere else." He repeated variations on this request following each of our interviews, finally concluding our conversations by reminding me: "The only thing I would like to ask you, as you come from Canada where, they say, you find some genocide deniers, is to tell what you have seen. It's not one million Tutsi who perished as they say. It's perhaps two or three million."⁴¹

The themes identified in this chapter are representative of the increasingly politicized official history that is being disseminated via Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials. It is perhaps, therefore, unsurprising that these sites have met with consistent criticism since the first sites were created in 1995. For example, Claudine Vidal has argued that Rwanda's memorials are a source of symbolic violence that silences survivors' lived experiences and dictates how they interact with their murdered loved ones.⁴² Sara Guyer has similarly concluded that the memorials' displays of human remains

[l]ead neither to a clearer understanding of the genocide nor to the restoration of powers of mind in the face of violence, but rather produce confusion, despondency, even senselessness: the bones at these sites resist a meaningful narrative, and the very effort to make them signify the genocide also renders them figures and stand-ins rather than the real, singular material that they must be in order to obtain their massive importance.⁴³

In keeping with such sentiments, Susan Thomson documented a pattern of resistance among survivors in response to Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials and other mechanisms aimed at promoting national unity and reconciliation. Of particular relevance, she cites an elderly Twa survivor named Séraphine who stole a bone from one of the displays because she felt it was inappropriate to mourn the death of her husband, who was killed by RPA soldiers during the 1995 massacre at Kibeho camp, through the local genocide memorial.⁴⁴ Ultimately, such controversy surrounding Rwanda's memorials, and its program of nationalized commemoration more broadly, have led scholars such as Jens Meierhenrich to characterize these sites as topographies of remembering and forgetting, wherein contemporary politics and power relations play a critical role in determining what people may remember and forget in public settings.⁴⁵

However, one question that is less frequently addressed in these critical analyses of Rwanda's state-funded genocide memorials is: how do Rwandan memorial staff relate to this official narrative on a personal level? The Rwandan government, while largely dismissive of allegations

that they are using commemorative events and sites to disseminate an official narrative to the Rwandan public and the international community, claims that it has the support of most Rwandans, as evidenced by recent presidential and parliamentary elections in which Paul Kagame and the RPF enjoyed landslide victories.⁴⁶ And indeed, in interactions with memorial staff in which we discussed their professional work surrounding the state-funded genocide memorials, it was tempting to interpret the consistency in their tour narratives as evidence of their widespread support for the memorials and the official history they disseminated. Memorial staff rarely complicated their tour narratives with their own lived experiences, and in instances where they did, these personal details were usually used in a manner that reinforced, rather than contradicted, the RPF's official narrative. This created the impression that the lived experiences and interpretations of the various memorial guides with whom I interacted aligned with the official narrative, an impression that would be challenged as the focus of my fieldwork shifted to individual life history interviews.

NOTES

1. Paul Kagame, "Speech by President Paul Kagame at the 20th Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi," *Kwibuka*, 7 April 2014, <http://www.kwibuka.rw/speech> (accessed 15 August 2015).
2. Building upon one of the recommendations of the 1993 Arusha Peace Accords, the Rwandan government created the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) in 1999, with the stated purpose of educating Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa about their shared national heritage as Rwandans so as to eliminate ethnic tension and prevent renewed bloodshed. For more information, see National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, "About," <http://www.nurc.gov.rw/index.php?id=73> (accessed 10 December 2016).
3. I also conducted fieldwork at smaller memorials around Rwanda, such as Kibuye Roman Catholic Church, Kibuye stadium, the National University of Rwanda in Butare, Nyanza, and Gitarama. However, due to a general absence of memorial staff and visitors, this fieldwork was not as extensive.
4. For more on this process, see Rachel Ibreck's "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Memory Studies*, 3(4) (2010), 330–343.

5. Law No 18/2008 defines genocide ideology as “an aggregate of thoughts characterized by conduct, speeches, documents and other acts aiming at exterminating or inciting others to exterminate people basing (sic) on ethnic group, origin, nationality, region, color, physical appearance, sex, language, religion or political opinion, committed in normal periods or during war.” The law is controversial among human rights experts due to the vague definition of the term and its widespread application to individuals who discuss the RPF’s various human rights abuses and limited democratic reforms, among other politically sensitive subject matter. Amnesty International, Rwanda: Safer to Stay Silent: The Chilling Effect of Rwanda’s Laws on ‘Genocide Ideology’ and ‘Sectarianism’, 31 August 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR47/005/2010/en> (accessed 8 February 2016).
6. See, for example, Louis Bickford and Amy Sodaro, “Remembering yesterday to protect tomorrow: The internationalization of a new commemorative paradigm,” in Y. Gutman, A. Brown, and A. Sodaro (eds.) *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics, and Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 66–86; Susan Cook, “The Politics of Preservation in Rwanda,” in S. Cook (ed.) *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 293–311; Liz Sevcenko, “Sites of conscience: New approaches to conflicted memory,” *Museum International* 62(1–2) (2010), 20–25; Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (London: Berg, 2007); Paul Williams, “Witnessing genocide: Vigilance and remembrance at Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 18(2) (2004), 234–254; James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1993).
7. In 2010, the KGMC launched an online version of its archives, thus making a select portion of its collections available to interested members of the public who were unable to travel to Rwanda to examine the materials in person and extending the transmission of Rwanda’s official history to the international community at large. For more information, see Genocide Archive Rwanda, available at: http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome_to_Genocide_Archive_Rwanda (accessed 15 April 2015).

8. Experts on colonial Rwanda largely agree with this assessment. For example, Alison Des Forges has noted that “[t]here was, however, no single Rwandan ‘response’ to the colonial invasion. Some Rwandans resisted, some collaborated, and many maneuvered to create opportunities from the presence of these foreigners who had clearly come to stay.” Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 53.
9. The term *akazu*, while most commonly applied to Habyarimana’s inner circle, has been used throughout Rwandan history in reference to the political elites that surrounded previous leaders as well.
10. This label is a relatively recent addition to public discourse on the genocide in Rwanda, and the Rwandan government and a handful of Rwandan civil society organizations have been lobbying the international community to adopt it in their own references to the genocide. In 2014, Olivier Nduhungirehe, Rwanda’s deputy permanent representative to the UN, announced a major victory of this campaign after the UN Security Council referenced “the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, during which Hutu and others were killed” in resolution 2136 on the DRC. For more information, see Innocent Gahiji, “UN Security Council Confirms ‘Genocide Against the Tutsi’ Phrase.” *News of Rwanda*, January 30, 2014. Accessed March 20, 2014: <http://www.newsfromrwanda.com/featured1/22174/un-security-council-confirms-genocide-against-the-tutsi-phrase/>; Edmund Kagire, “Genocide Against the Tutsi: It’s Now Official.” *The East African*, 1 February 2014, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/UN-decides-it-is-officially-genocide-against-Tutsi/-/2558/2169334/-/2q2s7cz/-/index.html> (accessed 20 March 2014); and UN Security Council, “Security Council Adopts Resolution 2136 (2014), Renewing Arms Embargo, Related Measures Imposed on Democratic Republic of Congo.” January 30, 2014: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11268.doc.htm> (accessed 20 March 2014).
11. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 3.
12. Burnet, “Whose Genocide? Whose Truth?,” 9.
13. Amnesty International, “Rwanda: Justice in Jeopardy: The First Instance Trial of Victoire Ingabire.” March 25, 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR47/001/2013/en/52dac84e-b937-4540-8907-14cb398202d2/afr470012013>

- [en.pdf](#) (accessed 22 March 2015); Amnesty International, “Safer to Stay Silent: The Chilling Effect of Rwanda’s Laws on ‘Genocide Ideology’ and Sectarianism,” August 31, 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR47/005/2010/en> (accessed 22 March 2015); Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Prison Term for Opposition Leader,” February 11, 2011, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/11/rwanda-prison-term-opposition-leader> (accessed 22 March 2015); and Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Protect Rights and Safety of Opposition Leaders,” October 15, 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/10/15/rwanda-protect-rights-and-safety-opposition-leaders> (accessed 22 March 2015).
14. Victoire Ingabire, “Unity and Reconciliation Speech at Gisozi Genocide Memorial Centre,” January 16, 2010, <http://www.victoire-ingabire.com/Eng/victoires-quotes/> (accessed 22 March 2016).
 15. Amnesty International. “Ensure Appeal After Unfair Ingabire Trial.” *Amnesty International News*, October 30, 2012. Accessed July 16, 2014: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/rwanda-ensure-appeal-after-unfair-ingabire-trial-2012-10-30>; Reuters. “Rwanda Opposition Member Sentenced to Eight Years.” *The New York Times*, October 30, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/31/world/africa/rwanda-court-sentences-victoire-ingabire.html?_r=0 (accessed 2 November 2012).
 16. Edmund Blair, “Rwandan Court Extends Jail Term of Opposition Politician.” *Reuters*, December 13, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/13/us-rwanda-opposition-idUSBRE9B C0KA20131213> (accessed 22 March 2014).
 17. In his study, Straus’ definition of “perpetrator” is limited to “any person who participated in an attack against a civilian in order to kill or to inflict serious injury on that civilian” and is extrapolated from interviews with 210 génocidaires from 15 central prisons across Rwanda. Scott Straus, “How many perpetrators were there in the Rwandan genocide? An estimate,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1) (2004), 87.
 18. Villia Jefremovas, “Acts of human kindness: Tutsi, Hutu and the genocide,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* (1995), 28–31; Lars Waldorf, “Revisiting Hotel Rwanda: Genocide ideology, reconciliation, and rescuers,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 11(1) (2009),

- 101–125; Paul Conway, “Righteous Hutus: Can stories of courageous rescuers help in Rwanda’s reconciliation process,” *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3(7) (2011), 217–223.
19. This theme was common in the interviews I conducted with convicted génocidaires, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, and in combination with other elements of their narratives, complicates the idea that they were motivated purely by a genocidal intent to eliminate their Tutsi compatriots.
 20. Indeed, I interviewed one such individual. This encounter will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7 in which I highlight some of the silences affecting public discussion of Rwanda’s past in the post-genocide period.
 21. See, for example, Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*; Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*; Newbury, *The Land Beyond the Mists*; and Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*.
 22. David Newbury, “Editor’s Introduction: Situating the Rwanda Court at the Time of Musinga’s Accession to Power,” in Des Forges, *Defeat is the Only Bad News*, xxiv.
 23. For more information, see Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*; and Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*.
 24. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 47–48.
 25. Newbury, “Ubureetwa and thangata”, 101. Vansina also upholds the importance of ubureetwa for fomenting socio-economic divisions among Rwandans in the late 1900s.
 26. Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 10–11.
 27. There is substantial evidence related to the atrocities perpetrated by the RPA surrounding the civil war from 1990 to 1994, as well as after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the DRC. See, for example, Burnet, “Whose genocide? Whose truth?”; Jennie Burnet, “The Injustice of Local Justice: Truth, Reconciliation, and Revenge in Rwanda,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 2 (4) (2008): 173–193; Lemarchand, “Genocide in the Great Lakes”; United Nations, “Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003,” August 2010, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/ZR/DRC_

- [MAPPING_REPORT_FINAL_EN.pdf](#) (accessed 27 May 2015); Marie Béatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: The ordeal of a Rwandan refugee in Zaire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).
28. In 1991, the RPF created *Radio Muhabura* in an effort to spread pro-RPF propaganda and convince Hutu civilians to resist the genocide ideology promoted by the Hutu extremist radio station, RTLM. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 68.
 29. See, for example, Amnesty International, “Pre-election Attacks on Rwandan Politicians and Journalists Condemned,” 5 August 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/pre-election-attacks-rwandan-politicians-and-journalists-condemned-2010-08-05> (accessed 1 June 2015); Amnesty International, “Rwanda: Intimidation of Opposition Parties Must End,” 18 February 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/rwanda-intimidation-opposition-parties-must-end-20100218> (accessed 1 June 2015); Amnesty International, “Rwanda: Government Slams Door on Political Life and Civil Society,” 9 June 2004, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR47/012/2004/en> (accessed 1 June 2015); Amnesty International, “Rwanda: Run up to Elections Marred by Threats and Harassment,” 23 August 2003, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR47/010/2003/en> (accessed 1 June 2015); Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Silencing Dissent Ahead of Elections,” 2 August 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/02/rwanda-attacks-freedom-expression-freedom--association-and-freedom-assembly-run-presi> (accessed 1 June 2015); and Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Stop Attacks on Journalists, Opponents,” 26 June 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/06/26/rwanda-stop-attacks-journalists-opponents> (accessed 1 June 2015).
 30. Paul Gready, “Beyond ‘you’re with us or against us’: Civil society and policymaking in post-genocide Rwanda,” in S. Straus and L. Waldorf (eds.) *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 87–102; Timothy Longman, “Limitations to political reform: The undemocratic nature of transition in Rwanda,” in S. Straus and L. Waldorf (eds.) *Remaking Rwanda: State Building*

- and Human Rights After Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 25–47; and Filip Reyntjens, “Post-1994 politics in Rwanda: Problematising ‘liberation’ and ‘democratisation,’” *Third World Quarterly* 27(6) (2006), 1103–1117.
31. Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 104–105.
 32. Laura Eramian and Cori Wielenga have both published recent journal articles that challenge the idea that ethnic identities have lost their salience in post-genocide Rwanda. Eramian, “Ethnicity without labels,” 96–106; and Cori Wielenga, “‘Lived identities in Rwanda—Beyond ethnicity?’ *Africa Insight* 44(1) (2014): 122–136.
 33. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), “Rwanda Vision 2020,” 2000, http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/General/Vision_2020/Vision-2020.pdf (accessed 27 February 2015), 2.
 34. For example, in a 2010 interview with Christiane Amanpour, Paul Kagame noted that members of the political opposition were only welcome in Rwanda if they accepted that they were accountable to Rwandan law. In the case of Victoire Ingabire, he argued she was guilty of using inflammatory rhetoric, specifically the “double genocide theory” that implies the RPF are also guilty of perpetrating a genocide against the Hutu under the cover of civil war and genocide from 1990 to 1994, and as such was guilty of genocide ideology. For more information, see CNN, “Christiane Amanpour Interview Paul Kagame” 19 March 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WED8dYiBvcE> (accessed 24 March 2015). Similarly, Kagame has frequently spoken about the need for a uniquely Rwandan form of democracy that takes into consideration the nation’s history of ethnic divisionism and bad governance. For example, see Paul Kagame, “The spirit of Rwanda will prevail” October 4, 2013, http://www.paulkagame.com/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1204%3Athe-spirit-of-rwanda-will-prevail&catid=36%3Anews&Itemid=71&lang=en (accessed March 24, 2015).
 35. Interview with author, 2007.
 36. Elsewhere, I have discussed the narrative that surrounds this particular woman as an example of one of several iconic stories that are frequently told surrounding the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. For more information, see Erin Jessee, “The danger of a single story:

- Iconic stories in the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide" *Memory Studies* 10(2) (2017).
37. Interview with author, 2007.
 38. While sold to the international community as a peacekeeping mission intended to prevent further bloodshed in areas of Rwanda not yet under RPF control during the genocide, Operation Turquoise established a corridor along Rwanda's border with the DRC, along which Hutu Power extremists, and Rwandan civilians more generally, were able to escape the RPA advance and seek refuge in the DRC. Many survivors have negative memories of the French soldiers involved in this mission, whom they claim demonstrated clear loyalties to the Hutu refugees, often allowing anti-Tutsi violence to continue in the communities under their control. For more information, see Karin Landgren, "Safe zones and international protection: A dark grey area," *International Journal of Refugee Law* 7(3) (1995), 448–451; Mel McNulty, "France's role in Rwanda and external military intervention," *International Peacekeeping* 4(3) (1997), 24–44; and Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 281–311.
 39. Interview with author, 2008.
 40. Fieldnotes, 2008.
 41. Interview with author, 2008.
 42. Claudine Vidal, "La commémoration du génocide au Rwanda: Violence symbolique, mémorization forcée et histoire officielle," *Cahiers d'études Africaines* 175 (2004) <http://etudesafricaines.revues.org/4737?lang=en> (accessed May 27, 2015).
 43. Sara Guyer, "Rwanda's Bones," *Boundary* 36(2) (2009): 169.
 44. Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 154. For more on the Kibeho massacre, see UN Commission on Human Rights, "Report on the situation of human rights in Rwanda submitted by Mr. René Degni-Ségui, Special Rapporteur, under paragraph 20 of resolution S-3/1 of 25 May 1994," 28 June 1995, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/commission/country52/7-rwa.htm> (accessed 10 June 2015).
 45. Jens Meierhenrich, "Topographies of remembering and forgetting: The transformation of *lieux de mémoire* in Rwanda," in S. Straus and L. Waldorf (eds.) *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 283–296.

46. In 2010, Rwanda held its most recent presidential elections, with incumbent President Paul Kagame winning 93% of the vote—an outcome that many human rights observers predicted based on the limited freedom of expression and lack of genuine political opposition in Rwanda. BBC News, “Rwanda President Kagame wins election with 93% of vote,” August 11, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-10935892> (accessed March 24, 2015); and Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Silencing Dissent Ahead of Elections,” August 2, 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/02/rwanda-attacks-freedom-expression-freedom-association-and-freedom-assembly-run-presi> (accessed March 24, 2015). Then in 2013, amid concerns from human rights observers that the elections lacked any genuine political opposition, the RPF secured 76% of the vote in the parliamentary elections. For more information, see BBC News, “Rwanda election: RPF wins parliamentary landslide,” September 17, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24132887> (accessed March 24, 2015); and The Economist, “Rwandan elections: Safe and sorry,” September 21, 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21586597-president-tightens-his-grip-safe-and-sorry> (accessed March 24, 2015).

Memorial Staff: Between Official Narrative and Lived Experience

“We want our visitors to see the responsibility of bad leadership in what happened here. We want them to understand that this kind of leadership should not be allowed to exist. Never should this happen again, be it here or elsewhere.”

—Augustin¹

APPROACHING MEMORIAL STAFF: SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Daphné—a child survivor of the genocide and a guide at one of Rwanda’s state-funded genocide memorials—was the first person who allowed me to interview her formally. We had met informally on several occasions while I was observing the day-to-day functionings of the memorial where she worked, and she had kindly permitted me to observe her as she guided visitors around the site. Like many of her co-workers, she was a consummate professional, providing a standardized overview of how the genocide took shape in her community before responding to visitors’ questions with confidence and composure, despite the intimate and often distressing subject matter. She seemed particularly skilled at providing support to the occasional Rwandans who came—often from abroad—to pay their respects to loved ones who were murdered during the genocide, giving them plenty of space but always staying close in case they wanted information or were overcome by emotion. She took great pride in her work, and wanted to

take English lessons and pursue higher education in genocide studies or human rights so she could improve her understanding of what had happened in her country and better educate others.

Despite having developed what I perceived to be a positive rapport with Daphné in these informal encounters, our interviews proved unsettling. While initially friendly and patient, Daphné grew reserved—sullen even—when asked to narrate her life history. She eventually admitted that she did not want to speak about her life, at least not until she had established exactly what it was I wanted to hear. My assertions that I was interested in having her narrate her life in her own terms did little to overcome her reticence: she responded that her life was unimportant and she did not see what I could possibly gain from listening to her stories. She requested I ask her specific questions, so she would know what I felt was important. In keeping with my training as an oral historian, I proceeded by asking open-ended questions to elicit, in a chronological fashion, her life history: where she was born, details about her family, what her childhood had been like, and so on. However, her responses were perfunctory and brief, and her impatience with the interview process grew visible. It seemed I was not asking the right questions, or perhaps not asking them in the right way.

I suggested at one point that we switch topics, suspecting her unwillingness to speak emerged from the possibility that it was distressing for her to revisit her life before the genocide. Daphné agreed, and so I inquired about her job at the memorial—a subject I knew from previous casual conversations she typically addressed with great confidence. However, with my recorder turned on, this exchange proved equally uncomfortable:

- Erin: So what kinds of people visit this memorial?
 Daphné: All kinds of people come.
 Erin: Do all visitors receive the same tour?
 Daphné: The tour does not change. I say exactly how it happened.
 Erin: Are there any aspects of the tour that you tend to emphasize?
 Daphné: I don't understand.
 Erin: Are there any parts of the story that you think are particularly important to tell people?
 Daphné: I don't add anything to the story.²

After a few minutes of conversing in this manner, I suggested we continue the interview another day. Daphné agreed, but subsequent sessions proved distressingly similar, and instead of improving, each interview

seemed to introduce new barriers. I stopped approaching her for interviews, concerned that her consent to be interviewed emerged from politeness rather than genuine interest in contributing to my research. However, in subsequent months we often met and conversed casually at the memorial where she worked, as I continued my fieldwork in the area. But I remained confused by our interviews and the dramatic shift in rapport I observed between our initial casual encounters and our formal interviews.

I reached out to Rwandan friends and colleagues for advice on what had likely gone wrong in my interviews with Daphné. In doing so, I was exposed to a complex web of interpersonal, social, and political forces that surrounded memorial staff in their everyday lives, and with which I would need to demonstrate sensitivity, if not fluency, if I was going to be able to conduct interviews with more success going forward. The problem was simultaneously methodological and cross-cultural, relating to the nature of the life history interview as embedded in Western intellectual history and ideology. I, like many oral historians, labored under the misconception that the life history interview, particularly if led by the interviewee or based around open-ended questions that facilitated the sharing of authority between the interviewee and the interviewer, was a relatively neutral research tool.³ However familiar the sharing of oral traditions may be among Rwandans, for many Rwandans, particularly those from rural communities, “the interview” is perceived as a rather unusual Western obsession that seeks out the experiences of an individual removed from the broader social and political contexts in which they are embedded. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the genocide, I found many Rwandans perceived the interview in a negative light. Many genocide survivors in particular had had the experience of sharing intimate information with a foreigner, such as a medical professional, journalist, or aid worker, who encouraged them to speak about their most painful experiences, perhaps promising them healing or catharsis in the process. The foreigner then disappeared, having presumably reduced the interviewee’s experiences to a handful of sensationalist sound bites and profited from the unidirectional exchange of information.

These negative experiences can be enhanced by the chrononormativity that characterizes Western approaches to the life history interview more specifically. As noted by Lynn Abrams, Alessandro Portelli, and Valerie Yow, many historians understand a “good” life history interview to progress chronologically, starting with the interviewee’s earliest memories

and progressing in a logical fashion toward the present day, “containing a balance between information and reflection.”⁴ However, in applying these standards in cross-cultural settings and, indeed, to the life history narratives involving people who have a different approach to storytelling or for whom key periods in their lives are marked by suffering, a chronological, reflective approach to an interview can be a source of discomfort and, in extreme cases, emotional distress and even trauma, as it encourages participants to revisit memories of childhood that have since become bittersweet due to the loss of loved ones, or speak of their lives in reference to life events and rites of passage that, for them, highlights the ways in which they were different from mainstream society, for example.⁵

Likewise, I learned that open-ended questions were sometimes perceived as threatening by Rwandan participants because they obscured the interviewers’ political affiliations and personal beliefs on the specific subject being explored. In post-genocide Rwanda, and indeed previous periods in Rwanda’s past, people understood the importance of “coming correct” when speaking to authority figures, particularly those affiliated with the government. In such instances, most Rwandans were skilled at observing the official in question for clues about their background, ethnicity, political orientation, and so on, listening to the often leading questions posed to them, and determining a safe response that may or may not reflect their actual thoughts on or experiences with the subject, but which almost certainly would align with official policy if they deemed it necessary.

In this setting, a foreign researcher whose political affiliation cannot be easily deduced from her accent, long-term history with the community, apparent ethnicity, and employment, for example, poses a potential threat. For many Rwandans, and particularly those in rural communities, the consequences of speaking openly about aspects of their lives that present post-genocide Rwanda in a negative light or voicing opinions that were critical of the RPF, for example, can be very severe. Most communities where I worked had firsthand experiences with forced disappearances of suspected *igipinga*—political dissidents—allegedly at the hands of the Rwandan police or military. Similarly, Rwandans were consistently inundated with media accounts of *inyangarwanda*—enemies of the state—who were forced into exile or assassinated, and whose removal was then celebrated publicly by Kagame and other members of his inner circle.⁶ Rumors of what happened to those Rwandans who were detained but later released were prevalent, often with horrific details of the torture

they had endured. Under the circumstances, it took time—often multiple casual conversations and interviews—to establish the kind of rapport whereby Rwandans would feel free to speak about lived experiences that diverged from the official narrative, particularly in those instances where I approached people through official channels after having received research permits from government ministries.

Read through this broader ethnographic lens, I came to understand that I had failed to approach Daphné in a culturally, politically, and personally sensitive manner. While I sought to share authority with Daphné, I did not anticipate that the style of life history interviewing in which I had been trained, with its emphasis on chronology and open-ended questions that sought to elicit personal reflection, could place her in an uncomfortable position. Similarly, I did not anticipate that Daphné might interpret my open-ended questions about her work at the memorial as attempting to lead her into a trap, wherein she felt pressure to speak about elements of the site or about her work in a manner that could endanger her politically and professionally. While I had attempted to explain my research project and its goals as part of establishing informed consent with Daphné prior to the start of our first interview, I had failed to communicate adequate awareness of the political and social factors influencing rural Rwandans' everyday lives by asking politically inappropriate questions without first adequately divulging my stake in the subject and taking the time to demonstrate my trustworthiness by Rwandan standards.⁷ And if I did not have enough understanding of Rwanda's political climate to ask appropriate questions, Daphné could not trust my ability to navigate the questions and interferences of official gatekeepers in a manner that would ensure her safety should she impart controversial information to me.

Ultimately, my encounters with Daphné proved a steep learning curve, but one that taught me to approach participants as an independent student and newcomer to Rwanda who desired a more accurate understanding of the nation's complex history and their place in it. I learned to acknowledge up front that I understood that many Rwandans had a tense relationship with their nation's history, having been educated in the colonial and post-independence period by different official narratives, and express my interest in privileging a "view from below" as an intellectual, rather than political, exercise. And in documenting these personal experiences, I shifted from using written to verbal consent and did not request personally identifying information such as participants names, identities of extended family members, or places of birth. This meant that,

in many instances, I knew only the first names or nicknames of the people I interviewed.

In subsequent interviews, I encouraged participants to start narrating their life histories however they chose, and progress however suited the particular narrative they were attempting to weave. I did not push them to reveal information about their family or life before the genocide unless they first raised the subject, and respected silences within the interview more generally by noting their presence but probing only far enough to acknowledge that this was a subject they did not want to discuss, as opposed to being a subject that had escaped their attention for other reasons. Similarly, I accepted that while in some instances people were comfortable being recorded, in many instances participants' level of comfort within the interview and the openness of their narrative improved when my audio recorder was turned off, prompting me to rely on ethnographic fieldnotes far more than I had originally intended.

This approach, combined with ongoing efforts to demonstrate trustworthiness by Rwandan standards, proved more effective in convincing Rwandans to speak openly about their lived experiences surrounding the genocide because it demonstrated I had learned how to respect and protect participants. And over time, having demonstrated some degree of trustworthiness, open-ended questions and unprompted conversations could follow. The resulting narratives demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach: while initially, many Rwandans still exercised caution in talking about their lives and their nation's history, they opened up over time, revealing much about the complex political forces influencing their everyday lives. This was particularly true of memorial staff who, by virtue of their employment at the state-funded genocide memorials, often found themselves caught between the official narrative they were employed to disseminate, their lived experiences of Rwanda's past and present, and their loyalties to the surrounding community.

MEMORIAL STAFF AS PROFESSIONAL SURVIVORS

As indicated in the previous chapter, in its initial efforts to commemorate the genocide in Rwanda, the RPF often collaborated with a host of survivors' organizations that took shape in the immediate aftermath of the genocide to determine an appropriate form and function for each of the state-funded genocide memorials. While nominally inclusive of a range of civilians' perspectives and experiences, including those of Hutu and Twa

victims of the genocidal violence, Ibreck notes that these survivors' organizations were and are often dominated by male elites, whom she describes as "well-educated urban residents."⁸ Nonetheless, Ibreck characterizes the initial memorials as sites where survivors from a range of backgrounds could voice their concerns and engage in activism aimed at improving conditions in their communities, even if it affected little positive change in their everyday lives. Likewise, the survivors associated with these sites took it upon themselves to recover and rebury, if only temporarily, the remains of victims of the genocide that were discovered in the surrounding community, and provide tours of the sites that sought to educate visitors about the genocide as it affected their community.⁹

However by the time I started fieldwork in 2007, most memorials had been taken over by the state with the purpose of ensuring sustained funding and maintenance toward the sites' preservation for future generations. One MINISPOC official explained this takeover as necessary to preserve the memory and evidence of the genocide. He recalled that previous periods of ethnic violence in Rwanda had been forgotten under the Hutu-dominated First and Second Republics, establishing a dangerous precedence whereby Hutu civilians could engage in anti-Tutsi propaganda and violence with the clear understanding there would be no legal or social consequences for their actions.¹⁰

As a result, the Rwandan genocide memorials were in a state of flux, constantly adapted to a range of policy and leadership changes as the RPF, in collaboration with genocide survivors, sought to identify the most appropriate means of commemorating the genocide. One of the most notable changes commented upon by memorial staff was the presence of trained survivors: whereas in the past survivors' organizations, in collaboration with the local community, had selected a handful of survivors to tell the story of a particular memorial, increased government oversight of the memorials meant that by 2007 the staff were largely seen as civil servants. Aware of the need for survivors to be intimately involved in the genocide memorials to make the sites more evocative for visitors, the Rwandan government established a training program to identify and remove those memorial staff who were too emotionally and psychologically vulnerable due to their experiences of the genocide to be able to represent the memorials effectively, and provide more resilient staff with coping strategies for handling the negative psychological consequences of long-term work at the state-funded genocide memorials. One of the successful candidates, Solange, summarized the decision-making process as follows:

When the memorial project started, local authorities requested trustworthy people to work here. Later, these people proved incapable of assuming their duties, sometimes getting drunk at work. The authorities decided that working at the memorial would require going through the normal recruitment processes, including interviews and special exams. Recruited workers would be on the payroll like other public servants. Selection criteria include being a survivor, and being physically and emotionally fit for the job.¹¹

Memorial staff often looked back on this training with mixed feelings. Some recalled the stress of the intense questioning by the selection committee—intended to mimic the inappropriate questions that might be asked by visitors—as triggering, requiring an astounding degree of resilience during the interview process and from which it took several days afterward to recover psychologically. Others recalled it as beneficial, forcing them to consider the various kinds of misinformation that were common among visitors who did not understand what had happened in Rwanda and providing them with the necessary tools to overwhelm genocide ideology and denial. Other stated benefits of the training process included helping memorial staff make sense of their experiences during the genocide, and training them in how to speak about these experiences in an educated manner without succumbing to trauma and grief or spreading dangerous misinformation about the genocide. To that end, one memorial guide appreciated the process for leaving her “numb” and impervious to the inappropriate questions she was forced to address on a daily basis as part of her responsibilities at the memorial where she worked, while another memorial guide noted that because he had been educated under the Habyarimana regime, he too had internalized “bad history” that he needed to unlearn to do his job effectively.¹²

As a result, I came to approach these memorial staff as “professional survivors” out of respect for the fact that in addition to having survived the genocide in the communities where they worked, they had also been formally trained by the Rwandan government to give guided tours of the state-funded genocide memorials, giving them a different perspective on the genocide.¹³ However, as my research shifted from analysis of the tour narratives at each site to documenting the life histories of many of the memorial staff I had come to know, I began to realize that many—if not all of them—had internalized a host of tensions related to the RPF’s official history that they had been trained to disseminate to visitors. Whereas most memorial staff adhered to the RPF’s official narrative when discussing

Rwanda's more distant past—specifically, the pre-colonial and colonial periods—tensions emerged when discussing more recent events that they had experienced firsthand, peaking with the post-genocide period.

PARADISE LOST: RECALLING PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL RWANDA

Of the 13 memorial staff with whom I worked closely for the purpose of this book, none acknowledged any specific inherited memories or narratives to relate regarding Rwanda's pre-colonial period, nor did they seem particularly interested in it. They could, however, speak generally about what they had been taught in school or learned from family members and friends, and on this basis—unsurprisingly given the government training they had received—recalled the pre-colonial period in very similar terms to the RPF's official narrative: it was a utopian time during which Rwandans lived together without any tensions, united by a Tutsi monarchy. When asked to describe the monarchy, memorial staff usually responded with references to how “the king” was a just leader, loved by all Rwandans regardless of social or economic status.¹⁴ And when asked about the etymology of the terms Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa—terms that had existed in the region prior to the arrival of the German and Belgian colonizers—memorial staff responded that these terms signified an individual's primary means of subsistence as either a farmer, pastoralist, or hunter-gatherer, and had nothing to do with ethnicity in the pre-colonial period.

These subjects inevitably led to an impassioned discussion of Rwanda's colonial period, though once again, this was largely informed by what memorial staff had learned in school or heard about from family and friends. For John-Bosco, a child survivor of the genocide, the colonial period set the foundation for genocide. He noted that it was during the colonial period that Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa first learned about the alleged racial differences between them, which were used to justify the Belgian colonizers' decision to concentrate power in the hands of the Tutsi. According to this theory, Hutu and Twa, he recalled, were true Africans and indigenous to Rwanda, while the Tutsi were the descendants of Caucasians who had intermarried with Ethiopians, and later immigrated to Rwanda. As true Africans, the Hutu and Twa came to believe they were less intelligent and attractive, prompting them to hate the more privileged, attractive, and intelligent Tutsi. And this, in Jean-Bosco's opinion, was the foundation of the “bad history” that would eventually make the genocide possible.¹⁵

Augustin, an elderly man, was similarly outspoken about this period. Indeed, before he would consent to allowing me to document his life history, Augustin insisted that I permit him to teach me the “real history of Rwanda,” which in his case began with Belgian colonization. In recalling his childhood during this period, Augustin had primarily positive memories:

Ethnicity did not exist here. Tutsi and Hutu lived side by side without any problem. The relationships were quite normal, and we lived peacefully... All the groups worked together. Actually, Tutsi and Hutu of this area were said to be similar in that they agreed on most issues affecting them. The major activities were hunting and cattle rearing, which were shared by all the groups. Tutsi owning many cows would give some to their Hutu neighbors as a sign of friendship.¹⁶

Augustin thus interpreted ubuhake as a mechanism for building positive relations within and among communities. He explained:

Tutsi cattle owners gave cows to Hutu, who offered their services, and stayed with and became members of the family, given the role that the cow plays in Rwandan culture. The same happened among Tutsi themselves ... In Rwandan culture, the person who receives a cow is expected to behave and act as a brother, for better or for worse.¹⁷

However, the Belgian colonial administration, in their efforts to assert their political dominance in Rwanda, would prove to be a chaotic influence. Augustin was sympathetic to Musinga and Rudahigwa, whom he claimed had tried to maintain stability and prevent Rwandans from internalizing the ethnic categories created by the colonists, while maintaining Rwanda’s indigenous religious and cultural traditions. Augustin recalled:

...from my own experience as a young boy and my observations thereafter, the king was considered as being above ethnic rivalry and seen by his people as being fair to everybody. The Belgians were the ones opposing the people to their king ... Then church people got involved and they were influential. They approached the Hutu elite and gave them the means to mobilize the people. The Hutu elite, with the help of church leaders, were manipulated. They were told that if the king was overthrown, the power would be theirs. You know, power is sweet, and they wanted power.¹⁸

Simultaneously, Augustin claimed the Belgians:

felt a threat to their rule and a possibility of being forced out of the country as Rwandans gained political consciousness. They saw that those who pushed for independence were Tutsi and Hutu elites close to the king. This was the time when political parties were born. The Belgians approached some of them, trying to divide Rwandans and prevent them from speaking with one voice.

The newly born parties included UNAR, PARMEHUTU, RADER, and APROSOMA. They were the most influential political formations. UNAR preached the unity of all Rwandans around the authority of the king. PARMEHUTU promoted Hutu emancipation from what it called the oppressive Tutsi rule. But all of this was manipulation by the Belgians. In reality, they had deprived the king of all his powers. Power was in the hands of the Belgian authorities. To isolate the king and weaken UNAR, the Belgians infiltrated RADER and APROSOMA, and opposed them to UNAR.¹⁹

Having divided Rwandans along ethno-political lines and mobilized key Hutu political elites against the monarchy, Augustine claimed that the Belgians were then able to orchestrate Rudahigwa's assassination in 1959 with minimal concerns of Rwandan rebellion.

The political and ethnic tensions that emerged from the Belgians' decision to foster the emergence of political parties along specifically ethnic lines rather than support Rwanda's monarchy then led to the start of the Hutu Revolution in 1959. For many memorial staff, this period was most notable for the anti-Tutsi violence that overwhelmed the nation. Aphrodis, a child survivor of the genocide, had learned from his elders that during this period "to kill a Tutsi was seen as a democratic right and heroic action," in keeping with the RPF's official narrative.²⁰ Yet few memorial staff recounted actual killings of Tutsi in their discussions of this period. People recalled houses being burned and cattle being killed and eaten, and occasionally referenced people being beaten in the streets, but it seems most of the violence was intended to force Tutsi political elites—particularly monarchists—to abandon their property and their communities, suggesting the violence was as much inspired by politics and opportunism as it was inspired by ethnocentrism. For example, an elderly woman, Serafina, recalled that during the Hutu Revolution her father, grandfather, and other Tutsi political elites from her community were arrested and beaten for being an *inyenzi*.²¹ Her grandfather was ultimately killed, but this remains the only instance I encountered among memorial staff where someone could recall a family member who was murdered,

rather than threatened, arrested, beaten, or their property destroyed. It seems the remaining Tutsi who were attacked were eventually returned to their homes and their families with the understanding that they start life anew elsewhere—within or beyond Rwanda—and no longer oppose the dissolution of the monarchy.

SUBTLE OPPRESSION: LIFE UNDER KAYIBANDA AND HABYARIMANA

Under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes—also referred to as the First and Second Hutu Republics—memorial staffs' recollections became more detailed, as they often had personal experiences and inherited memories to recount. In doing so, however, they increasingly deviated from the RPF's official narrative, offering a more complicated understanding of what life had been like for Rwanda's minority Tutsi population under Kayibanda and Habyarimana, and Hutu political leadership, more generally.

In discussing Kayibanda, the picture that emerges is a negative one characterized by systemic discrimination and sporadic outbreaks of anti-Tutsi violence. However, the narratives of memorial staff clearly demonstrate that this violence did not occur in a vacuum fueled by anti-Tutsi hatred, as indicated by the RPF's official narrative, but rather was directly related to growing political tensions in the newly independent nation. Likewise, the systemic discrimination allegedly endured by Rwanda's minority Tutsi population may not have been as comprehensive as it is portrayed by the RPF, particularly in the early years of the Kayibanda regime. While there is no doubt that Rwanda's minority Tutsi population struggled in various ways under Kayibanda, the recollections of memorial staff suggest that the RPF's official narrative simultaneously oversimplifies and exaggerates the post-independence struggles of Rwanda's minority Tutsi population.

With Belgium's recognition of Rwandan independence in 1962, many memorial staff reported momentary calm in Rwanda. While there were still political skirmishes, the primary targets were political elites who challenged PARMEHUTU's claim to power, rather than ordinary civilians. However, there were notable exceptions to this statement that emerged particularly from memorial staff from Bugesera district. At the time, Bugesera was renowned for its hot, dry climate and dangerous wild animals, as well as the prevalence of sleeping sickness spread by the notori-

ous tsetse fly. Under the Rwandan monarchy and colonial rule, the region had been sparsely populated and neglected by officials for these reasons.

The Belgian colonial administration relocated some Tutsi to Bugesera during the Hutu Revolution. For example, Jean Hatzfeld has documented the memories of an elderly genocide survivor, Jean-Baptiste Munyankore, who was forced to seek refuge with his family in December 1959 after local Hutu extremists set fire to Tutsi homes in his community. As the number of refugees grew and it became clear they would not be permitted to return to their homes, Belgian officials began arranging for their resettlement in Burundi—then under Belgian control as part of their colony, Ruanda-Urundi—or Tanzania. Jean-Baptiste requested to remain in Rwanda, and soon after was sent to Bugesera. His first impressions of the region are as follows:

We set eyes on a land covered with savannas and marshes: we were entering the Bugesera. I thought, They are dumping us here to abandon us alive in the arms of death. Without exaggeration: the swarming tsetse flies darkened the brightness of the sky. I still believe the authorities assumed that those terrible tsetse flies would be the end of us.²²

Solange, a child survivor of the genocide, had heard similar accounts from her parents and grandparents about how they came to live in Bugesera: like Jean-Baptiste, they were among the first Tutsi to be resettled in Bugesera after their family fled political violence in their community. She recalled stories of how dangerous Bugesera had been at that time—infested with tsetse flies and overrun by wild animals—and the hunger and exhaustion endured by her family as they attempted to clear the land so their cattle could graze.²³ However difficult, the Belgian colonial administration gave these internally displaced Tutsi no choice but to make a life for themselves in Bugesera.

However, most Bugesera-based memorial staff had slightly more recent origins in the district that were closely tied to the physical and structural violence that emerged in the early years of Rwandan independence. In 1963, the Kayibanda regime implemented a policy according to which those Tutsi who had previously held prominent positions in the government or military or had made names for themselves as political activists were forced to move to Bugesera.²⁴ Jean-Bosco recalled this policy as a punishment that was intended to kill Tutsi by exposing them to tsetse flies and wild animals that would likely kill them.²⁵ Daphné recalled this period

similarly, noting that her parents were forcibly deported to Bugesera by the Kayibanda regime to be killed by tsetse flies.²⁶

In Augustin's recounting of his family's arrival in Bugesera, however, he chose to focus not only on the physical danger, but also on the structural violence endured by those Tutsi who were forcibly deported to remote regions where their long-term survival was unlikely.

Many of those who remained inside Rwanda were deported to Bugesera and Kibungo regions—Rukumberi and Sake communes. The official reason for this resettlement was that these areas had a low population density. But these areas were mainly forests infested with tsetse flies that cause the deadly sleeping disease. Life was hard. Some survived, but the death toll was high. Moreover, there were no health facilities, no roads, and no secondary schools. The area was left behind in terms of development infrastructure.²⁷

Ultimately, Kayibanda's decision to relocate Rwandan Tutsi to Bugesera was widely interpreted by memorial staff as a genocidal act, as the Rwandan authorities enforced these deportations with the understanding that the Tutsi would be unlikely to survive there. Their chances of survival were further undermined by the regional neglect Bugesera-based communities endured under Kayibanda. Bugesera-based memorial staff unanimously condemned his regime for consistently refusing to implement policies that would have alleviated the periodic droughts and food shortages that occurred, in addition to the particularly harsh conditions of everyday life.

However, beyond these region-specific experiences of structural violence, neglect, and oppression, memorial staff had few complaints about life under the Kayibanda regime, aside from more generic allegations about corruption and regional favoritism commonly voiced by all Rwandans, regardless of ethnicity or political orientation. Among those memorial staff who were old enough to have firsthand experiences of life under Kayibanda, they typically described their overall quality of life in positive terms, noting that there were minimal ethnic tensions among neighbors and a high degree of political stability. They likewise commented positively upon their families' ability to gradually amass wealth, particularly cattle, and run businesses with minimal state interference. Furthermore, several of the memorial staff with whom I worked came from families that had prospered under the quota system, despite being Tutsi. Their parents and grandparents had, for example, worked as teachers or professors or served in the local government, positions that allowed them enhanced social and political status within their communities.

A notable exception to memorial staff's predominantly positive memories of everyday life under Kayibanda was the education system. For those memorial staff who attended school or who had children who were being educated during this period, the education system was a source of ongoing concern, as it was here that students typically learned about ethnicity through the lens of the Kayibanda regime's official narrative. Augustin recalled:

...the schools started teaching that the Tutsi had oppressed the Hutu as part of a program developed by the Ministry of Education... It was taught that the Tutsi had ruled and dominated the Hutu for 400 years. But this was propaganda developed by Belgians and aimed at dividing the two groups. In 1959, as Africa was claiming independence from colonial powers, the Belgians started dividing Hutu and Tutsi as a diversion from the real problem, which was self-determination... Belgians would say the Hutu were the Tutsi's servants: that they performed manual labour free for them, and that they carried hot pots on their heads—which was ridiculous as it never happened—that Hutu were prevented from going to school—which was not true either, as there were few schools and that they were reserved for the children of the chiefs close to the king. Even for them it wasn't enough. At independence, very few Rwandans had attended institutions of higher learning.²⁸

Given the politicized curriculum promoted in Rwandan schools under Kayibanda, it is unsurprising that ethnic violence did occur on occasion, though memorial staff's narratives indicated that such outbreaks were typically localized and never occurred in a vacuum. Indeed, the narratives of memorial staff like Augustin indicate that this violence was triggered by a very specific cause, namely, the *inyenzi* incursions that occurred in the years immediately following independence.

[T]he Tutsi in exile attempted some incursions into Rwanda around 1963. That's the time the Tutsi started being dehumanized, being called cockroaches. In fact, that marked the beginning of the genocide process. An attack on the area's military camp by Tutsi rebels in 1963 was repulsed, but Tutsi in area paid a high price. Many of them were massacred. That's the time when it was declared that should the Hutu regime be threatened by Tutsi rebel attacks, all Tutsi living inside Rwanda would be wiped out. And as a matter of fact, whenever Tutsi rebels made an incursion from a particular border area, be it Cyangugu, Gisenyi or Bugesera, many internal Tutsi all over Rwanda would be killed.²⁹

Augustin's comments on the *inyenzi* incursions reveal an important point of tension between the RPF's official narrative and the lived experiences of many memorial staff. The rebels' attempts to return to Rwanda by force—destabilizing its borders and directly threatening Kayibanda's leadership by trying to force him to reverse his policy that prevented Rwandan refugees of the Hutu Revolution and related episodes of political violence from returning to Rwanda legally—consistently resulted in suffering for those Tutsi who had remained in Rwanda. As potential supporters of the *inyenzi*, Tutsi populations that lived in the areas where these incursions occurred were perceived as potential *inyangarwanda*. As such, the Kayibanda regime responded with violence, sending soldiers to burn Tutsi homes and businesses, arrest community leaders and other prominent figures, and subject all suspected spies to a range of human rights violations, ranging from beatings and torture to murder.³⁰ Among memorial staff who had grown up in communities whose Tutsi populations had been punished for the *inyenzi* incursions, there was a noticeable bitterness when discussing the rebels. This bitterness seemed rooted in the perception that the *inyenzi* had knowingly sacrificed the well-being of Rwanda-based Tutsi in order to resist exile under Kayibanda. An additional source of resentment toward the rebels was founded in the realization that their incursions simultaneously provided Kayibanda with a means of further uniting the Hutu majority against the Tutsi.

Not all memorial staff had encounters with this kind of violence, however. Serafina's family came from a remote community in central Rwanda, far from the border regions where the *inyenzi* attacks were occurring, and as a result, was insulated from the subsequent anti-Tutsi violence that characterized the early years of the First Hutu Republic. She was a teenager when the incursions began, and recalled that ethnic tensions were so minimal in her community that she did not even know her own ethnicity, let alone the ethnicities of her neighbors. Furthermore, people in her community did not seem particularly concerned about the *inyenzi* incursions or question the loyalty of their Tutsi neighbors. As evidence of this, Serafina noted she did not learn about her Tutsi heritage until 1973, when political violence associated with Habyarimana's rise to power resulted in her father being arrested as an *inyenzi* spy and later murdered, leaving her an orphan.³¹

Perhaps for this reason, Serafina had little positive things to say about life under Habyarimana, in keeping with the sentiments of most memorial staff and the RPF official narrative, more generally. For example, Augustin characterized the Habyarimana regime as follows:

When Kayibanda was overthrown in 1973, the Tutsi were massacred anew. With Habyarimana as the new president, nothing changed. Dehumanization continued, and Tutsi were called *inzoka* [snakes]. This was a continued attempt to deprive Tutsi of their humanity and present the Tutsi as wicked people. We had no roads still, no hospital, no secondary schools and no electricity here. Our local leaders were Hutu brought from other areas of the country.³²

However, aside from Serafina, none of the memorial staff I interviewed could recall specific acts of physical violence against Tutsi occurring in their communities in the early years of the Habyarimana regime. In Jean-Bosco's experience, violence did occur, but the victims were political elites who had been outspoken supporters of the Kayibanda regime or who had profited from its corruption.³³ Tutsi were rarely included in these categories as the Kayibanda regime was primarily dominated by Hutu from southern Rwanda, Kayibanda's home region and power base. In addition, the anti-Tutsi propaganda that had periodically been espoused during the Kayibanda regime ceased under Habyarimana and did not recur until the late 1980s when threats of an *inyenzi* invasion began anew following the emergence and militarization of the RPF in Uganda. What made life difficult under Habyarimana was once again the low-level structural violence and regional favoritism that made life difficult for all Rwandans. Solange was not yet born when Habyarimana came to power, but she had learned that state neglect of the Bugesera region and other Tutsi-dominated communities increased under Habyarimana, while people in Kigali and the north seemed to prosper.³⁴ Jean-Bosco, meanwhile, had been forced to leave school early under Habyarimana because he was a Tutsi, and stronger Tutsi students had already filled the ethnic quota for advancing to the next level.³⁵

Yet despite the presence of social injustices that were endured disproportionately by the Tutsi, many memorial staff also had positive memories of everyday life under Habyarimana. Many memorial staff recalled enjoying a good standard of living during the early years of Habyarimana's leadership and enjoyed opportunities for advancement in business and other avenues of subsistence, if not the military and politics. Augustin and his extended family had enjoyed a high degree of business success under Habyarimana, whom he recalled had exceptional support from the international community for promoting the development of the nation.³⁶ Even Jean-Bosco admitted that even while his education had suffered under Habyarimana, many Rwandans were able to forget the ethnic divisions of the past during this period, accounting for higher rates of intermarriage between Hutu and Tutsi, for example.³⁷

TRAGIC EVENTS: RECALLING RWANDA'S CIVIL WAR AND GENOCIDE

In recounting when they first sensed a shift in Habyarimana's policies toward and treatment of Rwanda's minority Tutsi population, memorial staff consistently referenced the start of the civil war in 1990 as the point when they first realized it was no longer safe to be a Tutsi in Rwanda. For Jean-Bosco, the shift was immediately apparent. Within days of the RPA invasion, he recalled that Hutu and Tutsi no longer sat together in bars, but instead segregated themselves according to ethnicity amid rumors that the Tutsi-owned bars were poisoning their Hutu patrons and vice versa.³⁸ Amid this segregation, several bars in his community began hosting political meetings attended by civilians, military figures, and political elites. Jean-Bosco learned from his Hutu friends that Hutu were being encouraged to watch their Tutsi neighbors and report suspicious behavior to the authorities so that they could be investigated properly. This led to a pattern of arbitrary imprisonment and torture of Tutsi civilians who were suspected RPF collaborators, which gradually escalated to all battle-aged Tutsi men. By 1992, Jean-Bosco's community was overwhelmed by ethnic and political violence, with suspected Tutsi collaborators being murdered and their homes burned as a means of discouraging other Tutsi from engaging in politically subversive activities.

Augustin similarly identified the RPA invasion as the point where life in Rwanda suddenly became difficult for Tutsi in his community:

When the RPF entered Rwanda, many tragic events took place here with the resumption of killings. Our young people would be arrested and taken to [a local] military camp—an important military training centre—and were given hoes to dig their own graves. They would be bitten to death or have their heads crushed and left to die a slow motion death. Others were thrown in [the lake], or in the forest.

In 1992, all Tutsi houses were burnt. Within three days, 600 people were killed. Others found refuge in churches, with the belief that no one would kill them inside a church. Cattle were slaughtered and a foreign nun was killed because she helped the Tutsi and made their plight known. An outcry from the international community stopped the killings.³⁹

In relation to the 600 Tutsi civilians who were killed, Augustin had witnessed much of this violence firsthand. He had been among a handful of Tutsi who, prior to 1994, were arrested by the military and tortured for

information about the RPF before being subject to *kwica rubozo*—which he defined as “slow-motion killing.” He recalled:

I witnessed it myself while there. They were saying killings should stop as rumours about them were spreading in both Rwanda and abroad. When I was taken to the camp, the commander had just issued an order to stop the killings. That’s how I survived... They said they’d kill all Tutsi since they were RPF collaborators and supporters. It was no secret that they intended to kill the Tutsi, and they’d openly talk about it. For them, to kill a Tutsi was like killing a snake, and therefore it was accepted and authorized by the power in place, from the President [Habyarimana] down to the cell level.

Upon his release from the military camp, Augustin decided to flee with his family—a decision that he credits for their survival. They did not return to their community until after the RPF wrested control of the nation and the genocide had formally ended.

Most of the memorial staff I interviewed had family members who were attacked in the civil war period due to allegations they were collaborating with the RPF. For example, Cesare—a child survivor—still had nightmares about his father’s imprisonment in 1992. His father had been a prominent civil servant and intellectual, and while he claimed loyalty to the Habyarimana regime, his brother’s decision to join the RPF in 1992 resulted in severe consequences for the whole family. Cesare’s father was arrested shortly after and taken to a nearby military camp where he, along with 11 other men who were suspected of spying for the RPF, was denied food and water, beaten, and questioned for information about the RPF’s military strategy. When they failed to provide the desired information, the captives were then buried in a hole up to their necks and then left for animals to scavenge. Cesare’s father survived, but upon returning home, was unrecognizable to his family due to the beating and exposure he had endured.

Such recollections reveal an important silence in the RPF official narrative, namely, the role their “war of liberation,” played in radicalizing Hutu political elites and the Hutu majority, more generally. Augustin had previously identified the *inyenzi* incursions as bearing partial responsibility for triggering anti-Tutsi sentiments and violence in his community in the 1960s, and he returned to this theme in our conversations about the civil war. His efforts to highlight the actions of the *inyenzi* and RPF in triggering the escalation of ethnic and political tensions in Rwanda were important, as they revealed a key point of tension shared among many memorial staff: namely, the sense that in 1990, as in the case of the *inyenzi* incursions in the 1960s,

Rwanda's minority Tutsi population was knowingly sacrificed to allow Tutsi refugees to assert their right to return to Rwanda. While it is perhaps unfair to expect the RPF to be able to anticipate precisely how Hutu political elites affiliated with the Habyarimana regime would ultimately react to the RPA invasion, many memorial staff argued that faced with the steady increase in anti-Tutsi propaganda in Rwanda's media—which the RPF followed to combat using its Radio Muhabura—more could have been done to prepare Rwanda's Tutsi communities, particularly in rural areas and the more remote western provinces, for the possibility of genocide. Indeed, Cesare was adamant that the genocide had actually started in 1990, rather than 1994, and was the direct outcome of the RPF's decision to invade Rwanda without first ensuring the security of Rwanda's minority Tutsi population—a sentiment that was common among many of the memorial staff with whom I spoke.

“LIFE WAS A HELL”: THE 1994 GENOCIDE

This leads to the genocide as recalled by memorial staff, a period marked by extensive anti-Tutsi violence that targeted not only Tutsi political elites or alleged spies, but ordinary Tutsi men, women, and children, in horrifying ways. For most memorial staff, the genocide started unexpectedly, despite the steadily increasing ethnic and political tensions in their communities. In Kigali, the Presidential Guard began attacking political moderates within hours of the confirmation of Habyarimana's death, and roadblocks had been created throughout the city on the orders of the Hutu Power extremists by the following morning. For example, Aphrodis, a survivor from Kigali, recalled that the violence was immediately visible. Within hours of Habyarimana's assassination, his father—a prominent political figure—had heard rumors that the Presidential Guard was killing political moderates and began making arrangements for his family to go into hiding. However, the Presidential Guard arrived before they were able to flee, and Aphrodis suddenly found himself the sole surviving member of his immediate family. He spent several nights hiding in the bushes in his neighborhood before finally making his way to a nearby church, where he hid until the RPF took control of the city. However, in the few days that he was in hiding on the streets, he saw a great deal of violence, including atrocities he had never previously imagined. He recalled “life in Kigali was a hell” in which “to be killed with a gun was an honor.”⁴⁰ He was particularly shocked to see neighbors killing neighbors at roadblocks, when they had previously lived together in peace and friendship.

Outside Kigali, people heard immediately about Habyarimana's assassination and the various theories regarding who was responsible, but most memorial staff recalled believing the violence was largely political and would not affect ordinary civilians. Often it was days, or even weeks, before the genocidal violence began to take shape in rural communities. In Bugesera, for example, memorial staff recalled that the genocide began with the killing and eating of cattle, and the burning of homes owned by alleged RPF spies. Jean-Bosco recalled that the local Tutsi were encouraged by their leaders to remain calm: only RPF spies were being targeted in the first days of the violence, and once they were caught, the violence would end. Civilians were encouraged to seek refuge at the local church, and to bring with them enough water, food, clothing, and medication to last until the police brought the violence under control. Three days later, however, soldiers and Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi militias surrounded the church, and its Tutsi occupants "were killed like animals."⁴¹ Jean-Bosco—one of only a few survivors—managed to flee in the first minutes of the massacre, but was forced to hide in the swamps until the RPA arrived in the region, bringing the violence to an end.

Other rural memorial staff reported similar experiences. For Daphné, the genocide in her community began with Tutsi political elites and cultural leaders being dragged through the streets and publicly executed using machetes and nail-studded clubs. But while these acts terrified her, she believed her parents when they said that ordinary Tutsi civilians would not be harmed and felt little fear in accompanying them to the local church to wait for the violence to end.⁴² Government soldiers and Interahamwe attacked the church a few days later. There were few survivors, even among the unarmed Tutsi women and children who Daphné recalled had always been left unharmed in previous conflicts.

This belief that women and children would not be harmed was, in Augustin's opinion, not only the result of past experiences of political and ethnic violence in which women and children were always spared, but also the result of a powerful taboo that prohibited violence against women and children. Augustin explained:

In our culture, the woman is called *nyampinga*, meaning a loving person with good feelings towards other people... It is believed that women have no wickedness, do not belong to any group, welcome everybody regardless of ethnicity, gender, family connections. It is also believed that women have power and positive influence over their husbands, providing them with good advice...⁴³

Augustin identified a similar tradition that ensured the protection of children during times of violence and political unrest. He recalled: "No one would dare kill a child before 1994... In our culture a child was considered an angel because of his innocence. Children were protected not only by their parents, but by every adult around." As a result, the possibility that Hutu Power extremists could kill Tutsi women and children was unimaginable to most Tutsi civilians, prompting them to seek refuge in local churches and other central locations when the genocide began in their communities, rather than flee the country, for example. Many memorial staff argued that the Hutu Power extremists were aware of this tendency, having witnessed it in action during previous conflicts, and had used it to gather Tutsi together in unprotected groups during the genocide, accounting in large part for the high numbers of Tutsi civilian casualties.

In Olivier's community, as in other rural communities, the genocide began with the burning of Tutsi's homes and the eating of their cattle. Once again, local political elites encouraged Tutsi civilians to seek refuge at a local school, where they were allowed to remain unharmed for two weeks. The conditions in the school were dire: once inside, people were not allowed to leave to collect food, water, and other necessities, and so within days everyone was suffering from shortages and poor hygiene. In this instance, when the Hutu Power extremists attacked the refugees managed to defend themselves by using bricks and stones to keep them at a distance. However, the extremists soon returned with trained soldiers and military weapons, overwhelming the refugees and massacring all but a handful of the refugees.

In addition to these massacres, many memorial staff witnessed a range of individual acts of brutality against Tutsi in the weeks and months following their escape. Solange was particularly haunted by how the génocidaires used rape to destroy Tutsi women and their families.⁴⁴ In her experience, beautiful young Tutsi women were particularly vulnerable to rape and other forms of sexual violence, including forced marriage and forced maternity. She believed these practices emerged from Hutu men's curiosity about whether rumors that Tutsi women were physically different from Hutu women, and therefore more enjoyable sexual partners, were accurate. However, Solange recognized that rape had an intensely negative effect on the women who survived. In the months and years following the genocide, they were often ostracized by their families and communities for having had sex with Hutu men, even if they did not consent.⁴⁵ Under the circumstances, Solange understood rape to be a means

of undermining Tutsi women's social and physical well-being, "killing them before they died," a perception she believed most Hutu men would have internalized as well and perhaps even motivated this particular form of gender-based violence.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the memorial staff whom I interviewed from eastern Rwanda often highlighted the extraordinary length of the genocidal violence that impacted their communities. In Kibuye and Bisese, the violence began gradually, as it had in other rural communities, with the killing of Tutsi political elites and community leaders. As the violence gained momentum and the Hutu Power extremists began targeting ordinary Tutsi civilians, people were encouraged to flee to churches, hospitals, stadiums, and other sites where they were promised protection. Massacres quickly followed in all instances, and the survivors fled into the mountains or to the DRC in the hopes of escaping their attackers. However, in eastern Rwanda, from 23 June 1994 the presence of the French soldiers associated with *Opération Turquoise*, with its stated mandate of protecting civilians, slowed the RPA advance.⁴⁷ However, many memorial staff from the region reported that anti-Tutsi violence was allowed to continue unchecked under *Opération Turquoise*. In Consolée's experience, the French soldiers' presence actually resulted in additional deaths of Tutsi:

[T]hey gathered us, and they told us to inform also our colleagues who were struggling everywhere in bushes, like cripples and the people who had been disabled by the genocide, that they promised to protect us. But few days later they left, saying that they were coming shortly, and they disappeared. We were left in a big group, I remember, and it was that time most of the Tutsi who survived died, because we were easy to find. So after such a horrible event, the French soldiers came back again and took some survivors to the Congo and in some other different places. Please add that if the French soldiers didn't come here and tell lies many more Tutsi could have at least survived...

After the killing, French soldiers were protecting... or fighting against the RPF entering the *Opération Turquoise* zone, so that the extremists and génocidaires and their families could flee to Congo.⁴⁸

SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, AND POLITICAL TENSIONS: EVERYDAY LIFE IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

Despite regional variations in how the genocide took shape across Rwanda, without exception, memorial staff's experiences of the genocide came to an end with the arrival of RPA troops in their community. RPA troops

simultaneously rescued Tutsi survivors and forced an estimated two million Hutu, some of whom had been responsible for orchestrating, inciting, and committing genocide, to seek refuge in the DRC. Life for those who remained in Rwanda in the immediate aftermath of the genocide was difficult: most communities had endured not only the near-annihilation of their Tutsi populations and the displacement of many Hutu civilians, but also widespread looting and destruction of infrastructure. The RPF established camps where they provided medical treatment to survivors before temporarily resettling them in homes abandoned by fleeing Hutu civilians. Over time, however, survivors were encouraged by the RPF to return to their pre-genocide homes. Jean-Bosco recalled being told this was necessary to make room for returning Hutu civilians and help re-establish a Tutsi presence across those regions of Rwanda hardest hit by the genocide.⁴⁹

For memorial staff, this period of return was often extremely challenging, and in Charlotte's experience, many survivors were "not living in the world."⁵⁰ In addition to struggling with physical ailments, emotional distress, and in some instances post-traumatic stress disorder associated with the violence they had experienced during the genocide, upon returning to their pre-genocide homes survivors often felt compelled to locate and rebury with respect the remains of their missing and murdered loved ones—a process that brought them face-to-face with a host of political, spiritual, and social tensions.

For example, Jean-Bosco expressed gratitude to the RPF for removing from power the Hutu extremists responsible for instigating the genocidal violence against Rwanda's Tutsi minority population, and stopping the genocide. However, he simultaneously acknowledged concerns about what he described as widespread dissatisfaction shared by Rwandans from all sides of the conflict in the aftermath of the genocide. To demonstrate these challenges, Jean-Bosco invited me to observe a local gacaca trial that he, as a survivor and employee of the local state-funded genocide memorial, was required to attend.⁵¹ While waiting for the trial to begin, I was repeatedly asked by district-level officials to produce my permit. The start of the trial was then inexplicably delayed, despite the presence of the accused, witnesses, and necessary officials, and having achieved the necessary quorum. Jean-Bosco—eavesdropping on the conversations taking place between the officials and the primary witness against the accused—learned the officials hoped that if they delayed the start of the trial long enough, I would leave. They were apparently uncomfortable with a foreigner randomly turning up to observe, and eventually decided to go

ahead with the trial, but postpone the sentencing.⁵² When I asked which day the sentencing would take place, they responded that my permit allowed me to observe trials, not the handing down of sentences.

After the trial, Jean-Bosco and I returned to the memorial to talk about what had transpired. As we walked, Clemente—an elderly survivor who had just testified against the accused—intercepted us and requested I document his story. He was clearly distressed—upset, as it turned out, by the delay in sentencing, which he interpreted as evidence that the gacaca judges had not taken his testimony seriously and intended to release the man he had accused of beating him nearly to death. Clemente claimed that he had been forced to testify by district-level officials because he was the sole survivor of a series of attacks orchestrated by the accused—a man who during the genocide was notorious for using dogs to hunt Tutsi, and then beating his victims to death with a nail-studded club. Clemente had risked testifying because he wanted justice—specifically, to see his attacker imprisoned for life and forced to compensate him for the physical and psychological harm he had endured.⁵³ As evidence of this harm, Clemente showed us scars on his legs, back, neck, and head resulting from the nail-studded club his attacker had used to beat him.

It was not the injustices visited upon him during the genocide, however, that Clemente wanted to impress upon me. He was adamant that I understand that justice would not be served by the gacaca trial I had just witnessed. He claimed that attacker's family and friends had fabricated an alibi that suggested he was away during the first days of the genocide when Clemente was attacked, and so for this reason, the man was going to be cleared of all charges and released. Clemente's testimony—that he had known his attacker for many years prior to the genocide and could identify him as his attacker on the grounds that he recognized both the man and his dogs—was then dismissed by his attackers' supporters as the ranting of an elderly man who had likely suffered irreparable physical and psychological damage during the genocide, and for that reason, could not be considered a reliable witness. And with no other survivors or other eyewitnesses who could support Clemente's version of events, he was confident that his attacker was going to be released.

After Clemente left, Jean-Bosco explained that there was a great deal of tension in the community at present, not only along ethnic lines or between survivors and génocidaires, but between the civilians and the district authorities. This tension came from different sources. Most notably, Jean-Bosco argued that gacaca, while initially anticipated by survivors as a positive step toward retribution for the suffering they had experienced during the geno-

cide, was now widely perceived as a sham. He argued that too many known génocidaires from his community had received reduced sentences based on fabricated confessions that addressed only a fraction of the murders and related atrocities they had perpetrated. In particular, none of the local génocidaires seemed willing to confess to participating in sexual violence, mutilation of the dead, and other taboo crimes, such as attacks on children and the elderly, even though such violence was widespread during the genocide in his community.⁵⁴ Yet Jean-Bosco noted that the government was willing to ignore the shortcomings of gacaca in order to promote gacaca as an essential part of the nation's successful national unity and reconciliation policies. Jean-Bosco concluded that the gacaca officials, knowing that the sentencing of the accused was likely to result in public outcry among survivors, had not wanted me to observe lest I take this evidence of the shortcomings of the gacaca system back to the international community.

Jean-Bosco then explained how dissatisfaction with the government was rife in rural Rwanda these days, and that even the local memorial—a place that was intended to promote reconciliation and remembrance of the innocent lives lost during the genocide—was undermining positive relations between Rwandan civilians and the government. In Jean-Bosco's experience, local support for the memorial had dwindled over the years as people realized the government prioritized legitimizing the authoritarian Kagame regime over its stated goals of providing survivors with a safe space to remember the victims of the genocide and promoting reconciliation among Rwandans. The memorial where he worked had, he claimed, become a point of distress and dangerous spiritual contamination within the community. This emerged in part from the government's decision to transform the church into a memorial without first providing the community with an alternative venue in which to worship, and in part from the government's decision to incorporate displays of human remains in various states of decomposition into the memorial. Jean-Bosco noted that there was a rumor among the local population that Kagame had become an atheist during his time in Uganda, which they claimed explain his apparent indifference to the spiritual well-being of the Rwandan people.

In Jean-Bosco's experience, many of the survivors in his community avoided the memorial, even going so far as to fake illnesses around commemoration events so they had a good excuse to miss the ceremonies. He claimed they found it distressing that the anonymous remains of the victims of the genocide were displayed on shelves or interred in mass graves, or were reluctant to risk coming in contact with the angry spirits of the people whose remains had been incorporated into the state-funded

genocide memorials against their wishes. A devout Christian, Jean-Bosco claimed he did not believe in spirits or their ability to negatively affect the living. However, he argued that many rural Rwandans adhered to a mix of Christian and indigenous religious practices, making them susceptible to superstition. As a result, they perceived the state-funded genocide memorials as a source of spiritual distress, and minimized their involvement with the site. To this end, Jean-Bosco noted that the only visitors who seemed to come to the memorial willingly were Tutsi returnees and foreigners who came to pay their respects—a general pattern that I observed as well in the months when I was conducting fieldwork at and around the sites, and which was reinforced in my conversations with other memorial staff.

Female memorial staff, while typically reluctant to get into the messy details of Rwandan history and its official interpretation in the post-genocide period, were often very forthcoming about the ongoing spiritual violence endured by many Rwandan communities in the post-genocide period. This tendency likely emerges from what Jennie Burnet refers to as “a dialectic of male/female distinctions” among Rwandans, particularly rural Rwandans, whereby women are valued for being reserved, submissive, and maternal, and men are valued for being dominant, strong, and logical.⁵⁵ Despite the growing prevalence of women in politics and business in post-genocide Rwanda, rural women frequently endure social pressure to refrain from speaking out about political and social issues.⁵⁶ Yet rural Rwandan women could—if primarily in the capacity of protecting and maintaining their household and the well-being of their families and communities—serve as vocal advocates on issues related to spiritual violence, for example, and the negative consequences of disrespecting missed and murdered loved ones who were killed during the genocide and related mass atrocities.

Consolée—an ambitious young survivor who approached her work at her community’s genocide memorial as stepping stone to a much better position with the district authorities—was initially dismissive of my questions regarding levels of public support for the memorials. In an initial interview, she argued:

We [survivors] prefer our people to stay at memorials as physical evidence of the genocide, and also we want people from abroad like you to tell others what happened. We want our history to be remembered by the younger generations of Rwandans and also by the entire world.⁵⁷

However, Consolée later acknowledged that the displays of human remains and the use of mass graves rather than single burial plots were culturally inappropriate and a source of tension with her community, primarily because

these practices had been given priority over even tentative identifications of the victims. She claimed to know many people who believed they were haunted by the disrespected spirits of family members who had gone missing during the genocide, as well as distressed by the possibility that their loved ones might still be alive somewhere.

The harms come when a survivor thinks that maybe his or her people have been eaten by wild dogs or have been buried in disrespectful way, or maybe they are still alive and are living somewhere else since you are not really sure where they are buried... It happens to some people: you may hear someone speaking to his/her relative who died. Most of the cases are traumatized people. And also there some people who dream while they are awake. When you talk to them, they say they were talking to their dead relatives. So it happens to some people.⁵⁸

Consolée concluded that if the government dedicated resources to locating, identifying, and allowing survivors to repatriate the anonymous victims of the genocide according to their preferences—whether in single burials on ancestral land according to tradition, or in the state-funded genocide memorials—it would go a long way toward repairing some of the harms endured by survivors in post-genocide Rwanda.

Other memorial staff whom I interviewed were similarly divided on the memorials' prominent displays of human remains, though all of them acknowledged its negative potential for those Rwandan survivors who associated a traditional burial with closure and demonstrating respect for the spirit of the deceased. For example, Solange—a young survivor who interpreted her work at the local state-funded genocide memorial as essential for preventing future genocidal violence in Rwanda—was conflicted about whether graphic displays of human remains were a necessary or relevant part of the memorial. She maintained that it was important to show visitors physical evidence of the genocide, noting “I want people to understand that genocide really happened, because some people doubt it ever took place or deny it. My aim is to make them realize the enormity of what happened.” And at times, she defended the government's decision to place the remains of genocide victims on display or inter them in mass graves, explaining:

In our tradition, when somebody dies, family and friends gather for the burial ceremony. There is a specific number of days of mourning. Once this period is past, the family returns to everyday business. It's over. But following genocide, you bury a person you are not even sure is your relative. Sometimes you are told that your loved ones were thrown or buried in a particular place and when you search, you don't find them. Sometimes you find body parts scattered all over, and you collect the head here, the

legs there... So what we do is we collect all remains and bring them to the memorial. In essence, we are not in opposition to tradition. We are just being practical, adapting to the special situation of genocide. The only difference is that we come together here every year to commemorate, which was not done traditionally. Once the burial had taken place, it was over.⁵⁹

However, Solange admitted that the government's treatment of the anonymous dead at the memorials had alienated the wider community where she worked. For this reason, Solange alternated between respecting the government's decision to prioritize memorials as sites where visitors were confronted with physical evidence of the genocide, and empathizing with those survivors for whom the memorials had become a source of anguish, holding captive the remains of their relatives and forcing them to interact with their dead in a manner that defied individual preferences for the respectful treatment of the dead. Solange claimed she had, on occasion, seen survivors take small bones and pieces of clothing from the memorial, presumably with the intention of reburying them on their ancestral lands as a means of facilitating closure or appeasing the angry spirits of their dead. And while she acknowledged that people were not supposed to speak about such things, referencing a survival tactic of *ceceka* or keeping silent widely practiced by Rwandans, she also admitted that many members of her community, regardless of ethnicity, were angered by the thought of Tutsi victims of the genocide being buried alongside Hutu victims of RPA atrocities—often alleged génocidaires who had been murdered by RPA troops—at the state-funded genocide memorials.⁶⁰

These tensions beg the following question: why, given the shortcomings of the RPF's policies in their communities, did memorial staff choose to work at the state-funded genocide memorials? When asked, Augustin responded that he had spent his whole life in the region, and understood Rwandan history leading up to the genocide well, making him an ideal person to represent survivors at the memorial. But Augustin also argued that whatever his feelings about the RPF and its policies, the prevention of further bloodshed in Rwanda was a priority. Throughout our conversations, Augustin always returned to the idea that it was important for people to understand what had happened in Rwanda surrounding the genocide so that similar violence would never be permitted to overwhelm the nation again. He explained the responsibilities of memorial staff as follows: "We want our visitors to see the responsibility of bad leadership in what happened here. We want them to understand that this kind of leadership should not be allowed to exist. Never should this happen again, be it here or elsewhere."⁶¹ Under the circumstances, it was possible for him to put his personal feelings aside in the hopes that despite the divisive nature

of the RPF and his many criticisms of their actions over the years, he was contributing to the prevention of future bloodshed.

Other memorial staff cited similar reasons for working at the state-funded genocide memorials, approaching their work as a higher calling of sorts, even while recognizing that they were often promoting a simplistic and politically charged overview of the genocide. For Jean-Bosco, his commitment to working at his local memorial came from the knowledge that as someone who witnessed the massacre in his community, he was the best person to educate others about what had happened. It was important work, he argued, and essential to Rwanda's future to educate people to resist genocide ideology and bad governance.⁶²

But how do the narratives shared by memorial staff, with their close proximity to sites directly associated with the RPF's official narrative, compare to those of ordinary Rwandan survivors of the genocide? The following chapter will explore the narratives of Rwandan survivors who had no formal affiliation with the genocide memorials. These narratives add insights to the social, political, and spiritual tensions internalized by many Rwandans in the post-genocide period, further complicating the RPF's official narrative and allowing for a more nuanced understanding of Rwandan history as informed by the lived experiences of yet another often disparate cohort within post-genocide Rwandan society.

NOTES

1. Interview with author, 2008.
2. Interview by author, 2007.
3. Alexander Freund, "Confessing animals: Toward a *longue durée* history of the oral history interview," *Oral History Review* 41(1) (2014), 1–26; Alexander Freund and Erin Jessee, edited by Troy Reeves and Caitlin Tyler-Richards, "Confessing animals" redux: A conversation between Alexander Freund and Erin Jessee," *Oral History Review* 41(2) (2014), 314–324.
4. Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 11; Alessandro Portelli, "The time of my life: Functions of time in oral history," *International Journal of Oral History* 2(3) (1981), 162–180; Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, second edition (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2005), 110.
5. Amy Tooth Murphy, "The continuous thread of revelation: Chrononormativity and the challenge of queer oral history," Scottish Oral History Centre seminar series, 3 February 2014.

6. For example, less than two weeks after the assassination of Rwanda National Congress (RNC) co-founder Patrick Karegeya—an outspoken member of Rwanda’s political opposition in exile—Kagame shocked people by saying during a prayer meeting that “You cannot betray Rwanda and get away with it. There are consequences for betraying your country.” He went on to state, “Anyone who betrays our cause or wishes our people ill will fall victim. What remains to be seen is how you fall victim.” BBC News, “Rwanda’s President Kagame warns traitors,” 13 January 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25713774> (accessed 15 June 2015). In addition, Williams Nkurunziza, Rwanda’s ambassador to the UK, confirmed that Karegeya was an “enemy of the state.” BBC News, “Rwanda Ambassador: Karegeya ‘was enemy of the state,’” 13 January 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25718785> (accessed 15 June 2015).
7. For a useful discussion of the various ways that researchers can seek to build trust with their research participants, see Julie Norman, “Got trust? The challenge of gaining access in conflict zones,” in C. Sriram, J. King, J. Mertus, O. Martin-Ortega and J. Herman (eds.) *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 71–90.
8. Ibreck, “The politics of mourning,” 333. Ibreck identifies the survivors’ organization Ibuka as one of the most powerful organizations involved in commemoration, but in discussing the tendency for these organizations to be dominated by male elites mentions the *Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo* (AVEGA Agahozo) and the *Association des Etudiants Et Éléves Rescapés Du Génocide* (AERG) as important exceptions to this statement.
9. For more on these survivor-led processes of exhumation, see Laura Major, “Unearthing, untangling and re-articulating genocide corpses in Rwanda,” *Critical African Studies* 7(2) (2015), 164–181.
10. Fieldnotes, 2008.
11. Interview with author, 2008. In the early days of the state-funded genocide memorials, survivors’ experiences of loss and suffering were often too raw for them to be able to spend substantial time at the state-funded genocide memorials, particularly as these sites were often initially left in the condition in which they had been found—with human remains, shrapnel scars on the floors, walls, and ceilings, and other evidence of the extreme violence that had overwhelmed the community clearly visible.

12. Fieldnotes, 2007 and 2008.
13. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki have previously used the term “professional survivor” to encapsulate Holocaust survivors, such as Elie Wiesel, who make a career out of their survival, as well as those who bear witness on a voluntary basis as representatives of their local Holocaust centers. They note “[p]rofessionalism in this context therefore does not refer to paid compensation, but rather to the commitment and dedication of these survivors to doing the hard work of sharing their narratives publicly.” Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Professionalizing Survival: The Politics of Public Memory Among Holocaust Survivors-Educators in Montreal,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 12(2) (2013), 211.
14. In speaking about the Rwandan monarchy, it was common for research participants to speak of “the king” as though the Nyiginya kingdom had been ruled by a single leader.
15. Interview with author, 2008.
16. Interview with author, 2008.
17. Interview with author, 2008.
18. Interview with author, 2008.
19. Interview with author, 2008.
20. Interview with author.
21. Serafina’s use of the term *inyenzi* in this instance may be somewhat inaccurate, as the term did not enter into common usage in Rwanda until the *inyenzi* incursions began following Rwandan independence in 1962. If her grandfather was killed in 1959, then it is entirely possible he was killed for being a monarchist, many of whom subsequently fought with the *inyenzi* following their flight from Rwanda surrounding the Hutu Revolution.
22. Jean-Baptiste Munyankore, cited in Jean Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Other Press, 2006), 65.
23. Interview with author, 2008.
24. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 39; and Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 18.
25. Interview with author, 2008.
26. Interview with author, 2008.
27. Interview with author, 2008.
28. Interview with author, 2008.
29. Interview with author, 2008.

30. This anti-Tutsi violence was serious enough to capture international attention, culminating in the publication of a handful of international reports that condemned the attacks. See for example, A. Lathan Koeing, "Attempted Genocide in Rwanda," *The World Today* 20(3) (March 1964): 97–100; and Aaron Segal, 'Massacre in Rwanda,' *Fabian Research Series* 240(23) (1964), <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/19491/oclc2218385.pdf;sequence=2> (accessed 15 November 2016).
31. Interview with author, 2008.
32. Interview with author, 2008.
33. Interview with author, 2008. As noted by Gérard Prunier, Habyarimana had several members of Kayibanda's inner circle arrested and eventually killed in order to eliminate the possibility of insurrection against his new regime. Kayibanda was gradually starved to death, while Habyarimana's Security Chief, Théoneste Lizinde, was allegedly responsible for the assassination of an additional 56 dignitaries. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 82.
34. Interview with author, 2008.
35. Interview with author, 2008.
36. The Habyarimana regime was regarded by international donors as a "development dictatorship" that prioritized increasing foreign aid, improved healthcare and education, and greater life expectancy among its civilians, while simultaneously limiting the civil liberties enjoyed by its citizens. For more information, see Marie-Eve Desrosiers and Susan Thomson, "Rhetorical legacies of leadership: Projections of benevolent leadership in pre- and post-genocide Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 49(3) (2011): 429–453; and Philip Verwimp, "Development ideology, the peasantry and genocide: Rwanda represented in Habyarimana's speeches," *Journal of Genocide Research* 2(3) (2000): 325–361.
37. Interview with author, 2008.
38. Interview with author, 2008.
39. Interview with author, 2008.
40. Interview with author, 2008.
41. Interview with author, 2008.
42. Interview with author, 2007.
43. Interview with author, 2008.
44. Interview with author, 2008.
45. For further information on the specific forms of gender-based violence endured by Tutsi women and its impact on Tutsi communities,

- see, for example, Erin Baines, "Body politics and the Rwanda crisis"; Christopher Taylor, "A gendered genocide"; and Lisa Sharlach, "Gender and genocide in Rwanda: Women as agents and objects of genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1(3) (1999): 387–399.
46. Interview with author, 2008.
 47. The mandate of Opération Turquoise included "contributing to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians in danger in Rwanda, by means including the establishment and maintenance, where possible, of safe humanitarian areas." United Nations, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the UN during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, UK: UWE. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/395/47/IMG/N9939547.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 1 June 2015).
 48. Interview with author, 2012.
 49. Interview with author, 2008.
 50. Interview with author, 2012.
 51. The required quorum for gacaca was 100 people. In many communities, district-level authorities, including police, would go door-to-door to ensure quorum was achieved, at times aggressively threatening civilians to ensure their attendance. For this reason, gacaca is regarded by many Rwandans, regardless of class or ethnicity, as a form of state-control that could cause great tension in their everyday lives. For more information, see Susan Thomson and Rosemary Nagy. "Law, Power, and Justice: What Legalism Fails to Address in the Functioning of Rwanda's Gacaca Courts." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5(1) (2011), 11–30.
 52. While I was unable to confirm my suspicions, I believe their actions resulted from a recent shift in the academic and NGO literature on gacaca. While the courts have been widely studied and in some cases celebrated as an innovative and potentially positive means of addressing a massive backlog in cases related to the 1994 genocide or promoting national unity and reconciliation at the local level, several more recent studies have highlighted gacaca's shortcomings, from the often oppressive measures used by district-level authorities to ensure quorum and the presence of specific survivors who can testify against accused génocidaires, to the institution's inability to provide the wider community with locally conceived justice. For examples of more positive accounts of gacaca, see Phil

Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice Without Lawyers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and Phil Clark, "Bringing the peasants back in, again: State power and local agency in Rwanda's *gacaca* courts," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8(2) (2014): 193–213; Peter Uvin and Charles Mironko, "Western and local approaches to justice in Rwanda," *Global Governance* 9 (2003): 219–231. For examples of more critical assessments of *gacaca*, see Ingelaere, "Does the truth pass across the fire without burning?"; Max Rettig, "The Sovu trials: The impact of genocide justice on one community," in *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence*, eds. S. Straus and L. Waldorf (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 194–209 and "Gacaca: Truth, justice and reconciliation in postconflict Rwanda?" *African Studies Review* 51(3) (2008): 25–50; and Thomson and Nagy, "Law, power, and justice." Former chief prosecutor, Gerald Gahima's recent book on Rwanda's transitional justice program offers a particularly valuable insider's account of the challenges that have surrounded *gacaca*. Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda*.

53. In testifying before *gacaca*, many survivors are caught between promoting government justice and testifying against accused génocidaires in a very public setting, making retaliation a distinct possibility. If survivors refuse to participate in *gacaca*, they risk being labeled a political subversive by district authorities on the grounds that they do not support national unity and reconciliation, for example. However, should they decide to testify, survivors often experience pressure from the family and friends of the accused to be silent. This pressure can escalate to physical violence and even retaliation killings. For more on the dangers faced by survivors who testify before *gacaca*, see Hirondele, "IBUKA report: 167 Genocide Survivors Murdered Since 1995," July 15, 2008 <http://www.hirondellenews.com/ictr-rwanda/412-rwanda-political-and-social-issues/17187-en-en-150708-rwandasurvivors-ibuka-report--167-genocide-survivors-murdered-since-199562386238> (accessed 18 February 2015); Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 170–173; and Daniel Sabiti, "IBUKA raises alarm over killing of survivors," *East African*, April 18, 2014 <http://relief-web.int/report/rwanda/ibuka-raises-alarm-over-killing-survivors> (accessed 16 February 2015).

54. The subject of taboo violence during the genocide is discussed in greater detail in my doctoral dissertation on genocidal symbolic violence and social death. Erin Jessee, "Inscribed Intent: Genocidal Symbolic Violence and Social Death in the Aftermath of the Rwandan and Bosnian Genocides." Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University, 2010.
55. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 44–45. For more information on gender norms affected Rwandan women, particularly prior to the genocide, see Villia Jefremovas, *Brickyards to Graveyards: From Production to Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: SUNY Press, 2012); and Villia Jefremovas, "Loose women, virtuous wives, and timid virgins: gender and the control of resources in Rwanda," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines* 25(3) (1991): 378–395.
56. To read more about the challenges faced by rural Rwandan women related to the RPF's current efforts to promote gender equality, see Marie Berry, "There is no hope to get a better life," *Foreign Policy*, 7 April 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/author/marie-berry/> (accessed 22 July 2015); Jennie Burnet, "Women have found respect: Gender quotas, symbolic representation and female empowerment in Rwanda," *Politics & Gender* 7(3) (2011): 303–334; Jennie Burnet, "Gender balance and the meanings of women in governance in post-genocide Rwanda," *African Affairs* 107(428) (2008): 361–386; and Susan Thomson, "Rwanda: Visible progress yet power is still a male preserve," *Chatham House: The World Today*, 1 April 2015, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/WT0215Thomson.pdf (accessed 22 July 2015).
57. Interview with author, 2012.
58. Interview with author, 2012.
59. Interview with author, 2008.
60. Vidal and Burnet have similarly critiqued nationalized commemoration in Rwanda for failing to distinguish between victims of the 1994 genocide and those who were killed by RPA troops surrounding this same period. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 127; and Vidal, "*La commémoration du génocide au Rwanda*."
61. Interview with author, 2008.
62. Interview with author, 2008.

Genocide Survivors: Complicating the Official Narrative

“Genocide is still in the people’s minds, and this will never change.”

—Venant

THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

Just as it took time to comprehend and navigate the unique social and political context in which the memorial staff were embedded, fieldwork among survivors required similar care and patience. Initially, I had perceived the memorials as a potential entry point in each community, anticipating that once I finished interviewing memorial staff at each site, they would then be able to help me recruit survivors from nearby areas. However, due to the complicated position occupied by memorial staff, and the fact that the surrounding communities had seen me doing fieldwork at the state-funded genocide memorials, memorial staff recommended that I find another way to gain access. While they were willing to provide names and facilitate introductions, they argued that survivors approached through the state-funded genocide memorials would likely assume that I was working for the government, rendering them suspicious and unwilling to speak freely. A safer option, according to my contacts at the memorials, would be to approach survivors through the various community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provided them with support, as these institutions were, generally speaking, seen as safe spaces for survivors to voice their

needs and concerns.¹ The vetting process that many of these organizations employed in deciding whether a researcher should be permitted access to their members, meanwhile, would help me demonstrate trustworthiness by Rwandan standards.²

As a result, I initially recruited survivors through a handful of CBOs and NGOs that were active around Rwanda, working with these organizations to identify and approach survivors in rural communities who might be willing to participate in my research project. As I established rapport with these initial participants, I then asked them to refer me to other Rwandans from their communities who might also be interested in being interviewed. Ultimately, this approach enabled me to recruit an additional 12 survivors of the genocide who were in no way affiliated with the state-funded genocide memorials. Their lived experiences of everyday life in Rwanda prior to, during, and after the genocide proved invaluable for introducing me to the politics of survival in post-genocide Rwanda, and further complicating the RPF's official narrative.

The politics of survival in post-genocide Rwanda emerge in large part from the fact that not all Rwandans who endured suffering and personal loss surrounding the genocide are permitted in the post-genocide period to publically identify as "survivors." In official parlance and public usage, this term is reserved for Rwandans of Tutsi heritage, whether born in Rwanda or elsewhere, whose loved ones, property, and livelihoods were destroyed during the genocide. As a result, the term has taken on political connotations that make many Rwandans uncomfortable for implying that only Tutsi were negatively affected by the violence of the genocide.

Further complicating the issue, those who can publically identify as survivors have access to a range of organizations and initiatives designed to ensure their well-being. For example, in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, government programs were established to settle widows and orphans of the genocide in villages so that women who lacked support in their old age could receive assistance from orphans who required adult care and supervision and had been disconnected from their families' patronage networks that, in times of peace, might have otherwise enabled them to pursue education, skills training, and gainful employment.³ In addition, the government created scholarship opportunities for youth survivors to pursue higher education.⁴

These official programs are complemented by a host of CBOs and NGOs with specific interests or concerns, such as providing skills training to young women who were raped during the genocide so that they can start their own

businesses as tailors, cooks, and artisans, for example.⁵ However, because so many of these opportunities were—or at least were perceived to be—offering support only to survivors, the majority of Rwandans were excluded, facilitating ethnic and political tensions among Rwandans that left many survivors feeling keenly vulnerable to unspoken animosities that they believed were directed at them by their former Hutu neighbors and compatriots.

Adding to the politics of survival in post-genocide Rwanda was the tendency of many genocide survivors to have internalized a host of apprehensions about the intentions of the RPF toward Rwanda's minority Tutsi population. While the RPF had created a range of programs aimed at improving survivors' post-genocide lives, many survivors perceived these programs as intended to make the government appear responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable cohort in Rwandan society without enabling meaningful positive changes in their lives. In particular, rural survivors often complained that the support they received from official sources was minimal and only made available to those Rwandans who had powerful patrons within the RPF or who were able to afford giving gifts to district-level authorities to be included in the more lucrative programs. In other instances, survivors argued that their needs were only addressed, and typically on a temporary basis, when foreign officials were visiting.

Perhaps due to this tense political climate, I quickly realized that many of the survivors who consented to participate in my project did so for a host of personal and political reasons. Much like the memorial staff I had interviewed previously, they typically demonstrated an only passing interest in Rwanda's distant past, but grew increasingly invested in their narratives as they approached events that they had experienced firsthand, and the post-genocide period in particular. And in crafting their life histories, they seemed to adhere to, complicate, or reject those elements of the RPF's official narrative that allowed them to present themselves and their ancestors in a more positive light, and highlight their status as innocent victims of genocide as well as post-genocide politics.

For this reason, I approached my survivor participants as complex political actors, a term that builds upon Erica Bouris' conceptualization of the complex political victim—"a victim who is no longer chained to characteristics of complete innocence and purity, but remains a victim nonetheless."⁶ This terminology is intended to highlight the victim's interests in the post-conflict period as he or she negotiates competing truth claims, mythico-histories, and understandings of justice, healing, and reconciliation, among other factors. Of particular importance, it is intended to recast the victim as an individual

who knowingly and purposefully supports certain discourses that contribute to the space of her political victimization. This is neither because she wants to be victimized, nor because she has “given up hope” and resorted to supporting these discourses because of a lack of better options, nor because she has made a “rational choice” to support this discourse. Rather, the complex political victim supports these propitious discourses because they construct her identity in other ways beyond the identity of a victim. Furthermore, these are identities that she values, and she does not want to be undone by the deconstruction of these propitious discourses.⁷

Admittedly, my decision to approach Rwandan genocide survivors as complex political actors may initially seem jarring to some readers on the grounds that using this framework fails to adequately respect the suffering endured by survivors during the genocide or risks placing them on the same moral ground as perpetrators. However, it is important to note that in the context of post-genocide Rwanda, many survivors disapprove of the term “victim” in reference to themselves, preferring instead to reserve it for those who were killed, disappeared, or harmed irreparably during genocide. Similarly, as part of their discussions of the genocide, many of the survivors I interviewed impressed upon me the importance of resisting the false dichotomy of victim/survivor and perpetrator/génocidaire promoted by the RPF, as it did not adequately represent their complex lived experiences, nor those of the Hutu majority whom they recognized were unfairly demonized as génocidaires in the post-genocide period. Many survivors highlighted the often choiceless decisions that they had to make in order to negotiate their survival, and offered examples of instances in which they—understandably given the circumstances—were forced by the Hutu Power extremists to commit crimes against their Tutsi compatriots as a means of demonstrating the allegedly duplicitous nature of the Tutsi or undermining the social vitality of Tutsi communities. They spoke of how Tutsi were forced to torture and murder, and commit incest or rape in exchange for a merciful death, a respectful burial or a guarantee of survival for themselves or someone they loved. Similarly common were the stories of the violence in which survivors made choiceless decisions to save themselves at the expense of loved ones. And of course, none of the survivors I interviewed could speak about their experiences of the genocide without acknowledging the small and large acts of kindness and rescue on the part of ordinary Hutu civilians—some of whom were, admittedly, simultaneously committing atrocities against other Tutsi—that had made their survival possible. In the post-genocide period, it has become difficult for survivors to speak openly about these complicated experiences, and

yet many are haunted by them, making it difficult for them to accept the survivor label, and the privileges, whether real or perceived, that are associated with it. For this reason, the complex political actor framework may actually better encapsulate their lived experiences and their diverse actions surrounding the genocide, compared to the politicized label of survivor, as evidenced in the survivors' discussions of Rwandan history that follow.

A BETTER TIME: PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL RWANDA

I was fortunate to recruit several elderly survivors from around Rwanda who could speak with authority about Rwanda's pre-colonial and colonial past by virtue of having inherited oral traditions from their parents and grandparents, and having experienced some of the colonial period firsthand. In most instances, these elders claimed to be descendants of prestigious clan lineages associated with the monarchy—most commonly, the Abanyiginya and Abega clans—perhaps explaining their tendency to reference the pre-colonial period as perfect or idyllic. As members of the Abanyiginya and Abega clans, their ancestors would have likely enjoyed heightened social status due to their close relationship with the royal court.

For example, as the daughter of a district chief, Colette came from a comparatively prestigious family that had a high standard of living demonstrated primarily through the large numbers of cattle her father had amassed. As a child, she recalled a peaceful existence: being female and from a good family, she busied herself with weaving mats and baskets, and preparing for marriage and raising children. Her father served as a local representative of the court, but to Colette's knowledge was perceived as a fair man. As a result, she claimed her family enjoyed "extremely good" relations with their neighbors. Her father acted as a patron for a number of Hutu families in the community, and while they were "servants," Colette remembered being instructed from the time when she was a young child to treat all of his clients like family.

For this reason, Colette believed most Hutu in her community regarded the monarchy and its representatives in positive terms. She was particularly positive in her recollections of King Rudahigwa, whom she described as a good man who wanted only good things for his people, and who would never have allowed ethnic discrimination and violence to divide his people. When asked if she had learned about or experienced any periods of tension under Rudahigwa's leadership, Colette's sole recollections related to a perhaps regionally specific practice of executing Rwandan women who became pregnant out of wedlock for having embarrassed their families and

endangered the spiritual well-being of the community.⁸ Colette was quick to note, however, that this was a practice maintained and carried out by communities independent of the monarchy.

Thierry, like Colette, had a close personal connection to the monarchy, claiming direct descent from the royal Abanyiginya clan. His family was active in the royal court, and Thierry had, as he reached adulthood, been summoned to meet King Rudahigwa in 1956 with the purpose of arranging a position for him at the court. Rudahigwa was, in Thierry's recollections, celebrated for being fair and democratic in his dealings with the Rwandan people, and included Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa among his dignitaries. He did not tolerate tensions among Rwandans, and indeed had promoted unity among Rwandans by abolishing *ubuhake* in order to promote social equality. For these reasons, Thierry argued that Rudahigwa was loved by all Rwandans, much like his royal predecessors. To his knowledge, it was only the *bazungu* (a Swahili term for people of European descent)—particularly the Belgians—who disliked the monarchy, and this resulted primarily from Musinga and Rudahigwa's refusal to allow them to destroy Rwanda.

Among these positive recollections, one elder's narrative stood out as offering a more complicated overview of life in Rwanda during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Venant was unusual among the elder survivors I interviewed in that he did not claim descent from one of Rwanda's royal or matridynastic clans. He spoke volumes about the amazing quality of life enjoyed by Rwandans in the pre-colonial and colonial period. He explained that Rwandans had been very close prior to the arrival of the colonists, and enjoyed a high degree of social mobility:

This country was a monarchy. Chiefs and sub-chiefs were Tutsi. Colonists accused the Tutsi of monopolizing power. In reality, people lived together peacefully. When you were a servant, you were respected by your boss. He would give you land, cows ... People lived in harmony. During the *ubuhake* system, people were happy ... Hutu could own cattle and get rich. On the other hand, Tutsi could lose both cattle and power and become poor.⁹

Yet scratching the surface of this assessment of the pre-colonial and colonial periods quickly revealed deeply entrenched structural inequalities between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa that called into question Venant's assertions that there were no tensions among Rwandans at this point in the nation's past. While it remains accurate that these tensions were not inherently ethnic in nature, Venant subsequently acknowledged that intermarriage between Hutu and

Tutsi was not common: “Tutsi were fewer than Hutu. Marriage tended to be arranged between families, who married among themselves. [The Tutsi] hoped to increase their numbers that way.”¹⁰ Venant’s explanation suggests social distinctions between these cohorts may have been more important than he had previously allowed, and substantial economic and social advancement was perhaps the only means for Hutu to transition to Tutsi.

Additional points of tension between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa became apparent in Venant’s discussion of colonialism. Venant consistently identified the Belgians as the source of these problems, but nonetheless, revealed a history of distinctions among Rwandans that indicate social and political inequalities did exist prior to the arrival of European colonizers. For example, Venant recalled:

There was no tension [in the pre-colonial period]. In fact, tension was imported by Belgians. They said that Tutsi had oppressed, exploited and impoverished the Hutu. In saying that, they sought to fight King Rudahigwa, who had given much power to the Hutu. There was a time when the Belgians attempted to divide the two groups based on the numbers of the cows one had. Hutu who owned many cattle were considered to be Tutsi.¹¹

When I asked how the Belgians turned people against the monarchy, Venant detailed various indigenous social practices that had been used by the Belgians to foment ethnic hatred among Rwandans. For example:

It was said that the Tutsi did not want to share a drink [with Hutu or Twa] in the same container or food in the same dish. The system was called *kunena*. I find it normal. How could a servant share a drink with the boss using the same calabash? During ceremonies, there was a drink container for the chiefs and one for the commoners. It was our custom. Tutsi did not share with Hutu, and Hutu did not share with Twa. Yet, all this was accepted by all the concerned. In fact, it was rare to see an adult eating...

It was just like that, and I do not know where it came from. For the Twa, one reason why they were despised by Tutsi and Hutu alike was that they ate mutton, a forbidden type of meat in our culture. Sheep skin was used to carry babies on women’s backs, so who ever ate mutton was despised. So Twa wouldn’t share a drink with neither Hutu nor Tutsi. Twa were also considered dirty, and lived in nest-like houses. The positive aspect associated with Twa was their artistic predisposition. They are naturally excellent dancers, and were part of the king’s warrior dancers (*intore*). Similarly, no Hutu or Tutsi would marry a Twa. That was our culture. However, there was a belief that having sex with a Twa woman could cure backache. Tutsi

and Hutu suffering from acute backache would find a Twa woman and sleep with her. And it seems they were cured. That's what I was told. The children born from this kind of encounter were called Abasyete and had a different morphology. They were Hutu-Twa or Tutsi-Twa half castes. You found most of them in the Nyanza region. Unfortunately, many of them were killed during the genocide.¹²

These practices were, in Venant's experience, interpreted by the Belgians as oppressive toward the Hutu majority, particularly in the lead-up to Rwandan independence. And while he did not deny that they were a part of everyday life in pre-colonial and colonial Rwandan society, Venant argued that they were misinterpreted by the Belgians to foment ethnic tension and violence, leading to the overthrow of the monarchy and the emergence of Hutu-dominated dictatorships—the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. They were indicative of a social and political hierarchy that, to outsiders, perhaps seemed extreme, but which to Rwandans seemed normal and, of greater importance, necessary to ensure the overall well-being of Rwandan society.

The narratives of these elders indicate that the Belgians are, as in the case of the RPF's official narrative, perceived as bearing primary responsibility for introducing ethnic tensions and political violence among Rwandans. And indeed, several survivors could draw upon firsthand experiences that supported this conclusion. As a student in the 1950s, Marguerite witnessed how these divisions and tensions were encouraged among Rwandans. She had vivid memories of European scientists visiting her school. They arrived with a range of equipment, and after separating the students according to their ethnicity, began recording measurements of the students' height, length of their arms and legs, shape of their noses, and size of their heads. She recalled:

I was in the 1st year of primary school when the teacher asked Tutsi children to stand up, and did the same with the Hutu thereafter. As I did not know to which group I belonged, I said "I'll ask my parents." Also, some white people would come to the school, take us to a room, ask us to take our clothes off, and start measuring all the parts of the body. This was around 1959. They would also weigh us.¹³

While she could not have realized it at the time, she later came to understand that these measurements would become the foundation for claims that the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were physically distinct ethnic groups, and that the Tutsi were descendants of the Ethiopians—claims that Hutu Power extremists would later use to give weight to the idea that the Tutsi were foreign invaders rather than indigenous Rwandans.¹⁴

For many survivors, divisive tactics of this nature were part of a broader strategy on the part of the Belgians, whom they believed purposefully manipulated ethnic and political tensions among Rwandans so people would turn against the monarchy. The resulting upheaval was designed to permit the Belgians to exercise greater political power in the region without having to first worry about gaining the monarchy's support for their policies, all under the guise of promoting democracy. Thus, for many survivors the period preceding Rwandan independence was recalled with strong anti-colonial sentiment, as well as frustration and sorrow at the irreparable destruction of what they remembered as having been a previously idyllic way of life.

Among those old enough to remember the latter years of Rwanda's colonial period, survivors consistently identified the late 1950s as the point where the "the good life" came to an end. With the rise of multiple political parties, several survivors witnessed the emergence of political rhetoric that directly targeted Rwanda's Tutsi minority as the primary cause of Hutu suffering. For Thierry, a defining moment was the 1957 publication of the so-called Hutu Manifesto, through which he claimed a select group of Hutu political elites promoted the violent overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy, and also incited violence against Tutsi more generally.¹⁵ Within months, anti-Tutsi violence overwhelmed his community, and Thierry was forced to flee to Burundi with his extended family where they stayed for several weeks until the violence abated.

Other survivors recalled steadily increasing tensions during this period, but did not experience actual physical violence in their communities until weeks leading up to the 1960 elections. Marguerite recalled that the violence in her community was preceded by political meetings during which Hutu political elites claimed that the Tutsi had a history of marginalizing and exploiting the Hutu. Venant had similar recollections of the period immediately preceding Rwandan independence. He characterized this period as the start of "the war" between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda—a war that would last until 1994. Jean-de-Dieu framed it similarly, noting that from the start of the Hutu Revolution in 1959 until the 1994 genocide, the Tutsi knew no peace in Rwanda.

NEITHER PEACE NOR WAR: LIFE UNDER KAYIBANDA AND HABYARIMANA

Survivor participants' experiences of Rwandan independence and the First and Second Hutu Republics were thus predominantly recalled with a sense of impending doom. Yvette associated Rwandan independence and

Kayibanda's rise to the presidency as "the death of democracy in Rwanda" because in her opinion, while the elections were democratic in design, in actual fact the results had been tampered with to provide Kayibanda's party with an undeniable majority.¹⁶ Indeed, many of the survivors I interviewed maintained similar perspectives: for example, Thierry marked Rwandan independence as the start of Tutsi subjugation following PARMEHUTU's theft of what he described as a clear win for the monarchists, while Venant noted that while PARMEHUTU was said to have won the elections, the only real victors were the Belgians. In what he referred to as the subsequent "war of independence," whereby PARMEHUTU and Kayibanda cleansed the nation of monarchists and other members of the political opposition in order to secure their claim to power, Venant recalled many Tutsi were killed, while others were forced to flee Rwanda. This violence, he argued, would not have been necessary had PARMEHUTU won the elections legitimately, nor would it have been possible had the Belgians not supported PARMEHUTU's alleged election victory and the purging of Rwanda's monarchists.

Of particular interest, however, is the fact that few of the survivors I interviewed had direct experiences of physical violence during this period. While Rwanda was undeniably rocked by political violence, and indeed many of the survivors I interviewed came from families with intimate and overt connections to the monarchy, most narratives included only generic accounts of the killing of cattle, destruction of property, seeking refuge in local churches, and, ultimately, the exile of political elites who had opposed PARMEHUTU. What emerged instead from their narratives—much like those of the memorial staff with whom I worked—were pervasive accounts of structural violence that invaded their everyday lives and which they associated very clearly with Kayibanda's leadership.

Thierry was particularly affected by the sudden shift in Rwanda's political climate following independence. With the help of a powerful family patron who sympathized with the monarchists, he was able to return to Rwanda in 1964 after finishing his education abroad and reclaim some of his family's property. He was shocked to find that most of the Tutsi families from his community had been forced to relocate to Bugesera, and their properties and possessions had been redistributed to Hutu who had been loyal to PARMEHUTU and who had no prior history in the community. His efforts to find family, friends, and associates who had been relocated met with official resistance in the form of travel permits that were difficult to acquire without bribes and unwanted attention from

district-level authorities charged with monitoring people's movements in their communities. As a Tutsi descendant from a powerful family with political connections to the monarchy, Thierry decided it was not worth the risk, and so over the next few years, he traveled only for official business reasons.

Venant reported similar difficulties in the early years of the Kayibanda regime, though in his case he understood travel permits and other limitations placed on Rwandans had been implemented for a very particular reason, namely, to limit the movements of individuals associated with the *inyenzi* incursions that started in 1963.

1963 was marked by the first incursion of Tutsi refugees that came to be called *inyenzi* (cockroaches), attempting a comeback. Incursions continued without real success, principally due to the Belgians' military assistance, providing troops and arms to assist the Rwandan army. Many people died during those incursions. There were barriers throughout the country. You needed a special pass to go from one place to another, from the cell level to the sector level, whether on foot or by car. To be caught without a pass could expose you to a death penalty as an *inyenzi*. When an *inyenzi* was caught, he was summarily executed. There were two types of passes: one for the traveller on foot, the other for the travellers by car. This system went on till 1973.¹⁷

Indeed, for many survivors, the first signs of physical violence in the post-independence period emerged, as it had in the narratives of memorial staff, following the *inyenzi* incursions. Marguerite referenced the "war in 1963" as a terrifying experience, during which Hutu from her community threw many Tutsi who had supported UNAR and those who were suspected of collaborating with the *inyenzi* in a nearby river, and forced Tutsi civilians to seek refuge in local churches until the violence ended.¹⁸ Venant also labeled this period as "war," but highlighted the secretive nature of much of the violence endured by the Tutsi:

In 1963, during the time of *inyenzi* incursions, the country was in a state of war. In places like Ruhengeri, the Belgians had forbidden public killings. So, they would secretly arrest people and assassinate them.¹⁹

For Colette, however, the violence was hardly secretive. Her first husband had been an outspoken supporter of UNAR in the years surrounding the elections, but despite frequent bouts of violence between UNAR

and PARMEHUTU, among other parties, he had always managed to stay safe. However, with the start of the *inyenzi* incursions, he was immediately identified as a political subversive, arrested, and executed. Fearing for her safety and that of their children, Colette fled with her surviving family to Uganda. Some months later, neighbors loyal to her family arranged for their return. However, upon returning she found that their home had been destroyed, their property had been redistributed to Hutu loyal to PARMEHUTU, and their cattle had been eaten.

In some regions, however, the everyday structural violence associated with Kayibanda's leadership settled down over time. For example, despite the horrific experiences Colette endured surrounding the *inyenzi* incursions in 1963, the community—the majority of whom were Hutu—rallied around her upon her return from Uganda. Because her family had been well liked in the community, their Hutu neighbors worked together to return her properties and provide her with cattle and other livestock to support her children, often at great personal cost. Over time, Colette settled back into her pre-war life and focused on raising her children. Her family gradually regained their comparatively high standard of living and maintained good relations with their Hutu neighbors, whom she saw as blameless in the violence that had led to her husband's murder.

Similarly, in eastern Rwanda, Marguerite found it was possible to have a good life under Kayibanda once the *inyenzi* incursions ceased. Her family's properties had been damaged and some of their cattle eaten, and there were definitely periods of fear related to *inyenzi* incursions that always resulted in arbitrary arrests of alleged *inyenzi* supporters. However, Marguerite recalled being surprised at how quickly life returned to normal after each incursion. Her family remained quite wealthy in relation to their neighbors, and yet they continued to enjoy good relations with the wider community, greeting each other in public, sharing drinks in local bars and at weddings, and otherwise interacting in a friendly and supportive manner.

Most survivors had similar recollections of enjoying a good life once the *inyenzi* incursions stopped. Thierry, for example, found himself primed—as a well-spoken, educated Rwandan with increasingly powerful contacts in the government—to pursue a career in law despite his Tutsi heritage and family connections to the monarchy. As a result, he was able to do exceptionally well within the ethnic quota system—a system that in his experience was more a matter of policy than practice. Particularly in the early years of the Kayibanda regime, he recalled, the government was

forced to rely extensively upon Tutsi officials trained during the colonial period to train the new generation of Hutu political elites. Assuming these Tutsi officials demonstrated absolute loyalty to Kayibanda, their Tutsi heritage was ignored, and they could use their status and connections to create opportunities for their families and friends regardless of the quota system.²⁰

This period of relative tranquillity associated with the latter years of the Kayibanda regime came to a sudden end with Habyarimana's coup in 1973. All of the survivor participants with whom I spoke associated the coup with a resurgence of fear associated with sporadic political and ethnic violence. In Marguerite's experience, this violence was largely limited to Gitarama where many of Kayibanda's supporters were arrested and imprisoned or killed. However, she also recalled that lists appeared in schools and government offices that named local Tutsi elites, and subsequently, some Tutsi men—most of whom were community leaders—were thrown in the Nyabarongo River. Tutsi women and children once again sought refuge in the local churches and were not harmed.²¹

This period of fear was short-lived, however, and once again many survivors recalled being able to settle into a relatively good life. This is not to say that Kayibanda's anti-Tutsi policies and other forms of structural violence did not continue under Habyarimana. Conversely, Thierry's experience suggests that Habyarimana took policies like the ethnic quotas more seriously, reporting that under Habyarimana he found it difficult for the first time in his life to find work precisely because the new government was not as open to working with Tutsi.²² However, other survivors reported improvements to their everyday quality of life under Habyarimana, particularly in the first five years of his regime. For example, Venant particularly appreciated that Rwandans under Habyarimana recovered their ability to travel within the country without permits.²³ Christophe, another elderly survivor, recalled that the early years of the Habyarimana regime were some of the best of his life.²⁴ While Tutsi were discouraged from attending schools or taking on positions of power within the government and the military, he felt there were far more positive collaborations between Hutu and Tutsi during this period, which he attributed to the fact that intermarriages became commonplace. Through intermarriage, Christophe claimed that many Tutsi women were able to help their families study to become professionals, and in this manner, attain a high standard of living.

Elderly survivors' perceptions of the early years of the Habyarimana regime as more positive than the Kayibanda regime may emerge in part

from the fact that as adults they were shielded from some of the regime's more ethnocentric and dangerous practices. Survivor participants who were educated in the early years of the Habyarimana regime often presented it in a different light, noting that it was in the schools that they first learned about their ethnicity, and always in a negative manner. For example, Innocent had vivid memories of learning about his ethnic heritage in primary school:

In grades 1 and 2 of primary, I was studying in Cyangugu and living at my grandmother's before I left to continue school in Butare. A teacher would come in class and ask all the Tutsi to raise our hands for recognition. We were also required to sit separately from other [Hutu] students, and would be seriously beaten in class if we did not. One day, the teacher mentioned that he/she [gender not specified] hated the Tutsi. This prompted other students make fun of us, and hate us too. I therefore went to study in Butare, and it seemed to be stable since they did not know us.²⁵

Clementine had similar memories of learning about her ethnicity as part of her education under the Habyarimana regime, though in her case, she had nowhere else to go.

I started being aware of it in standard one, when I went to school. The teachers would ask us to just 'put up your hand if you're a Tutsi' and that kind of stuff. But in standard three that's when we started taking pack lunches, and usually you don't eat alone. You're supposed to share. You bring pack lunch and share. And they [Hutu] refused to share with us [Tutsi]. So that's when I really noticed.²⁶

Due to experiences such as these, survivors who had been educated in the early years of the Habyarimana regime often claimed that ethnicity was important not only for determining the opportunities available to them, but also for shaping relationships among students. While none of the survivors I interviewed could recall teachers encouraging physical violence against Tutsi students in the early years of the Habyarimana regime, everyday structural violence was a common theme in their narratives.

UNHEEDED WARNINGS: THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

Regardless of age, all of the survivors I interviewed cited the start of the civil war in 1990 as the point when life became more difficult, particularly for those Tutsi with connections to diasporic Rwandans. Within days of

the RPA invasion in 1990, Colette's home was invaded by Rwandan soldiers searching for her son—a truck driver with rumored affiliations with the RPF who was at that time traveling regularly to Uganda. Unable to find her son, they arrested Colette instead and interrogated her about her son's whereabouts and political activities. She was detained illegally for several weeks along with a group of Tutsi men who were also suspected *ibytso* (accomplices of the enemy).²⁷ She was tortured on a daily basis, but because she was a woman she was held in a separate cell at night. The men with whom she was interred were held together, and many disappeared, she presumed murdered during interrogation sessions.

Colette was eventually released, having no valuable information for her captors. But before returning home she spent several weeks in the hospital recovering from her injuries. In the following months, she recalled that Rwandan police harassed her on a daily basis regarding her son's whereabouts. For this reason, as soon as Colette felt strong enough she fled Rwanda to escape further political persecution. In discussing this period in her life, Colette attributed blame not only to the increasingly radicalized Hutu Power political elites who were directly responsible for imprisoning and torturing her, but also to the RPF and the Belgian colonists, who she believed worked together to orchestrate the invasion that destabilized Rwanda so completely. She claimed Habyarimana and the Hutu people were innocent pawns in much of what followed, as she maintained most members of her community were supportive regardless of her ethnicity and alleged political affiliations.

Yvette had similar experiences with the start of the civil war in 1990, but unlike Colette, she was adamant that the RPF was to be blamed for triggering this political violence, though she did not see it this way at the time. She and several members of her extended family were avid supporters of the RPF, having joined the party in the lead-up to the civil war and secretly attended political meetings where they were educated about the necessity of overthrowing Habyarimana to rid Rwanda of political corruption and Tutsi oppression. However, they were not informed about the coming RPA invasion, and so were caught unaware when the invasion occurred. They were similarly unprepared when Rwandan soldiers began coming to people's homes to search for *ibytso* and interrogating Tutsi about their political loyalties.

In the following weeks, Yvette recalled that beatings and disappearances of Tutsi, particularly young, politically active men, became everyday occurrences in her community. Yet when they informed their RPF contacts of the escalating violence, they were given no support beyond the

suggestions that they could flee to the RPA-controlled zone—a significant journey that would mean leaving behind homes and families with no guarantee of safe passage as they traveled through communities in which they were unknown, and therefore at heightened risk of being perceived as *ibyitso*. The situation gradually improved as the initial RPA invasion was beaten back by the Rwandan Armed Forces (RAF), but then dramatically worsened again in 1992 when the RPF regrouped and launched a new phase of guerrilla warfare. As before, the RPF offered little support to the Rwanda-based Tutsi—even those who were supporting their war and who were in danger of being massacred by the rapidly growing Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi militias. Based on these experiences, Yvette concluded that the safety of Rwanda's Tutsi was not a priority for the RPF. The RPF was merely concerned with securing the rights of Tutsi exiles to return to Rwanda and overthrowing Habyarimana.

Other survivors drew similar conclusions as a result of the sudden escalation of anti-Tutsi sentiment that occurred following the RPA invasion. Jean-de-Dieu was imprisoned in 1991 for being an RPF spy, an allegation he strenuously denied. He was held for many months, during which he endured starvation, dehydration, daily beatings, and other forms of torture. Even so, he regarded himself as fortunate—many Tutsi men in his community had disappeared during this period after being imprisoned, forcibly recruited into the army, or sent away on an official errand, never to return. These atrocities were a regular part of everyday life during the civil war, and in his experience, few Tutsi men from his community were spared.

Marguerite's husband was also arrested and subjected to a range of human rights abuses after Rwandan soldiers invaded their home and found letters addressed to him from their extended family in Uganda. He too was eventually released, but Marguerite believed he was only permitted his freedom because the government had already decided to annihilate the Tutsi and knew he would be killed eventually. To this end, Marguerite recalled witnessing small-scale massacres of Tutsi community leaders in 1992 and 1993, during which there was little public outcry—actions she now understood were a means of testing public support for genocide and a sign of greater violence to come. However, at the time she believed these attacks were limited to select assassinations that were part of a war between the RPF and Habyarimana's increasingly extremist MRND.

Of particular interest, when discussing the escalating violence they endured during the civil war, survivors rarely mentioned Habyarimana and the MRND, nor did they condemn the actions of their Hutu neigh-

bors and compatriots. The violence was primarily presented as triggered by the RPA invasion, and perpetrated by Hutu elites in the military, police, and government in response to concerns that Rwanda's Tutsi minority population was secretly providing intelligence and support to RPA troops. When the actions of ordinary Hutu were mentioned, it was their silence that seemed important: they observed the escalating violence and participated indirectly by failing to defend their Tutsi compatriots, but were not directly responsible. However, several survivors simultaneously acknowledged that life during the civil war was also hard for the Hutu and that many of them lived in fear of being suspected as *ibyitso*, particularly after the Rwandan media began condemning Hutu moderates and those Hutu who had Tutsi spouses, friends and business associates.²⁸ Conversely, the RPF was often mentioned in the same context as Hutu political elites as having—perhaps knowingly—sacrificed Rwanda's Tutsi minority for their own political gain. This theme would continue in survivors' discussions of the genocide.

“THE MORE YOU SUFFERED, THE BETTER”: THE 1994 GENOCIDE

Despite escalating violence during the civil war period, the genocide caught most of the survivors I interviewed by surprise. In a nation where people, particularly in rural communities, rely heavily on local rumor mills for their knowledge of current events, the assassination of Habyarimana was unexpected and the violence that followed unparalleled in Rwandan history. As in the case of memorial staff, survivors' experiences of the genocide varied greatly by region. Venant was living in Kigali when Habyarimana's plane was shot down, and he considered himself to be one of the genocide's first victims, alongside other well-known political moderates. Early in the morning of 7 April 1994—a matter of hours after Habyarimana was confirmed dead—the Presidential Guard attacked Venant's home. Venant was taken outside with his family, shot in the chest, and left for dead. He later learned this attack was motivated by the fact that he and several members of his family were members of the *Parti Libéral* (PL), and therefore were perceived as a threat to the emerging interim government.²⁹ Venant survived the attack along with one of his children, but the rest of his immediate family were murdered. But because he was believed dead by his attackers, he and his child were able to survive the rest of the genocide by hiding in and around their home. The realization that their neighborhood

was full of roadblocks at which Tutsi were being killed convinced them that they would not survive long if they tried to flee, particularly if they were recognized or forced to show their identity cards.

Beyond Kigali, the genocide started more gradually. In eastern Rwanda, survivors recalled that the genocide started with Hutu extremists burning Tutsi houses and eating their cattle, as it typically did during previous periods of political and ethnic violence. Many Tutsi fled to the local churches where they were permitted to seek refuge—again, much as they had during previous periods of conflict. For example, Yvette’s family fled to their local church on 7 April after being warned by a neighbor that they were in immediate danger. As the surrounding violence steadily grew worse, they were joined by hundreds, if not thousands, of Tutsi civilians, and indeed with each new refugee arrival, the crowd of Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi militia outside the church seemed to grow as well. Yvette recalled that the Hutu Power extremists acted crazy and sang songs to terrify and demoralize the Tutsi. Finally, when it seemed all the surviving Tutsi from the surrounding community had gathered at the church, the Hutu extremists attacked. They entered the compound and began separating the Hutu who had Tutsi spouses and children from the Tutsi, and threatened to kill them if they refused to abandon their families. Only a handful of Hutu chose to leave the church. Yvette remembered that most Hutu refused to leave their families to be slaughtered, and as a result, they were executed with particular brutality that everyone present was forced to witness before the attackers began killing the Tutsi.

At this point, Yvette fled the church and found refuge in a nearby office. RAF soldiers quickly discovered her hiding place, and took her and a handful of other Tutsi women they had captured to their camp where they became *kubohoza* (sex slaves).³⁰ Following days of sexual assault and the gradual murder of many of the *kubohoza* with whom Yvette was being held, she eventually convinced a soldier she had known before the war to show her mercy, prompting him to take her as his “wife.” While this ensured Yvette’s protection from other soldiers, his treatment of her was far from kind, and she endured weeks of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse. She was finally rescued from captivity when her “husband” forced her to accompany him to Burundi ahead of the RPA advance. They were quickly stopped by RPA troops, who, upon suspecting that the soldier was holding Yvette against her will, shot her captor on the spot. The RPA soldiers then sent Yvette to an RPA camp where she received treatment for her injuries.

In Butare, meanwhile, Tutsi prefect Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana stalled the genocide for a couple of weeks by making it clear that he would hold his local burgomasters and sub-prefects directly responsible for any killings that might occur in the district.³¹ This act of resistance prevented the local population from participating in the violence that elsewhere was being initiated by the military and Presidential Guard lest they be held criminally accountable.³² As a result, Marguerite's community managed to avoid being swept up in the genocide until 22 April 1994—a day she remembered vividly. Early in the morning, a colleague came to her house, claiming she had just seen a list on which the names of Marguerite and her husband were included as priorities for murder. She gave Marguerite a key to her office and provided them with refuge for several weeks during which she brought them food, water, and other necessities to make them as comfortable as possible. Eventually, however, her colleague's coworkers began to ask questions about why the office was always locked and the curtains closed, raising concerns that she was hiding *inyenzi*. Shortly after, her colleague was interrogated and killed by members of the Interahamwe, and Marguerite and her family were forced to flee their hiding place.

They sought refuge in the bushes near their home for several days until an elderly neighbor found them and offered Marguerite shelter in her home. She took Marguerite's children to a local church that was caring for orphans of the violence. However, the sudden arrival of a group of Hutu refugees from RPA-controlled regions of Rwanda forced Marguerite and her husband to seek shelter elsewhere. Marguerite's husband left at this point to join the RPA, and she later learned Hutu extremists killed him before he made it to the front lines. Similarly, the orphanage where her children sought refuge was, just days before the RPA's arrival in the region, attacked by Interahamwe and the children were murdered without exception. In the space of a few weeks, Marguerite became the sole surviving member of her immediate family.

In western Rwanda, many survivors spoke of a similar pattern whereby the initial destruction of Tutsi property and possession suddenly became much more serious, involving systemic and organized massacres of Tutsi civilians of all ages. Agathe recalled that in the first days following President Habyarimana's death, Hutu and Tutsi civilians worked together to guard Tutsi homes and businesses from the Interahamwe and RAF soldiers, successfully minimizing the violence.³³ For this reason, Agathe initially felt extremely safe, and believed the violence would pass with little loss of life as it had during previous periods of political and ethnic tension. However,

a week later the Tutsi were told that the only way, going forward, for them to remain safe was to seek refuge in the local church. Agathe was unsure what caused the shift in her neighbors' attitudes; however, as in other regions of Rwanda, the Tutsi civilians here too were allowed to stay in the church only for a few days before being surrounded and attacked. The massacre continued for two days, with the attackers returning periodically to make sure there were no survivors. Agathe hid under the bodies of the victims until an RAF soldier found her and took her into his home, along with three other survivors. The soldier ultimately helped them escape to the DRC, providing them with food, money, and the necessary contacts to cross Lake Kivu safely. Agathe remembered little of this period, aside from being surrounded by Hutu civilians who, with the help of *Opération Turquoise* soldiers, were fleeing the RPA advance. Some of them she recognized as having committed heinous crimes against Tutsi during the genocide in her community, though at the time she said nothing because she felt it was unsafe to reveal her Tutsi heritage to the French soldiers or the other refugees. Too many Tutsi were still being attacked or had disappeared, despite the presence of the French peacekeepers.

In their narratives, many survivors expressed particular shock—over a decade after the genocide—at the brutal violence with which Tutsi women and children were attacked. Political and ethnic violence against Tutsi men was not uncommon throughout Rwanda's history, particularly if they were politically active or outspoken against the various regimes that had dominated Rwanda's recent past. Indeed, many of the Tutsi men I interviewed had narrowly survived attacks prior to the genocide, and seemed in a way resigned to the fact that as men they were particularly vulnerable to ethnic and political violence, however it might arise. But Tutsi women and children had always been spared from direct violence. Even during the worst periods of violence in Rwanda's past, women were rarely, if ever, harmed. The fact that Tutsi women and children had been attacked during the genocide was thus, according to survivors, one of the genocide's most distinguishing features, and a point of ongoing distress.

This distress largely emerged from the meaning attributed to the various forms of violence to which Tutsi women and children were subjected to during the genocide. Yvette, as a survivor of sexual slavery, had come to understand fairly well the purpose that attacks on Tutsi women and children was intended to serve. While detained in the RAF camp, she witnessed Tutsi women being raped and impaled as a means of punishing them for their beauty and proving that "they were nothing."³⁴ She

claimed the soldiers spoke openly about these things, and seemed to enjoy devising new strategies for torturing their captives. Similarly, the man who took her as his “wife” often abused her verbally, threatening her life constantly and insulting her for being a Tutsi who, before the genocide, saw herself as too good for him.

Pélagie interpreted the violence endured by Tutsi women and children similarly. As a healer, and therefore someone whose expertise was occasionally understood by her neighbors as emerging from her connection to mystical powers, she was spared during the genocide because the perpetrators feared being haunted by her angry spirit. However, she witnessed many atrocities in her community, including the evisceration of one of her pregnant patients—a Tutsi woman who prior to the genocide was regarded in the community as being too proud of her beauty. In this instance, Pélagie noted that this particular woman’s murder was inspired by the extreme hatred that many of the Hutu men in the community bore for her. However, she recalled that Hutu men talked about several local Tutsi women in this manner, and few of them were actually guilty of excessive pride or treating their Hutu compatriots as inferior. This reputation was simply attributed to them because they were beautiful and their Hutu suitors considered themselves unattractive, socially inferior, and thus unworthy of the women’s affections.³⁵ Pélagie concluded that such extreme forms of torture and murder were often the outcome of a hatred that was rarely justified, but intended to diminish the victims. Their attackers wanted to diminish Tutsi women they perceived to be superior to them, in particular by preventing them from fulfilling their duty of expanding their families. Such attacks also served the purpose of demoralizing other Tutsi in the community so that they would not resist their attackers and simply beg to be killed quickly.

However, it was not just Tutsi women and children who were occasionally subject to excessively brutal forms of torture and murder. In Colette’s community, several elderly Tutsi were subjected to similarly excessive forms of violence. Upon her return from Uganda, she learned that many of her Tutsi neighbors had died horribly, and their bodies placed on display in the community as a means of celebrating their deaths. Some of her elderly friends had been locked in a house with a starving dog and left to be torn to pieces—a key indication in her mind that Rwandan customs of respecting elders above all others were not upheld during the genocide. These stories led her to conclude that the Hutu extremists had one policy regarding the treatment of their Tutsi compatriots: “the more you suffered, the better.”

But just as survivors recounted stories of unspeakable atrocities, survivors also shared stories of rescue and kindness at the hands of ordinary Hutu, sometimes well-known neighbors and other times complete strangers acting out of a sense of shared humanity and a desire to resist, if only in small measure, the violence overwhelming their lives.³⁶ Marguerite, for example, was aided by two different Hutu civilians during the genocide—costing one her life—while Agathe was rescued by an RAF soldier.³⁷ Rosine's mother was warned by a Hutu neighbor two days after Habyarimana's death that their names were on a list of Tutsi who were going to be killed.³⁸ The neighbor's husband was a high-level member of the Interahamwe, and so while it was too dangerous for them to hide Rosine's mother, they agreed to hide Rosine. They encouraged Rosine's mother to visit each day so she could see her daughter and bring her food, an arrangement that continued for over a month until Rosine's mother was finally caught and murdered by Interahamwe. Soon after, the neighbor and her husband were forced to flee their home due to the arrival of RPA troops, and Rosine was taken to an RPA camp for survivors.

Clementine and her siblings, meanwhile, sought out the help of their neighbors after learning that two Tutsi civilians from their community had been murdered. Suspecting that the sudden violence surrounding them was different, they decided that the best way to ensure their survival was to split up.³⁹ Clementine was taken in by a Hutu man and his wife. The man kept track of her siblings, and over the next few weeks kept her informed of their whereabouts. As the violence escalated and people began searching the homes of suspected Tutsi sympathizers, he began bringing her news of her siblings' deaths. Gradually, he stopped because he feared the constant bad news was too much for her to bear.

However, it was not just Tutsi women who experienced rescue: Tutsi men often experienced acts of kindness and rescue as well. Interahamwe captured Thierry in the first days of the genocide due to an infected leg wound that prevented him from running. But rather than killing him, the Interahamwe decided that it would be a greater cruelty to let him die slowly. Thierry was subsequently found and taken in by a Hutu family who tended to his injuries and provided him with food and shelter, allowing him to share their home for the duration of the genocide.⁴⁰ Similarly, Maurice's neighbor warned him that the Interahamwe were coming to kill him, and provided him with money, food, and a contact that helped his family escape the country, saving their lives.⁴¹ Positive experiences of this nature prompted Maurice to argue that the experiences of Hutu peasants

should be included when discussing the victims of the genocide, on the grounds that they were manipulated and betrayed by their political elites and often suffered during and after the genocide alongside their Tutsi compatriots. While he knew many of his Hutu neighbors participated in the murder of Tutsi civilians, he did not believe that they did so willingly or because they had internalized a particular hatred of the Tutsi. Instead, he argued they participated because it was dangerous for them to refuse, particularly if they were helping to hide Tutsi friends and family from the Hutu extremists. He also argued that the few who participated in the violence willingly were motivated by greed and opportunism: faced with the reality of extreme poverty, he believed only a truly selfless person would be able to resist the possibility of gaining property or possessions that could dramatically improve their family's quality of life. He concluded that the Hutu were not inherently evil people, and often rescued some Tutsi even as they participated in the murders of others. However, while he advocated for leniency when dealing with the Hutu peasantry who had committed crimes during the genocide, he understood Hutu political elites functioned on an entirely different level and were the "real génocidaires." From Maurice's perspective, that so many of them had fled and escaped justice was a tragedy, particularly as the Hutu peasantry was being forced to accept responsibility in their absence.

"GENOCIDE IS STILL IN PEOPLE'S MINDS": EVERYDAY COMPROMISES IN THE POST-GENOCIDE PERIOD

This leads to the post-genocide period. As in the case of memorial staff, most survivors willingly expressed gratitude to the RPF for having stopped the genocide, even if they believed that the genocide would not have occurred had not the RPA invasion gradually radicalized Hutu political elites affiliated with the Habyarimana regime. For most of the survivors I interviewed, their experiences of the genocide ended when they were formally offered RPA protection by being taken to camps, provided with medical treatment, and given temporary housing. Yvette remembered this period of her life with mixed sentiments: she had been badly injured and faced substantial mental health challenges after having witnessed the murder of her extended family, yet she recalled "life in the RPF camp was good."⁴² In the camps, survivors spoke openly about what they had endured, and often supported each other to get tested for pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. She felt she had a reliable support network

and that her needs were addressed. Once she left the camp, this changed completely.

In particular, upon returning to her pre-genocide home, Yvette realized she could never speak openly again about having been taken as a sex slave as the few women who had admitted similar experiences were quickly ostracized by her community. These women were considered dangerous: in addition to having witnessed the criminal acts committed by many of their neighbors, they were willing to speak out about these atrocities, and the RPF was eager to arrest as many *génocidaires* as possible, regardless of the quality of the evidence that was brought against them. Some of these women were killed or disappeared, while others were forced into silence to avoid further endangering themselves and their families. Meanwhile, the surrounding community continued to talk about the atrocities these women endured, blaming them for having seduced their attackers and later misrepresented the nature of their relationships to send “innocent” Hutu men to prison. In Yvette’s experience, such attitudes made life very difficult for these women, and many remained unmarried and landless, unable to find work, and socially isolated from their surrounding communities, rendering them vulnerable to homelessness, prostitution, and suicide.

For these reasons, Yvette had little hope that Rwanda would ever reconcile in her lifetime. Yvette had ultimately done very well for herself in the post-genocide period, remarrying, working her way into a relatively lucrative position as a civil servant, and maintaining a local support network for genocide survivors. She was well-versed in the RPF’s policy of national unity and reconciliation, and while she agreed it was a necessity in the post-genocide period to at least try to undo the ethnic and political tensions that had made the genocide possible, she believed it was too one-sided. In her experience, it was always survivors offering forgiveness to *génocidaires*, often in the hopes of obtaining information about how their loved ones were murdered and where their bodies were buried. In exchange, the *génocidaires* offered only partial information and insincere confessions, which provided little solace to survivors and, in many instances, actually exacerbated tensions among Rwandans by promoting the perception that the *génocidaires* were trying to cause survivors pain in the post-genocide period.

Colette found it similarly difficult to forget or forgive in the aftermath of the genocide.⁴³ Having fled Rwanda before the genocide, she experienced survivor’s guilt, particularly when faced with the realities of the violence as endured by many of her Tutsi friends and family who had remained in

Rwanda. As a result, she took it upon herself to help survivors learn the fates of their missing and murdered loved ones—a task she saw as extremely important in order to help survivors achieve some degree of peace in the post-genocide period. She saw this as a spiritual calling of sorts, for while she had converted to Christianity several decades before, as an elder she understood that many Rwandans in her community believed they were being haunted by the angry spirits of their missing and murdered loved ones. These angry spirits could only be appeased, in Colette's experience, if surviving family found and reburied their remains according to family tradition.⁴⁴ However, most *génocidaires* were unwilling to tell survivors the whereabouts of their missing and murdered family members, she believed, because the *génocidaires* wanted the survivors to suffer. As a result, Colette believed the *génocidaires* were still influenced by genocide ideology and were more determined than ever to inflict suffering on the Tutsi.

Thierry exhibited similar animosity toward *génocidaires*. However, in the post-genocide period, Thierry had, for several years, provided legal advice to accused *génocidaires* who were about to be tried before *gacaca* so they would understand the process, what was expected of them, and what they could realistically expect in terms of a sentence. As a result, he had a more nuanced understanding of the challenging circumstances surrounding *génocidaires*' confessions. He encouraged *génocidaires* to confess completely to receive minimal sentences, but found that in nearly all cases, they were only willing to confess to what he characterized as "safe crimes" that carried lighter sentences.⁴⁵ The resulting confessions were often poorly received by the local survivor communities, resulting in lengthier sentences than necessary, and creating conflict between those who sought the release of the accused and those who wanted a full, remorseful confession and punishment.

However, Thierry's work in the prisons also frequently placed him in direct contact with individuals who had been falsely accused or had their crimes during the genocide exaggerated for personal or political reasons. In his experience, these alleged *génocidaires* suffered enormously in the Rwandan justice system, waiting years for a trial during which their accusers would argue that their unwillingness to confess was evidence that they still internalized genocide ideology. In the meantime, the social consequences of these false accusations were severe. Thierry spoke of several men who had been abandoned by their families, who cut ties in the hopes of avoiding further ostracization by their communities. He recounted other examples where men who had been falsely accused eventually decided to

confess to crimes they had not committed in the hopes of finally being released. This gaping flaw in the post-genocide transitional justice system, however, made it unlikely, in Thierry's opinion, that these *génocidaires* would ever be able to settle into their pre-genocide communities without harboring lingering animosities toward not only the individuals who had accused them, but also the survivors and the RPF, more generally.

For these reasons, many of the survivors I interviewed argued that it was only a matter of time before the *génocidaires* finished what they started during the genocide. In Venant's opinion, the RPF's efforts to promote development and national unity and reconciliation would benefit Rwandans only as long as the RPF remained unopposed.⁴⁶ While he recognized that the RPF was working hard to undo the ethnic and political divisions of the past, he nonetheless believed they had made too many mistakes, particularly in their dealings with the rural majority. As Tutsi returnees who had spent most, if not all, of their pre-genocide lives outside Rwanda, Venant argued the RPF did not understand the culture and history of Rwanda, or how closely their efforts to rule the nation as an authoritarian minority power mirrored the efforts of the regimes that had preceded them. Such problems might have been forgiven, or at least overlooked, had their efforts to promote development and progress within Rwanda not only benefited "foreign Tutsi" like themselves, at the expense of the peasant majority. But in Venant's experience, this was just the nature of government in Rwanda: each regime had privileged its favorites at the expense of the majority. But as a result, he concluded that "genocide is still in the people's minds, and this will never change."⁴⁷

NOTES

1. There are exceptions to this statement. For example, Ibuka, once predominantly survivor-led, has over the past few years increasingly been taken over by the government. In 2000, the organization was purged of those members who were critical of the RPF's increased politicization of the state-funded genocide memorials and overall treatment of survivors, effectively eliminating the primary mechanism survivors had for asserting their interests in the post-genocide period. The organization was given new, pro-RPF leadership and is now largely supportive of RPF. For more information, see Longman, "Limitations to political reform," 30–31. Similarly, the League for the Promotion and Defense of Human

Rights in Rwanda (LIPRODHOR)—a prominent Rwanda-based human rights organization that frequently and publically condemned the RPF's authoritarian practices—has endured several purges of its leadership since 2004. In 2004, Human Rights Watch reported that “[a]fter three days of debate, the Rwandan parliament on Wednesday asked the government to dissolve the League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights... and four other civil society organizations because they allegedly supported genocidal ideas. The action was recommended by a parliamentary commission that also called for the arrest of leaders of the organizations.” Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Government seeks to abolish rights group,” 2 July 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/07/02/rwanda-parliament-seeks-abolish-rights-group> (accessed 20 July 2015). Then in 2013, LIPRODHOR's leadership was ousted and replaced by individuals “believed to be favorable to the government.” Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Takeover of rights group,” 14 August 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/08/14/rwanda-takeover-rights-group> (accessed 20 July 2015).

2. This vetting process varied widely between organizations. In some instances, I was required to provide a letter of introduction, research proposal, copies of my permits, and letters of recommendation and proof of ethics approval from my home institution, and sent away for several days, if not weeks, while the organization administration deliberated. In other instances, a brief meeting was all that the organization required to decide whether or not to facilitate my research.
3. For example, the Rwandan government, alongside a range of international funders, contributed to the creation of AVEGA-Agahozo. Since 1995, this organization has engaged in many activities that support genocide widows and their dependents, most of whom are genocide orphans. Most notably, they have established medical centers around Rwanda that provide free testing and treatments to genocide survivors, and implemented a program that provided livestock to widows and youth-headed households so they could resist poverty. AVEGA-Agahozo, “Achievements of AVEGA, 1995–2010,” 2011. <http://survivors-fund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/AVEGA-Achievements-1995-2010.pdf> (accessed 8 August 2014). More recently, programs have been

established that address the needs of Rwanda's impoverished majority, more generally, such as *Girinka*—a one cow per family program implemented in 2006 to address poverty and child malnourishment. However, these programs are often overshadowed in public opinion by the plethora of opportunities allegedly available to genocide survivors specifically, and are fraught with allegations that even among genocide survivors an individual's ability to please powerful patrons determines whether they are able to access these funds. Burnet, *Genocide lives in us*, 158–159.

4. The Government Assistance Fund for Vulnerable Survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi (*Fonds d'assistance aux rescapés du génocide*—FARG) was established in 1998 to provide financial support, including scholarships, to survivors in the post-genocide period. For more information, see Republic of Rwanda, "Official Website of FARG." <http://www.farg.gov.rw/> (accessed 8 August 2014).
5. For example, Women for Women International runs a Women's Opportunity Centre in Rwanda that provides women, often genocide survivors, with training to help their families achieve financial security. For more information, see Women for Women International, "First-ever Women's Opportunity Centre in Rwanda," 31 May 2013, <http://www.womenforwomen.org/blog/first-ever-women%E2%80%99s-opportunity-center-rwanda> (accessed 22 July 2015).
6. Erica Bouris, *Complex Political Victims* (Sterling: Kumarian Press, 2010), 7.
7. *Ibid.*, 84.
8. Colette had, at different points in her youth, known young women who were executed after becoming pregnant out of wedlock in order to undo the embarrassment they caused their families and appease the gods, preventing gods from inflicting drought and other natural disasters upon the community. She claimed this practice was observed throughout Rwanda, and even attributed it as being responsible for origins of the Banyamulenge in the eastern provinces of the DRC, who, she claimed, were the descendants of Tutsi women who had been thrown in Lake Kivu to drown after having disgraced their families. These women were, in some instances according to the stories Colette heard, rescued by Congolese men and intermarried with their communities, allegedly sowing the foundations of the DRC's Banyamulenge communities. For more on the Banyamulenge in the DRC, see Stephen Jackson, "Sons of which soil? The language and politics of autochthony in Eastern

- D.R. Congo,” *African Studies Review* 49(2) (2006): 95–124; and Koen Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, identity formation and conflict in South Kivu: The case of the Banyamulenge,” *Review of African Political Economy* 29(93–94) (2002): 499–516.
9. Interview with author, 2008.
10. Interview with author, 2008.
11. Interview with author, 2008.
12. Interview with author, 2008. I will return to the subject of the discrimination faced by the Twa in Chapter 7, but in brief, Venant’s perspectives on the Twa are very much consistent with the kinds of prejudices documented by Christopher Taylor, for example. Christopher Taylor, “Mutton, Mud and Runny Noses: A Hierarchy of Distaste in Early Rwanda,” *Social Analysis* 49(2) (2005), 213–230.
13. Interview with author, 2008.
14. This practice of measuring Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa civilians to determine morphological interests related directly to the aforementioned Hamitic hypothesis. For more information on how this played out in the context of Rwanda, see Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 36–37; and Christopher Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (New York: Berg, 1999), 92.
15. The full title of the 1957 Hutu Manifesto (rendered in English) is “Note on the social aspect of the problem of indigenous race in Rwanda.” While it is consistently referenced in post-genocide society and the literature surrounding the Hutu Revolution as an example of anti-Tutsi propaganda, the document is actually relatively moderate, recognizing that poor Tutsi endure much of the same forms of social and political discrimination as the Hutu majority, and calling for power-sharing between the political elites and the general population that would facilitate the creation of programs aimed at improving the overall quality of life for the people. For more information, see Godefroid Sentama, Maximilien Niyonzima, Calliopé Mulindahabi, Joseph Sibomana, Louis Mbaraga, Grégoire Kayibanda, and Claver Ndahayo, “*Les manifestes des Bahutu: Note sur l’aspect social du problème racial indigène au Ruanda*,” 24 March 1957.
16. Interview with author, 2008. Sarah Watkins and I have previously written about the tendency for Rwandan returnees to portray the election as having been stolen from the monarchists, a mythico-history that was consistent among the narratives of many Rwanda-born survivors as well. Jessee and Watkins, “Good kings, bloody tyrants, and everything in between, 35–62.

17. Interview with author, 2008.
18. Interview with author, 2008.
19. Interview with author, 2008.
20. Susan Thomson has similarly argued that Kayibanda's ethnic quota system was "regularly bypassed as close-knit, intra-ethnic kin and local networks procured prominent positions in government and private sector employment for elite Tutsi. This was possible because colonial policy had limited access to formal education to Tutsi, which meant that few Hutu had the necessary skills to compete for these jobs." Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 70. See also C. Newbury, "Rwanda," 197; and Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda*, 501.
21. Interview with author, 2008.
22. Interview with author, 2008.
23. Interview with author, 2008.
24. Interview with author, 2008.
25. Interview with author, 2008.
26. Interview with author, 2008.
27. This term was used by Hutu extremists within the Habyarimana regime in reference to suspected RPF collaborators. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 8.
28. See for example, the Hutu Ten Commandments, which after casting Tutsi as spies bent on ethnic supremacy encouraged Hutu to cut ties with their Tutsi family, friends, and business partners, and explicitly states that "[a]ny Hutu who persecutes his brother for having read, disseminated and taught this ideology shall be deemed a traitor." Joseph Gitera, "Appeal to the conscience of the Hutu," *Kangura* 6 (1990), 5.
29. The interim government—led by President Théodore Sindikubwabo—would not formally take shape until 9 April 1994, following two days of deliberation by the *Comité de salut public* (Committee for Public Salvation) set up by two high-level Hutu Power extremists, Colonel Théoneste Bagosora and Colonel Pierre-Célestin Rwagafilita. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 232.
30. Des Forges defines this same term as "to help liberate" and applies it to the broader practice among MRND and CDR-affiliated Hutu extremists of kidnapping or threatening members of the political opposition during the civil war period. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 62.

31. Despite having the same Rwandan name, Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana was not a relation of President Juvénal Habyarimana. In Rwanda, children do not typically inherit their names from either parent, but rather are assigned a Rwandan name that conveys specific meaning related to significant life experiences of the parents, the circumstances under which the baby is born, or the parents' desires for the baby's future, for example. Julius Adekunle, *Culture and Customs of Rwanda* (Westport: Greenword Press, 2007), 102.
32. Alison Des Forges acknowledged the heroic efforts of Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana (documented in this instance as Habyalimana) and his eventual murder by Hutu Power extremists in her 1999 report, *Leave none to tell the story*. For more information, see Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 432–453.
33. Interview with author, 2012.
34. Interview with author, 2008.
35. Christopher Taylor has drawn similar conclusions, arguing that Rwandan “politics of beauty” informed much of the violence enacted by Hutu extremists against Tutsi women during the genocide. Drawing upon Liisa Malkki's work among Hutu refugees in Tanzania following the 1972 genocide in Burundi, he argues that Hutu men internalized two mythico-histories derived from the Hamitic hypothesis that led them to internalize a deep resentment toward Tutsi women. The first is the mythico-history of “beautiful Tutsi women as bait into servitude,” and the second is the mythico-history of “the death trap of Tutsi women's beauty.” For more information, see Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, 170; and Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 82–86.
36. For more on rescuers during the genocide, see Jefremovas, “Acts of human kindness,” 28–31; Waldorf, “Revisiting Hotel Rwanda,” 101–125; and Conway, “Righteous Hutus,” 217–223.
37. Interviews with author, 2008.
38. Interview with author, 2012.
39. Interview with author, 2012.
40. Interview with author, 2008.
41. Interview with author, 2008.
42. Interview with author, 2008.
43. Interview with author, 2008.

44. For more on the negative impact that angry spirits of the anonymous victims of the genocide can have on communities, see Jessee, "Promoting reconciliation through exhuming and identifying victims in the 1994 Rwandan genocide," 1–24.
45. Interview with author, 2008.
46. Interview with author, 2008.
47. Interview with author, 2008.

Convicted Génocidaires: Keepers of “Bad History”

“All Hutu want all Tutsi dead. There is no exception. This is the Hutu sin, and it persists within Hutu even today.”

—Maxime

THE POLITICS OF PERPETRATION IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

As indicated in Chapter 1, I interspersed my interviews with memorial staff and survivors with fieldwork at five Rwandan prisons so I could interview convicted génocidaires. I sought out génocidaires’ perspectives for two reasons. First, it seemed unethical to place the “narrative burden” of giving testimony related to the genocide solely on survivors and bystanders, many of whom face significant mental and physical health challenges in the post-genocide period that might be exacerbated by spending long periods talking about their experiences.¹ This is not to say that génocidaires had been spared similar mental and physical health challenges—indeed, many of the génocidaires I interviewed exhibited anxiety, paranoia, and emotional distress, and admitted suffering from nightmares and other potential symptoms of trauma in discussing the genocide and their subsequent imprisonment, suggesting they too had been deeply and negatively affected by the violence they had enacted in the post-genocide period.² However, it is arguably more ethical for perpetrators to share the narrative burden of speaking about the genocide with survivors, bystanders, and

other parties to the conflict wherever it is possible to gain access to their accounts. Second, I recognized that it is important to consider the experiences of *génocidaires* in conversation with the experiences of survivors to gain insight into how the genocide and Rwandan history more generally are interpreted by different parties to the conflict in the post-genocide period. This is particularly relevant as survivors and bystanders may not fully comprehend the various factors that motivated perpetrators' actions surrounding periods of genocide, for example, or may not have been party to intimate details regarding the planning and inciting of genocide in their communities.

To gain access to convicted *génocidaires*, I applied to Rwanda's Ministry of Internal Security (MININTER) for a permit to conduct research in the prisons—a process that was made mercifully straightforward due to my research assistant's contacts in the government. My credentials were thoroughly checked, but the officials involved were not openly concerned about my project. My research interests were not at odds with the RPF's official narrative, and as a graduate student, I was typically regarded by government officials as malleable—a perception I encouraged by practicing full transparency regarding my research interests and inviting my government gatekeepers to provide feedback on any elements of my proposal or sample questionnaires that they thought might create problems.³ A letter of support from my advisor and a certificate of ethics approval from my university further satisfied the authorities that I had the necessary credentials and qualifications to conduct research in an ethical and appropriate manner.

Once I had access to the prisons, however, convincing *génocidaires* to speak openly about their experiences was a challenge for several reasons. First, because I had acquired a formal permit to conduct interviews in the prisons, potential participants immediately knew that my project had the approval of the government and therefore assumed it was unlikely to be challenging the official narrative or questioning those policies that were negatively impacting their lives. As such, the *génocidaires* I approached typically assumed that my research was biased in favor of the government, and so could be of no use to them, or for the plight of the Hutu people under RPF rule, more generally. It took time to convince them that I was interested in looking at Rwanda's history from a variety of perspectives, and to demonstrate that I would not divulge to officials experiences or opinions that opposed the RPF's official history, creating problems for the prisoners.

This assumption led to a second important challenge: the terms of my institutional ethics approval meant that I was not permitted to compensate

participants in any way. This meant they received no financial compensation for their time, and as part of establishing informed consent in my work with génocidaires, I was required to make it clear that I was in no position to interfere with criminal proceedings. This latter requirement meant I was limited to interviewing génocidaires who had already been tried, sentenced, and completed the appeal process to avoid placing myself in the potential ethical quandary of being called upon—either by participants or by the Rwandan government—to give testimony related to any criminal acts discussed within the interviews. But the process of having to explain in detail the various ways that my research would be of no benefit to them was awkward and did little to help me build positive rapport with génocidaires. I felt at times it also made me look naïve in the eyes of the génocidaires I approached, who often expressed amusement at my efforts to explain their “rights” within the project. As the interviews were taking place in a prison amid an authoritarian post-genocide context that was widely believed to engage in near-constant surveillance of its citizens, we all knew I had little ability to ensure these rights were respected. If, for example, government or prison officials had wanted to know who I was interviewing or what prisoners were telling me, it would have been easy enough to place surveillance in or around the rooms in which I was conducting the interviews. This realization meant there was little I could ultimately do to protect participants’ confidentiality beyond trusting in the various prison administrators’ claims that they would respect the project’s need for privacy. This ethical challenge existed beyond Rwanda’s prisons as well, but seems far more pressing in my work with génocidaires due to the necessity of conducting interviews in the prisons.

Among the 27 génocidaires who nonetheless consented to be interviewed, a pattern quickly emerged. For some, and in particular among the eight women génocidaires I interviewed, the opportunity of having a rare break from the monotony of prison life was a significant motivator to participate in the research project. For example, Annalise—a young woman from Gitarama who was in prison for informing on Tutsi during the genocide—noted with excitement that our first meeting in a small building just beyond the inner gates of the prison was her first glimpse of the “outside world” since she had been arrested 12 years ago.⁴ She expressed little interest in talking about her experiences of Rwandan history, nor did she seem to have an ulterior motive in speaking about her experiences surrounding the genocide. In our time together, she narrated her life history only partially, focusing almost exclusively on the domestic violence she

suffered at the hands of her husband prior to the genocide. The story she ultimately narrated, however—while crucial for helping me understand a rarely discussed aspect of many rural Rwandan women’s lived experiences with domestic violence—seemed at times secondary to her primary aim: to catch, through the questions she posed to me surrounding the interview, a glimpse of what Rwanda had become in the years since her arrest.

Other *génocidaires* consented to participate in this research project because they wanted to inculcate me, in the process of sharing their life histories, with their particular political agendas. Most commonly, the *génocidaires* who consented to be interviewed seemed determined to cast themselves as victims in the post-genocide period, claims which they reinforced by referencing previous periods in Rwanda’s past when the Hutu were allegedly oppressed by the Tutsi, in keeping with the pre-genocide official narratives promoted under Kayibanda and Habyarimana, as well as instances when they too were targeted by the Hutu Power extremists or RPA troops during the genocide.⁵ Thus, I approached these *génocidaires* the same way I had approached the survivors I had interviewed—as complex political actors whose crimes during the genocide, while reprehensible, were nonetheless often the product of a series of unenviable circumstances and choiceless decisions. In this instance, this term builds not only upon the previously discussed work of Erica Bouris, but also Erin Baines’ 2009 article on complex political perpetrators in northern Uganda. Drawing upon knowledge of and interactions with Dominic Ongwen—a young man who had been abducted as a child into the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), only to later be indicted by the ICC for the crimes against humanity and war crimes he perpetrated as commander of the movement’s Sinai Brigade. Baines argues that Ongwen’s crimes, while grave, must be simultaneously understood as the actions of an individual who is very much a victim of the political landscape in northern Uganda. While he committed numerous atrocities, he was abducted as a child and forced to adapt to the hostile culture of the LRA in order to survive. The choiceless nature of his actions, therefore, must be taken into account to make sense of the atrocities he perpetrated and determine an appropriate sentence. Baines’ introduction of the “complex political perpetrator” allows for a more nuanced understanding of Rwandan *génocidaires’* actions and experiences surrounding the genocide, though again it is important to acknowledge that it is not without limitations. As “unloved” participants—individuals who are immersed in events or subject matter marked by conflict or controversy, and from whom others often actively seek to distance themselves due to the morally reprehensible nature of their actions—many readers may resist the idea

of using the same theoretical starting point to understand how Rwandan survivors and perpetrators make sense of their actions surrounding the genocide on the grounds that it risks minimizing the perpetrators' criminal actions and making their alleged suffering and claims to victim, rescuer and other problematic identities morally equivalent to what "real" genocide victims and survivors have been forced to endure.⁷ However, as will become clear from the narratives that follow, many of the génocidaires whom I interviewed clearly resisted categorization solely as génocidaires, and in their narratives discussed the complex range of actions in which they had engaged during the genocide that included not only their crimes, but acts of resistance and rescue as well. Likewise, they highlighted the various ways in which they could simultaneously claim space as victims of political manipulation and coercion by Hutu Power extremists, and by the RPF. Taken together, these narratives necessitate a theoretical framework that facilitates consideration of the full range of actions in which génocidaires engaged surrounding the genocide, not just their crimes.⁶

While this approach made it easier on a theoretical level to approach my work in the Rwandan prisons, in practice it did little to appease my uneasiness when the subject of conversation turned to the excessive violence inflicted upon unarmed civilians during the genocide, for example, or the deeply entrenched, but often historically implausible, beliefs internalized by many génocidaires regarding the pervasive suffering the Hutu people had allegedly endured at the hands of the Tutsi throughout Rwanda's colonial and pre-colonial past. As a result, I frequently struggled to maintain professional composure in these interviews, leading me to constantly question the quality of the research I was conducting and the relevance of applying qualitative methods—particularly life history and thematic interviews—to studies of recent mass atrocities.⁷

Nonetheless, several important patterns emerged from my interviews with convicted génocidaires. First, as a result of having spent several years incarcerated in Rwandan prisons, génocidaires seemed well-versed in the RPF's official narrative, and in early interviews adhered closely to it. Several of them had taken part in *ingando* during their incarceration aimed at educating them in the "correct version" of Rwandan history—the RPF's official narrative—and to help minimize the genocide ideology they had allegedly internalized under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. And until the génocidaire participants I interviewed felt comfortable speaking to me about their lived experiences, they typically adhered to the RPF's official narrative. For many of them, this was a crucial survival strategy and point of hope in their lives. By demonstrating that they were

accepting of the RPF's official narrative and remorseful about the crimes they committed against their Tutsi compatriots, there was a small chance that one day they might be among the thousands of convicted génocidaires who were granted early release from prison.⁸

However, over time, most génocidaires increasingly strayed from the RPF's official narrative, revealing points of tension between the re-education they had received in the prisons and their lived experiences of Rwanda's recent past. As in the case of the memorial staff and rural survivors I interviewed, these points of tension affected every period of Rwanda's history, from the pre-colonial period to the present. Over time, it became clear that while the génocidaires I interviewed had listened carefully to the re-education they received, they nonetheless privileged their lived experiences, inherited memories, and the official narratives promoted under Kayibanda and Habyarimana when making sense of Rwanda's past and present. Unfortunately, the narratives they produced provide undeniable evidence of a powerful reservoir of political tension directed primarily at the RPF, but at times extending to Rwanda's minority Tutsi population, which was perceived by many génocidaires—at times inaccurately—as benefitting from the RPF's oppressive treatment of the Hutu majority.⁹ Thus, while tensions were apparent along ethnic lines, they were largely rooted in post-genocide Rwanda's particular political climate.

Finally, in discussing the crimes they had perpetrated against civilians during the genocide, génocidaires spoke in general terms, preferring instead to focus on the ways in which the Tutsi had harmed the Hutu throughout Rwanda's history. In instances where they did discuss the violence inflicted on the Tutsi during the genocide, they cast themselves as bystanders and witnesses to these atrocities rather than active participants. There are many reasons why génocidaires may have constructed their narratives in this manner. It allowed them to avoid casting themselves in a negative light by acknowledging their direct criminal responsibility for these crimes, while lending credibility to their claims of victimization. It was also perhaps a means of maintaining psychic composure, by omitting any direct role they may have played in particularly graphic forms of torture and murder. However, another likely possibility is that this pattern emerged from the tendency, during the genocide, for many perpetrators to act in groups, particularly when killing, so that it was not easy to determine who had struck the lethal blow. Regardless of its underlying reasons, this tendency among génocidaires to narrate the genocide as though they were passive observers of the more graphic acts of violence was particularly true of the women I interviewed in the prisons. In particular, rural women

génocidaires often claimed that due to Rwandan gender norms they were subject to added social and legal stigmatization if they admitted to torturing or killing Tutsi. As a result, they rarely confessed to criminal acts more serious than looting or informing.¹⁰

THE ENSLAVEMENT OF THE HUTU MASSES: PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL RWANDA

With a few notable exceptions, the génocidaires I interviewed fit within a particular cohort of middle-aged adults from rural communities who had moderate levels of education.¹¹ As such, they often had a particular understanding of Rwanda’s pre-colonial and colonial past that came not from personal lived experiences and close associations with families connected to the monarchy, as in the case of many survivor participants, but from narratives inherited from elderly family members descended from less notable, predominantly Hutu peasant clan lineages and, to a lesser extent, from the history curricula taught under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. As a result, their depictions of the Tutsi monarchy and daily life under its leadership were very different from both the RPF’s official narrative and the narratives of survivors and memorial staff. Whereas these other sources on Rwanda’s pre-colonial and colonial period were predominantly positive, génocidaires’ narratives were dominated by accounts of structural inequalities and the exploitation of the Hutu masses by Tutsi political elites—a situation they frequently characterized as slavery.

For example, when asked to describe what life had been like under the monarchy, Gabriel—a cell-level official who led the genocide in his community—replied that he knew from his parents and grandparents that the Tutsi had behaved badly toward the Hutu.¹² Some of the problems were subtle and deeply engrained in everyday social norms, such as Tutsi refusing to greet Hutu publicly or to permit Hutu to marry their daughters because the Hutu were perceived as inferior. However, other problems were more visible. Gabriel recalled the widespread practices of *ubuhake* and *ubureetwa*, both of which he described as initiated by Tutsi to force Hutu into servitude for access to cattle or land for farming. Such perceptions led him to conclude that the Hutu were little better than slaves to the Tutsi. Annalise understood the pre-colonial period similarly, comparing the Tutsi kings to rich presidents who gave people cattle to ensure their loyalty.¹³ Under *ubuhake*, as she recalled the practice, the Hutu suffered and were practically slaves, while the Tutsi, and later the European colonists, profited.

Michel had particularly strong opinions about ubuhake, noting that the Tutsi monarchy used it to enslave the Hutu.¹⁴ According to Michel, any Tutsi man, regardless of his relationship to the Tutsi monarchs, was able to subjugate the Hutu in his community by using his wealth in cattle to bind them to his will. By giving a Hutu neighbor a cow, the Tutsi patron ensured that in the future he would be able to call upon that Hutu to give him a share of his crops, cattle, or any other wealth he might acquire, as well as labor. Thus, the Tutsi became increasingly wealthy without having to do hard, manual labor and without having to contaminate themselves by doing work deemed socially inferior. To add insult to injury, Michel believed that ubuhake allowed the Tutsi to spread rumors that the Hutu were poorly mannered, stupid, and unattractive—justifying their oppression by the Tutsi. Michel argued this prejudice emerged from the fact that hard, forced manual labor necessitated by ubuhake gave the Hutu few opportunities to better themselves, while the Tutsi were free to pursue education, eat well, and avoid activities that might cause their bodies to degrade more rapidly, such as intense manual labor.

Gérard—an older man who had helped orchestrate and perpetrate a large-scale massacre of Tutsi at the church in his community—initially claimed that relations between Hutu and Tutsi prior to the arrival of the German and Belgian colonists had been peaceful, and that ethnic tensions only emerged once the *bazungu* arrived and decided to use the Tutsi minority to dominate the Hutu majority.¹⁵ In later interviews, however, Gérard provided lengthy summaries of the horrors endured by the Hutu people, and the clever political strategies the Tutsi used to keep the Hutu from achieving their potential—all of which were devised, to his knowledge, prior to the arrival of the colonists. Gérard depicted the pre-colonial Tutsi monarchy as a superstitious and dysfunctional form of governance in which a mwami was never safe—particularly from his children and power-hungry court notables. He described an alleged pre-colonial practice according to which the mwami's eldest son's feet would be measured in secret by members of the royal court. As soon as the son's feet had reached the same size as his father's, the father would be poisoned and his more malleable son became the new mwami.¹⁶ According to Gérard, this practice prompted abami to send their sons off to war, exile them, or have them murdered as they neared adulthood to avoid competition. Aspiring Queen Mothers, meanwhile, conspired to prevent the deaths of their sons by hiding the evidence of their sons' increasing maturity until the abami could be assassinated.

Conversely Philippe, whose narrative I discuss at the beginning of Chapter 1, preferred to focus on the Tutsi royalty's behavior toward their subjects. He was an incredible source of information because he had undertaken training to become a teacher during the latter years of the Habyarimana regime, making him an expert on the official narratives that had dominated Rwanda at a point where concentrated efforts were being made by extremists within the Habyarimana regime to radicalize the Hutu majority. Philippe, like many of the génocidaires I interviewed, interpreted the period prior to the Hutu Revolution as a time of oppression for the Hutu majority, who were kept in ignorance, poverty, and slavery by the Tutsi. But it was the Tutsi royalty that he criticized most harshly, arguing that they went out of their way to oppress the Hutu. He claimed one unnamed Queen Mother used to keep Hutu babies around her wherever she sat, stabbing them with a sword that she used to support her weight when she stood. Philippe also claimed that the abami exploited Hutu by forcing them to pay exorbitant taxes on their beer, crops, and livestock. The punishment for failing to pay these taxes was exile or death. Then, when the abami died, their Hutu servants would be killed and buried with them so they could continue to serve them in the afterlife.

Génocidaires frequently cited such stories when trying to explain the oppression endured by their ancestors under Tutsi rule. For example, Martin—a government official who participated in several massacres during the genocide—narrated a similar story to Philippe, despite coming from a different part of the country and being interred in a different prison.¹⁷ When asked about the monarchy, Martin responded that the abami were evil. As evidence of this, he told me a similar story about the Queen Mother who would offer Hutu children milk in order to trick them into trusting her. Once she had gained their trust and they had come closer, she then stabbed the children with a sword in order to support herself as she stood. Sosthene repeated variations on this story as well in the context of explaining why he—previously a farmer with little to no interest in politics or history—had ultimately decided to kill Tutsi during the genocide.¹⁸ He recalled that the leaders in his community had recited this story to convince the local Hutu to join in the violence in the first days of the genocide, arguing their help was necessary to prevent the Tutsi from once again enslaving and abusing the Hutu majority.

Following the murder of his father by RPA soldiers, Michel—an older man who prior to the genocide had worked as a salesman—had volunteered to help kill Tutsi at the roadblocks in his community during the

genocide. Yet when I asked why he had decided to participate in the massacre of his Tutsi neighbors, he cited not only the murder of his father, but the threat of allowing Rwanda to fall once again into the hands of the Tutsi. Growing up, he—like Gabriel, Gérard, Martin, and Philippe—had heard stories from his family about the human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by the Tutsi monarchs against their Hutu subjects.¹⁹ In particular, he had been horrified by the mwami's practice of standing by planting his spear in the bodies of his Hutu servants for support or decorating the drum Kalinga with the testicles of Hutu men who displeased him.²⁰

According to the génocidaire with whom I worked, life during the pre-colonial period was difficult even for those Hutu who had no direct dealings with the Tutsi monarchy. Philippe was adamant that the corruption and oppression that made life for the Hutu people so difficult started with the monarchy, but due to the intricate web of chiefs and sub-chiefs who exercised the king's power across Rwanda—all of whom, Philippe claimed, were also Tutsi—social injustice toward the Hutu was everywhere.²¹ The chiefs and sub-chiefs were responsible for ensuring that the Hutu people remained uneducated and impoverished by collecting taxes and claiming the best of everything—from crop yields to livestock to property—in the name of the mwami. Those who resisted could be exiled or put to death for failing to recognize the court's authority. As a result, Philippe believed that the Hutu people had been forced to work themselves nearly to death to meet their Tutsi leaders' unreasonable demands.

In this manner, it became clear that many of the convicted génocidaires I interviewed had internalized a range of stories that demonized the Tutsi monarchy for enslaving the Hutu masses and subjecting them to a range of human rights violations. Yet in explaining why these stories affected them so intimately, motivating them to torture and murder their Tutsi compatriots in 1994, génocidaires often cited the fact that the Tutsi refused to acknowledge what they had done. Maxime was particularly outspoken on this point, noting that many of the tensions between Hutu and Tutsi could be undone if the Tutsi would simply acknowledge "the truth" about Rwanda's past: that the Tutsi had enslaved and oppressed the Hutu.²² Instead, the Tutsi had, throughout Rwanda's past, refused to acknowledge the oppression endured by the Hutu compatriots, which, in turn, made the Hutu hate them. Even Rwanda's colonizers were better in Maxime's opinion, as they had recognized their error in supporting the Tutsi monarchy and eventually shifted their allegiances to facilitate Rwandan democracy and independence. The Tutsi, however, continued to act as though the pre-colonial period had been a utopia in which all

Rwandans lived as equals. This misrepresentation, in Maxime’s mind, was inexcusable.

With so much emphasis placed on the failings of the Tutsi monarchy and the Tutsi people, more broadly, the génocidaires I interviewed had little to say—positive or negative—about Rwanda’s colonizers. Compared to the official narrative promoted by the RPF and the survivors’ narratives I encountered, génocidaires were relatively silent about the role played by German and Belgian colonists in shaping Rwandan history. This may have been due in part to the fact that it was difficult for the génocidaires to determine the extent to which certain oppressive policies were initiated by German or Belgian colonial administrators, or the predominantly Tutsi officials through whom they implemented policies. As descendants of peasant Hutu, the génocidaires and their families would have been largely excluded from much of the decision-making that took place during the nation’s colonial period, meaning the colonizers’ roles in shaping Rwanda might not have been immediately apparent to them. Tutsi elites—as representatives of the monarchy and later an integral part of the different colonial administrations—were simply more visible in everyday life prior to the Hutu Revolution.

Another possible explanation is that the génocidaires I interviewed did not perceive the German and Belgian colonizers as a negative presence in Rwanda, as maintained by the official narrative promoted by the RPF. After all, the colonists brought with them the missionaries who would eventually educate the Hutu masses as part of their larger efforts to win converts to Roman Catholicism. According to Octave Ugirashebuja, only after King Rudahigwa was baptized in 1943 did large numbers of Rwandan civilians formally convert, and in the early years of the Church of Rwanda, the missionaries were content to work within the existing social hierarchy, privileging Tutsi at the expense of the Hutu.²³ However, beginning in 1955, four factors led to a dramatic shift in the status quo. First, a large number of Flemish administrators and missionaries arrived in Rwanda who recognized similarities between the Tutsi domination of Rwandan politics and the domination of Belgian politics by the French-speaking Walloons—a minority population—following Belgium’s independence in 1830. Second, the Roman Catholic Church, as a whole, was becoming more sensitive to certain forms of social injustice, and as such was taking a more active role in politics in different colonial contexts. Third, in an effort to minimize the power of the Belgian colonists in Rwanda, the monarchy had begun advocating for immediate independence. And fourth, in 1957 a small community of Hutu intellectuals—among them Kayibanda—published “The Bahutu Manifesto,” a now infamous document that called for

democratic reform and equal opportunities for the Hutu majority.²⁴ Upon realizing that the emerging class of Hutu elites was not calling for independence, but merely democratic reform and an end to Hutu oppression, the colonial administration and the church shifted their support to the Hutu majority, and allowed for the creation of political parties so that the Hutu masses could achieve their political goals. From that point forward, the Belgian colonists and missionaries became far more visible in daily life in Rwanda as supporters of the Hutu majority.

A final factor contributing to the absence of commentary on Rwanda's colonizers may be that in the aftermath of the Hutu Revolution, the newly emerged Hutu political elites actively revised Rwandan history to allow them to take credit for delivering the Hutu masses from slavery and oppression. By writing the Belgian colonists out of Rwanda's recent history, the Hutu political elites behind Rwanda's first political parties could be portrayed as having been entirely responsible for wresting power away from the Tutsi minority. Among *génocidaires*, this revised version of history may have been perceived as more empowering than the RPF's preferred alternative, which portrays the Hutu Revolution as the product of Belgian efforts to maintain political clout in Rwanda.

“A HAPPY LIFE”: LIFE UNDER KAYIBANDA AND HABYARIMANA

With the Hutu Revolution of 1959, the narratives of the *génocidaires* I interviewed frequently shifted from stories of abuse and slavery to stories of hope and emancipation. I met few *génocidaires* who were old enough to have experienced the revolution, and among younger *génocidaires*, most had learned about this event in school or from their parents and grandparents. Their thoughts on the Hutu Revolution were usually positive—at least as far as the political momentum leading up to Rwandan independence was concerned. For example, Alexandre remembered the Hutu Revolution as a period of endless possibilities for the Rwandan people.²⁵ In his experience, those Tutsi who supported democracy and Rwandan independence were not harmed, while supporters of the monarchy were persecuted but not killed. Indeed, during the violence, Alexandre's brother had made his home a place of refuge for Tutsi monarchists, and helped those who ultimately could not safely remain in Rwanda escape to Burundi and Tanzania. But the transition to an independent Rwanda, from Alexandre's perspective, was worth any momentary discomfort or unrest that the Rwandan people had experienced.

Gérard interpreted the Hutu Revolution similarly—as supported by all Rwandans who believed in democracy.²⁶ However, he acknowledged that those Tutsi who were unwilling to accept the decline of the monarchy—in his recollection, a small percentage of Rwandan Tutsi—were in danger. Cecile—a young woman who was in prison for informing on Tutsi who had hidden on her property—had learned from her parents that Rwandans largely supported the Hutu Revolution because it ended Hutu oppression and slavery.²⁷ The general consensus among génocidaires was that during the Hutu Revolution only those who desired the continued enslavement of the Hutu people—an alleged tendency among Tutsi monarchists affiliated with UNAR—were harmed or forced to leave the country. From the perspective of the génocidaires I interviewed, the revolution was overwhelmingly positive, as the only people who were directly harmed were the ones who would have fought against the Hutu majority to ensure the ongoing supremacy of the Tutsi minority.

Following the Hutu Revolution, the Kayibanda regime had ample opportunity to rewrite Rwanda's history to align with their new vision for the country. As president of Rwanda's first democratically elected government, Kayibanda was uniquely positioned to repair the social injustices endured by Hutu in the colonial and pre-colonial periods. And according to the génocidaires with whom I spoke, he was largely successful in this endeavor, transforming Rwanda from a colonized country divided by ethnicity and disproportionate wealth and opportunity to an independent nation characterized by a high standard of living, ample access to education and job opportunities, and good relations among neighbors, regardless of ethnicity. As a result, the génocidaires I interviewed had little negative to say about Kayibanda. For example, when reflecting upon life under Kayibanda's leadership, Alexandre recalled that this was the start of a peaceful time in Rwanda.²⁸ He had good relations with his neighbors, and negative aspects of Rwanda's past were only discussed in history class where it belonged. Had it not been for the *inyenzi* incursions, through which Rwanda's exiled monarchists sought to destabilize the Kayibanda regime, Alexandre believed life would have been perfect.

Cecile had similarly positive memories of this period in her life.²⁹ In her community, Kayibanda's leadership ushered in a period of remarkable solidarity among Rwandans. This was interrupted only by occasional periods of violence in the early 1960s that were provoked by the *inyenzi* trying to destabilize Rwanda. During these upheavals, Cecile remembered that people became fearful and burned the houses of those Tutsi neighbors who were rumored to be collaborating with the *inyenzi*, but no one in

her community died. Likewise, H       argued that the decade following Rwanda's independence was the happiest period of her life.³⁰ Her family were very poor subsistence farmers, but they had hope for the future that their lives would improve. As for ethnicity, H       claimed that under Kayibanda the only people who ever talked about who was Hutu and who was Tutsi were old women who had nothing better to do with their time.

The only g           I spoke with who criticized Kayibanda was G      , who as a former civil servant prided himself on having an intimate understanding of Rwanda's political history.³¹ According to G      , while Kayibanda enabled a positive shift away from the oppressive policies of the Tutsi monarchy, he was ultimately a poor leader who made a series of fatal errors that ultimately cost him the presidency. He argued that upon coming to power, Kayibanda promptly destroyed the multi-party system created by the Hutu people in an effort to minimize political opposition and secure his regime. Once this had been accomplished, Kayibanda became increasingly corrupt, giving the best opportunities to those Hutu who came from his home community in southern Rwanda. Then, as his corruption became increasingly visible to the Rwanda people, Kayibanda tried to distract the Rwandan people with the *inyenzi* incursions, a tactic that G       believed exposed his weaknesses and gave his enemies a foundation from which to launch attacks on his leadership.

In comparison, G       argued that Habyarimana won the popular support of Hutu moderates and Tutsi alike by speaking out against Kayibanda's discriminatory treatment of Rwanda's Tutsi, and publically criticizing Kayibanda for his open favoritism toward the southern Hutu. In doing so, Habyarimana won such widespread public support for the 1973 coup d'       that his assassination of Kayibanda and his political supporters occurred with little complaint. To this end, many of the g           I interviewed recalled Habyarimana's time in power as a harmonious period in Rwanda's history, at least until the start of the civil war in 1990. Devota described the early years of the Habyarimana regime as a beautiful and peaceful time for Rwandans.³² Her family were poor farmers, but she remembered that in difficult times they could always rely on their neighbors, regardless of ethnicity. Furthermore, Devota claimed that with Habyarimana in power, she never felt unsafe. In her opinion, under Habyarimana the only people who had any reason to be concerned were those "bad Christians" who refused to respect the law, as they were punished harshly for their crimes.

Philippe remembered this period similarly, commenting that Hutu and Tutsi at this time "understood each other" and lived together in peace.³³ He recalled that ethnicity was only discussed in history class or in private

among family, and that under Habyarimana it was a person's actions that determined their worth, not their ethnicity. Philippe believed this explained why someone like him had been able to thrive. Even though his parents were poor farmers with little education or wealth at their disposal, Philippe had completed primary and secondary school, and trained as a teacher, which in turn granted him a higher income and better job security than he could have ever hoped to enjoy as a farmer.

Philippe's narrative speaks to a possible reason why the majority of the convicted génocidaires with whom I worked had such an overwhelmingly favorable opinion of Habyarimana's early years in power: namely, Habyarimana's support for the advancement of the Hutu people without openly relying on anti-Tutsi rhetoric, at least in the early years of his presidency.³⁴ The Tutsi likely endured certain structural inequalities—as they had under Kayibanda—because of the ethnic quotas that restricted their access to education and jobs. But few génocidaires perceived the ethnic quotas as negatively impacting the Tutsi's quality of life because, from their perspective, their Tutsi neighbors' standards of living under the quota system were no worse than their own. Tutsi were free to farm and raise cattle, and, over time, were subjected to less anti-Tutsi rhetoric and violence. Several génocidaires cited the growing practice of intermarriage during this period as a sign of the improved relations between Hutu and Tutsi, and indeed several of the men—particularly those in positions of relative power in their communities—claimed to have been happily married to Tutsi women before the genocide.³⁵ As a result, the génocidaires perceived the Habyarimana regime as more benevolent than the regimes that had preceded it.

To this end, many génocidaires claimed that the vehement accusations levied by the RPF's official narrative against Habyarimana were not founded in historical fact or Rwandans' lived experiences. Instead they claimed that those who criticized Habyarimana's leadership—particularly in the early years—were simply trying to undermine the validity of Hutu leadership, more generally. For example, Alexandre attributed the negative impression of Habyarimana that was now popular in Rwanda to RPF propaganda, which sought to convince the Rwandan people and the international community that Hutu politicians were corrupt and incapable of running the country in order to justify the Tutsi-dominated RPF's leadership.³⁶ And while Alexandre conceded that this was arguably true of Kayibanda, whose poor leadership and corruption were thoroughly documented even before he was overthrown, he maintained that Habyarimana did not deserve this reputation. Indeed, many génocidaires argued that Habyarimana was presented unfairly in the RPF's official narrative.

“HUTU, BE VIGILANT; TUTSI, BE DOCILE”:
THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

Given their positive recollections of the Habyarimana regime, it is unsurprising that convicted *génocidaires* largely blamed the RPF for invading Rwanda and triggering a civil war that not only ended a period of relative peace and stability, but also gradually fomented the waves of anti-Tutsi sentiment that later overwhelmed Rwanda in 1994. For many, the invasion marked the point where they first began to feel unsafe—anxiety that was fed by their lived experiences and the firsthand accounts of refugees who had escaped the atrocities being perpetrated by RPA soldiers against Hutu civilians in northern Rwanda.³⁷ According to the *génocidaires* with whom I worked, they rarely felt their fears were exacerbated by the RTLM broadcasts and other extremist media often cited in the academic and official Rwandan literature as important for prompting the Rwandan masses to kill their Tutsi compatriots. Rather, they cited the conversations they had in local bars with friends, family, and local political elites, as well as refugees of the civil war, as key factors in convincing them that the RPF represented a significant threat to Rwanda’s long-term political security.³⁸

When asked about the first signs of ethnic tension in their communities, the *génocidaires* I interviewed often responded by telling me about the first days of the civil war, when rumors became rampant that the Hutu-owned bars were poisoning Tutsi customers and Tutsi-owned bars were poisoning Hutu customers. Philippe recalled that within days of the RPF invasion, the bars in his community segregated according to ethnicity, with Hutu-owned bars only serving Hutu and Tutsi-owned bars only serving Tutsi.³⁹ He claimed that if an unknown person went into the wrong bar, they would be attacked for spying or trying to poison the patrons. In the absence of interethnic socialization, the Hutu-owned bars became important public spaces in which Hutu Power extremists were free to speak openly about their political opinions and ambitions, and recruit young Hutu civilians to their cause, which over time shifted from defeating the RPF to annihilating the Tutsi people as a whole. It was in the Hutu-owned bars that Philippe first heard the mantra “Hutu, be vigilant; Tutsi, be docile” being chanted.⁴⁰ He recalled the Tutsi-owned bars in his community fell subject to suspicion, as the Tutsi who gathered there were assumed to be organizing politically and militarily in support of the RPF.

Sosthène—an older man who had confessed to participating in the murder of Tutsi in his community—had similar recollections. Local representa-

tives of the MRND, and later the CDR, spent a lot of time in the Hutu bars in his community, where they tried to convince patrons that the civil war would reach everywhere, placing all Hutu at risk of torture, murder, and, ultimately, enslavement by the RPF. As part of their efforts, these politicians told Sosthene and his friends that their Tutsi neighbors were preparing to betray them to the RPF. Under the circumstances, Sosthene felt he was “almost forced” to join the MRND if he wanted to survive.⁴¹ Roger—a young man at the start of the civil war—claimed he first learned about his Hutu ethnicity upon being evicted from a Tutsi bar in 1991 just after the renewed RPF invasion under Kagame.⁴² Prior to this point, he recalled, ethnicity had been totally unimportant in his community, but with the renewed invasion, bars and businesses segregated so that people could stay safe.

For other génocidaires—particularly those who were active members of the MRND during the civil war—local political meetings were another key means of mobilizing people against the RPF and the Tutsi minority that were allegedly supporting their invasion. For example, Alexandre—already a community and religious leader prior to the start of the civil war—recalled that political meetings were held around Rwanda to educate MRND members about the dangers facing them following the RPF invasion.⁴³ At the meetings he attended, civilians were told that the RPF was determined to take power in Rwanda by force to “restore the kingdom.”⁴⁴ People were warned that the RPF had already won the support of the international community, which would give them the political and military strength to succeed in their goal. If they were successful, the Hutu would become slaves again as they had been prior to the Hutu Revolution. One often repeated phrase that Alexandre remembered being used by MRND leaders to frighten people was “Tutsi will be carried on the backs of Hutu.”⁴⁵ The MRND leaders encouraged people to spread the word in their communities, and to resist the RPF invasion by any means available to them. Members were also encouraged to keep watch in their communities and report suspicious behavior.

Alexandre believed these scare tactics were ultimately very successful as in the next few months, he claimed over 8000 alleged *inkotanyi* (an alternative name for RPA soldiers) were arrested and imprisoned in the greater Kigali area alone. The conditions in the prisons were awful: the inkotanyi were kept in small containers and, in the rare instances they were given food and water, were forced to eat and drink from their shoes. These tactics were, to Alexandre’s knowledge, intended to kill the inkotanyi slowly via intimidation and demoralization so that “they started wishing to die.”⁴⁶

He claimed he realized very quickly that many of the Tutsi civilians who were being tortured in this manner were likely innocent, yet Alexandre decided to remain loyal to the MRND rather than protest their inhumane treatment. As the civil war progressed and the anti-Tutsi rhetoric became more pronounced in everyday life, he began to fear that he and his family would become vulnerable to attack if they failed to demonstrate absolute loyalty to the MRND. He, like many mid-level MRND officials, was married to a Tutsi woman and believed that his influential position within the MRND was the only way he could ensure his family's safety.

Thus, the RPF, and more specifically, the RPA advance, was experienced as a significant threat by many convicted génocidaires, the majority of whom claimed they decided to formally join or at least publicly support the MRND in the early years of the civil war in direct response to the military and political advances and rumored violent excesses of the RPA. As the RPA fought their way south toward Kigali, Hutu refugees fled, bringing with them stories of the mass human rights abuses they had suffered in the hands of the RPA soldiers. Some participants had experienced these atrocities firsthand. For example, Michel claimed the RPA soldiers had killed his father without provocation after one of his Tutsi neighbors told the RPA soldiers that an Interahamwe leader owned their house.⁴⁷ To Michel's knowledge, his father had moderate views on Rwandan politics, and was open-minded enough about ethnicity to marry Michel's mother, who was a Tutsi. These circumstances made it highly unlikely that his father would have had anything to do with the Interahamwe, leaving Michel to conclude that a vindictive neighbor had invented these allegations to orchestrate his father's murder. Regardless, RPA soldiers arrested Michel's father in his home, along with several members of his extended family and friends who had sought refuge there, and executed his father in public without trial.

Michel claimed he did not have a strong ethnic identity prior to the start of the civil war, nor did he have strong feelings about the RPF. However, following his father's murder, Michel weighed his options as a young man of mixed ethnicity who had seen firsthand what an RPF victory would mean for the Rwandan people, and decided to join the MRND. In the early days of the civil war, his involvement with the MRND meant attending political meetings and participating in training sessions so he could defend his community against the RPA. As time progressed, Michel agreed to serve as a night guard whose responsibilities included defending the community and informing local politicians of new arrivals or suspicious

activities on the part of his Tutsi neighbors. In hindsight, Michel realized that the local politicians were priming him to participate in the eventual massacre of the Tutsi in his community, including his own mother and her extended family. But at the time he claimed he believed he was doing what he could to protect his family.⁴⁸

Martin was similarly led astray by local political leaders following the start of the civil war. As a civil servant, he was present at meetings where plans for the desensitization and mobilization of the local Hutu population were discussed at length. Martin recalled that these efforts began soon after the start of the civil war, at which point he and his colleagues were ordered to draw up a list of the Tutsi in the community. In the following weeks, several of these people were accused of spying for the RPF, and arrested and tortured for information about the RPA's plans. And while some of these alleged spies were eventually released, they were monitored throughout the civil war and publically harassed for being RPF collaborators. Martin believed these acts of aggression were intended to inspire fear and suspicion within the community, and gradually attune people to the violence to come. At the time, Martin agreed with the harsh treatment of these Tutsi because he genuinely believed they were collaborating with the RPF. In hindsight, he felt ashamed that he had allowed these Tutsi to be harmed because his complicity in their incarceration and torture had desensitized him to the anti-Tutsi violence to come. His willingness to condemn his Tutsi neighbors without evidence of their crimes allowed him to rise quickly in the ranks of the local MRND, such that he was eventually called upon to arrange not only the occasional harassment, imprisonment, and torture of suspected inkotanyi, but also public beatings of those Hutu political moderates who spoke against the growing tide of anti-Tutsi sentiment.

"WE DIDN'T CARE FOR ANYTHING": THE 1994 GENOCIDE

Despite the gradual escalation of anti-Tutsi rhetoric and violence that most génocidaire participants had experienced, however, they unanimously claimed that the genocide was completely unexpected. For those génocidaires who were based in Kigali, the violence started immediately following the announcement that Habyarimana had died with the murder of Hutu and Tutsi political moderates, and quickly shifted to the wholesale massacre of Tutsi civilians. In more rural communities, however, the genocide took days and sometimes weeks to begin and was arguably more selective.

While some *génocidaires* may have willingly taken up arms against their Tutsi compatriots, most claimed they were coerced by Hutu Power political elites to participate, to which they agreed out of fear that they would be killed if they refused. Their survival, they claimed, was entirely conditional upon their ability to present themselves as “good Hutu,”—by which they meant Hutu who were firmly and publically opposed to the RPF and their Tutsi supporters, and loyal to the Hutu Power movement.

Following President Habyarimana’s assassination, Martin claimed he was reluctant to support the killing of the local Tutsi population because both he and his sister were married to Tutsi who were not guilty of collaborating with the RPF.⁴⁹ He claimed he even briefly considered fleeing Rwanda with his family. However, Martin decided it would be more dangerous to try to pass through the roadblocks, which as they moved further from their home would be controlled by strangers with whom he might not be able to use reason or bribes to negotiate their safe passage. By remaining, however, Martin became complicit in a host of crimes for which he had been gradually, emotionally and mentally primed to perpetrate. Two weeks after Habyarimana’s assassination, Martin was called upon by his superiors to arrange the massacre of Tutsi of all ages, genders, and political affiliation in his community, an order with which he complied immediately lest his name be added to the list of victims. In doing so, Martin was forced to abandon his wife to the Hutu extremists, and later, at the insistence of his superiors, murder his brother-in-law. Once he had been forced to commit murder, Martin felt there was no longer any reason to resist the violence around him. From that point forward, Martin regularly accompanied the local Hutu Power extremists when they went hunting for Tutsi, though he insisted he did not commit any more murders, at least on an individual level.

Martin’s insistence that he was not guilty of murdering other Tutsi in his community led me to probe the subject of individual responsibility during the genocide. While many of the *génocidaires* I interviewed were serving lengthy sentences for having participated in massacres or having killed Tutsi civilians during the genocide, few of them confessed to having committed individual murders, despite having often been found guilty of killing large numbers of Tutsi. This realization exposed a common practice during the genocide, whereby groups of Hutu worked together to hunt and kill their Tutsi compatriots in order to avoid spiritual contamination and criminal accountability.⁵⁰ Many convicted *génocidaires* referenced an important Rwandan taboo that maintains that blood spilled in violence or “bad death” can inflict extreme mental or physical illness upon the

perpetrator and anyone else who comes in contact with it. In order to avoid this contamination, most génocidaires expressed a strong preference for attacking in groups to minimize the risk of contamination. And in instances where génocidaires had been unable to avoid direct killing, they often complained that the blood of their victims was chasing them in the post-genocide period.⁵¹ Philippe, Sosthene, and Martin claimed to be suffering from nightmares, mood swings that made them act irrationally and paranoid, among other psychological symptoms that they attributed to having come in direct contact with the blood of their victims.⁵² Martin was particularly outspoken about his suffering, concluding that "he will never have peace because he has touched blood."⁵³

As a result, I began asking the convicted génocidaires I interviewed to tell me about the attacks they had observed in their communities, rather than those attacks in which they had directly caused a person's death. Only then did the resulting narratives reveal more accurate numbers of victims whose deaths they had contributed to. For example, Martin initially maintained he had killed only one Tutsi—his brother-in-law—during the genocide. However, he acknowledged that the survivors who testified against him before *gacaca* had provided eyewitness accounts of his participation in four separate massacres and several "hunting sessions," all of which he eventually admitted. In describing what he had observed during these attacks, it became clear that he had contributed to the deaths of perhaps hundreds of Tutsi, who were attacked by groups of as many as ten people and often using different types of weapons. But in such circumstances, Martin did not accept criminal responsibility for these deaths as he was not the person who struck the lethal blow.

Likewise Michel, despite having spent most of his time during the genocide at the local roadblocks, and having witnessed and participated in the murders of countless Tutsi men, women, and children, claimed he was only responsible for killing a handful of people, when in actual fact he had directly collaborated in the murders of hundreds of Tutsi.⁵⁴ Following Habyarimana's assassination—which at the time Michel genuinely believed had been perpetrated by the RPF—he began working at the local roadblocks to defend his community, serving as a night guard. In Michel's mind, his transformation from night guard to génocidaire was a gradual process orchestrated by his local politicians, who upon Habyarimana's death had initiated the genocidal violence by calling upon the young men in his community to kill their Tutsi neighbors' cattle.

In Michel's understanding, the mass slaughter of cattle was a well-known symbolic act dating back to the first *inyenzi* incursions in the 1960s

that signalled the start of hostilities against the Tutsi. In the past, such actions caused a mass exodus of Tutsi refugees, whose homes were then burned by the Hutu Power extremists in his community to prevent their return. In 1994, however, the presence of the roadblocks ensured that the local Tutsi were unable to flee, as those Tutsi who tried to pass through the roadblocks were murdered, regardless of gender, age, or political affiliation. As a result, most of the Tutsi in Michel's community went into hiding, while a small number tried to defend themselves. Either way, the Hutu extremists in Michel's community organized groups of Hutu whose sole responsibility was to track down surviving Tutsi and kill them. When he was not working at the roadblocks, Michel accompanied the extremists on their hunts, participating in more attacks than he could count.

However, when asked about his criminal responsibility, Michel acknowledged killing only a small number of people, as the vast majority of the Tutsi whose deaths he had witnessed had been victims of group attacks where it was difficult to determine who inflicted the lethal wound. Furthermore, Michel maintained that he only participated in the killings because he feared he would be killed if he refused, an explanation that was commonly cited by génocidaires when justifying their participation in atrocities. Martin used a similar explanation for going along with the violence that surrounded him after Habyarimana's assassination.⁵⁵ Two weeks after Habyarimana's death, Martin was promoted within the civil service after the man who had previously held his position was executed in public for refusing to facilitate the murder of Tutsi civilians.

Other génocidaires claimed that public executions were staged in their community with the express purpose of demonstrating what the authorities would do to Hutu who were hiding Tutsi or refusing to support the violence. Alexandre recalled that during the genocide, there was no more dishonorable way for a Hutu to die than being exposed as a traitor. This label was easily attached to Hutu who were married to Tutsi, had Tutsi as extended family members, or were the children of mixed marriages. As a result, many of the convicted génocidaires I interviewed claimed they lived in fear during the genocide not only of the RPF but also of being unfairly punished for having Tutsi family members, business partners, and other acquaintances that placed them at risk of being labeled Tutsi collaborators and RPF spies.

Yet when considering the option of fleeing to avoid persecution, the génocidaires I interviewed unanimously opted to stay put. In Alexandre's words, "it was safer to be a Hutu among Hutu" because once someone left the community in which they were well known, there were no guarantees

for their safety.⁵⁶ Not all people responsible for maintaining the roadblocks accepted identity cards as proof of ethnicity, and instead would examine an individual's face—looking for a long, slender nose or lighter skin, for example—to guess their potential victim's true ethnicity. Alexandre's wife and children fit many of the physical stereotypes that Hutu extremists claimed distinguished Tutsi from Hutu. Thus, he decided his family's chances of survival were much better if they remained in the community where he was known by his neighbors rather than take chances with strangers. But staying had its own negative consequences. In Alexandre's case, he had no choice but to follow the orders of his superiors in the MRND, who enlisted his help to organize and maintain the anti-Tutsi violence that was overwhelming Rwanda. Compliance with the Hutu Power extremists became the only way to guarantee his family's survival. And certainly, when framed in this manner, Alexandre's narrative has the added benefit of making him look less like an enthusiastic ideologue who demonstrated initiative while annihilating the Tutsi in his community, and more like a victim of choiceless decisions.

Several of the women génocidaires I interviewed claimed to have had a similar desire to flee at the start of the genocide, though in this instance greed and a sense of helplessness, rather than peer pressure, seems to have been a stronger determinant in their subsequent decisions to participate in the genocide. Devota claimed she initially wanted to run, but was terrified by thoughts of what might happen to her at the roadblocks once she made it out of her community where people knew her, especially because she had no money to pay the Interahamwe for safe passage.⁵⁷ Instead, she chose to stay at her parents' home, and within a day joined the other women in her community as they looted the houses of the Tutsi who had fled or been killed. As the genocide progressed, her confessed participation escalated and ranged from looting Tutsi homes to informing on Tutsi she encountered hiding in the nearby fields. Finally, her criminal involvement peaked when she allegedly joined with other Hutu women in her community to kill Tutsi children at the local church.⁵⁸

Annalise also briefly considered escaping, not only from the genocidal violence that appeared in her community, but from her abusive husband as well.⁵⁹ Once again, fear of what might happen to her as a woman traveling alone and without any money made her reconsider. She chose to stay in her husband's home, and though she maintained her innocence throughout our interviews, she was ultimately charged with having informed on a Tutsi man who tried to hide from his attackers in a field near her house, resulting in his murder. She did admit, however, to looting Tutsi homes

once the extremists had killed the owners, in an effort to try to alleviate the extreme poverty in which she lived.

Patricia and her husband had only recently moved back to Rwanda, having fled political violence in Burundi in 1993.⁶⁰ Upon arriving in Rwanda, Patricia discovered her new neighbors shared her fears of being enslaved and oppressed by the Tutsi. When Habyarimana was subsequently assassinated, she remembered that the local Hutu began behaving “like animals,” burning houses and killing Tutsi.⁶¹ Patricia and her husband considered returning to Burundi, but changed their minds when they realized they would have to risk the roadblocks without proper identification. And as in the cases of Devota and Annalise, Patricia eventually succumbed to greed and peer pressure, informing on local Tutsi and then looting their homes.

Once the genocide was in full swing across Rwanda, the graphic violence that occurred was not a topic that génocidaire participants discussed willingly, and when they did, the violence was typically discussed once again in a manner that allowed them to present their actions as somehow justified. For example, Roger claimed that during the genocide most Tutsi in his community were killed quickly without suffering. In the few instances where the attackers tortured their victims, the victims were often disliked in the community or had attempted to resist their attackers. He recalled that one man was cut with machetes and left to die slowly of exsanguination because people in the community were jealous of his handsome appearance and wealth. However, in Roger’s experience, Tutsi women were more likely to suffer extraordinary violence, particularly in the first month of the genocide, when they were often subjected to humiliating forms of sexual degradation and assault prior to being killed. In Roger’s experience, Tutsi women endured gang rape, genital mutilation, evisceration, and other atrocities if they had reputations within the community for being beautiful and proud toward their Hutu neighbors. Toward the end of the genocide, the Hutu Power extremists in his community declared that women had no ethnicity, and so suddenly Hutu men were able to force the Tutsi women they encountered into sexual slavery—taking them as “wives”—rather than raping and murdering them.⁶²

Most génocidaires dismissed these acts of excessive brutality by blaming them on other ostracized cohorts within Rwandan society, such as homeless children and criminals. When asked about the violence inflicted upon Tutsi women during the genocide, Philippe responded that while “every human being is weak in these things,” it was mostly street boys who committed rape and other forms of sexual violence.⁶³ He explained

this tendency as resulting from two key factors. First, the street boys were uneducated and uncultured, and therefore believed the lies they heard about how Tutsi women were physically different from Hutu women. Second, the street boys were considered socially inferior to the Tutsi—more so than the average Hutu civilian—meaning that the act of raping a Tutsi woman was even more taboo and humiliating for the woman. This made the act of rape even more socially and psychologically damaging, punishing their victims beyond the physical crime.

Indeed, most génocidaires preferred to focus on their heroic actions during the genocide, whereby they allegedly rescued Tutsi men and women close to them. These narratives were often recited with mixed sentiments: while on one hand, they expressed pride surrounding their efforts to rescue Tutsi, they often simultaneously felt disappointed and frustrated that the people they had rescued had not spoken out on their behalf before *gacaca* to have their sentences reduced. Such complaints prompted me to probe the circumstances surrounding their individual acts of rescue during the genocide, revealing additional complexities in the ways that génocidaires related to their crimes and the subject of criminal accountability in the post-genocide period.

For example, Alexandre spoke frequently about rescuing Tutsi women during the genocide, often following up this claim with the betrayal he felt when these women did not testify on his behalf during his trial.⁶⁴ As our interviews progressed, he admitted that many of these women were killed in the last days of the genocide in his community, while others did not see him as their rescuer even though he was clearly responsible for keeping them alive during the genocide. He refused to discuss the specific circumstances behind their allegations, arguing that regardless of how they had survived, these women were alive because he chose to rescue them. His caginess in discussing his acts of alleged rescue brought me back to a previous conversation I had had with Michel, who recalled that many génocidaires claimed to have rescued Tutsi women when in fact they had raped them or held them against their will as sex slaves.⁶⁵ Still others rescued Tutsi men and their families, but for a fee, circumstances that the RPF occasionally highlights in support of the argument that the actions of many so-called rescuers were neither altruistic nor humanitarian. For example, such allegations are frequently levied against Paul Rusesabagina, a high-profile Hutu hotel manager turned member of Rwanda's political opposition in exile, following his rise to international fame as a hero and rescuer during the genocide.⁶⁶

“TRUTH INVOLVES PEOPLE SPEAKING TOGETHER”:
POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

Génocidaires' efforts to complicate or diminish their criminal accountability during the genocide continued in their representations of the post-genocide period. Of particular importance, many of the convicted génocidaires I interviewed argued that they were unjustly imprisoned for murder and related criminal acts, when in fact they were merely following orders, or were victims of the baseless allegations of vindictive neighbors. For example, Alexandre argued that one of the main charges against him—whereby which he allegedly raped, eviscerated, and murdered a pregnant Tutsi woman and encouraged the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi present to do the same—was actually a sensationalized misinterpretation of actual events. He did not deny ordering one of his men to kill the woman, but claimed her rape and evisceration had already happened at the hands of undisciplined Interahamwe under his command. He came upon the scene later, and seeing that the woman was suffering greatly and would likely suffer a long time before dying, he ordered one of his bodyguards to kill her. It was, in his mind, an act of kindness, not murder, and claimed that while he regretted many of his actions during the genocide, her death did not weigh on his conscience.

Other génocidaires argued that Rwanda's transitional justice program was weighted against them. Mirroring the national and international judicial systems that have been applied to Rwanda in the post-genocide period, within the prisons there existed a hierarchy of complicity with the intellectuals, politicians, and other decision-makers at the top, informers, looters, and other small-scale opportunists in the middle, and murderers and rapists at the bottom. However, most génocidaires argued that the decision-makers who bore the greatest responsibility for organizing and inciting the genocide had largely escaped justice, leaving those who were merely following orders to pay for their crimes. Valerie was particularly vocal about the injustice of the judicial systems to which Rwanda's génocidaires were subjected to. She argued vehemently that the Hutu extremists who bore the greatest responsibility for orchestrating the genocide, such as Habyarimana's wife Agathe, had been aided by the French and allowed to flee Rwanda to escape justice.

Such sentiments were amplified by the widespread belief among génocidaires that the RPF had never investigated allegations that the RPA also perpetrated mass atrocities against Hutu civilians between 1990 and

1996.⁶⁷ While the Kagame regime alternates between denying accusations that RPA soldiers perpetrated war crimes, crimes against humanity, and even genocide against Hutu civilians beginning with the 1990 invasion, and insisting that those responsible for these abuses have been held accountable, génocidaires were adamant that they had not seen justice for their missing and murdered family and friends, while they had been arrested, tried, and imprisoned for much less serious crimes.

This perception contributed to widespread dissatisfaction with the Kagame regime, and the RPF more generally, within the prisons. When questioned about their perceptions of post-genocide Rwanda and the possibilities for long-term reconciliation and multi-ethnic collaboration, nearly all of the convicted génocidaires I interviewed responded negatively, in large part due to the many perceived injustices they had experienced at the hands of representatives of the current government. For example, Gérard was arrested when he tried to return to Rwanda from the DRC, and prior to being interred in the prisons he spent several weeks in a *cachot*—unofficial sites where alleged criminals are detained in instances where the Rwandan police or military want to obscure their location from family and international monitors who document prison conditions, for example—where he was beaten and starved.⁶⁸ As noted by Tertsakian in *Le Chateau: The Lives of Prisoners in Rwanda*, Hutu civilians often endured horrific experiences in the cachots, particularly between 1994 and 1999, because the soldiers who guarded the prisoners could act with impunity.⁶⁹ In Gérard's case, he believed that the RPF had treated him badly because they wanted revenge, and he was frustrated that Rwandan authorities and the international community had ignored the humiliation and torture he experienced in the cachot. He felt it was only fair that Rwandans be forced to acknowledge all the atrocities that occurred surrounding the genocide, and not just those inflicted upon the Tutsi.

Philippe was similarly frustrated by what had become of his life under the Kagame regime.⁷⁰ He claimed he had confessed to all of his crimes during the genocide, and certainly spoke more openly about the nature of his participation and the motivating factors that made it possible for him to shift from a teacher to génocidaire. However, he felt that some of the charges brought against him were never properly investigated, causing him to receive a much harsher sentence than he deserved. Philippe confessed to participating in several massacres, as well as targeting a few individuals with whom he had a history of interpersonal conflict. However, in addition to these crimes, he was sentenced to life in prison for planning

the genocide in his community. He argued that the municipal leaders in his community fabricated these charges, and refuted them by arguing that a teacher would not have the skills, experience, and contacts necessary to organize such violence. Furthermore, after being sentenced, Philippe's wife remarried a more powerful man and his family was "destroyed," leaving him to conclude that the extra charges against him were intended to break up his marriage.⁷¹ Since then, Philippe claimed he had lost hope for the future. He concluded that his "life has become meaningless" because he had neither family nor friends.⁷²

The women *génocidaires* I interviewed seemed similarly overwhelmed in the aftermath of the genocide. I found it difficult to get them to speak about what they had observed during the genocide, and noticed over time that while each of them had been convicted of a range of atrocities, the only crimes they would confess to were looting and informing on Tutsi who were hiding. This is likely due to a persisting taboo in Rwanda that limits women's ability to participate in physical violence, as well as enduring gender norms that stigmatize women who act in ways that are deemed only appropriate for men.⁷³ Several of the women *génocidaires* I interviewed claimed that their crimes during the genocide were minimal and yet they received harsher punishments than their male counterparts because they were perceived as having transgressed taboos that prohibited Rwandan women from participating in warfare.⁷⁴ Several male *génocidaires* confirmed this, arguing that women should be given harsher punishments for participating in the genocide because Rwandan tradition forbids women to touch weapons and engage in violence, especially against children. The one exception to this statement was poisoning, which was frequently described by Rwandan men as a skill at which Rwandan women excelled.

With the RPF now in power, meanwhile, several *génocidaires* argued that their participation in the genocide, while dishonorable on many levels, was nonetheless justified. Many refused to acknowledge that the violence that overwhelmed Rwanda in 1994 was, in fact, genocide, preferring instead to describe the period as war. They acknowledged that most of the people killed were unarmed and lacked military training, but maintained that the murder of these non-combatants was necessary to undermine political support for the RPF. For example, Alexandre was unapologetic about his overall role in inciting genocide.⁷⁵ While he acknowledged upon reflection that the brutal violence with which Tutsi civilians were killed was dishonorable—in his opinion, both to those who inflicted it and those who suffered it—Alexandre interpreted the genocide as one small part of the larger civil war that had enveloped Rwanda since 1990. He recalled that in that moment he

perceived the killing of Tutsi civilians as an honorable act. By killing Tutsi men, women, and children, the Hutu Power extremists became warriors, earning status by eliminating not only the foreign Tutsi threat that sought to overthrow the Hutu government, but also those Tutsi who had enslaved their ancestors in the past—a category that extended to all Rwandan Tutsi regardless of political affiliation, age, or gender. Furthermore, Alexandre contended—like so many of the convicted génocidaires I interviewed—that the RPF’s treatment of the Hutu majority in Rwanda since the genocide was evidence that the Hutu extremists had been correct to resist the RPF in any way they could. He argued the RPF had imprisoned Hutu for the slightest provocation, while RPA war criminals went free. Likewise, despite having not left the prison in 14 years, Alexandre had heard that the Tutsi were once again in control of the Rwandan government, military, and media. In his mind, this was a modern version of the enslavement of the Hutu people that had occurred under the Tutsi monarchy, and one that justified his efforts to resist RPF hegemony through violence.

REFORMED GÉNOCIDAIRES?

However, while most of the génocidaires I interviewed seemed quick to promote the official narratives they had been exposed to during the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, two convicted génocidaires stood out by adhering, at times enthusiastically, to the RPF’s official narrative. The first, Daniel—a young government official during the genocide—was a rumored spy for the RPF in the post-genocide period. According to several génocidaires, the RPF had spies everywhere within the prison—typically, those individuals who had confessed to receive reduced sentences and since become advocates for *gacaca* and post-genocide reconciliation, encouraging other génocidaires to follow their example. Daniel was one of these individuals, having become an outspoken advocate within the prison for the RPF and its policies. For this reason it was no surprise that his narrative aligned closely with the RPF’s official narrative.

Daniel claimed that in the first days of the genocide, he and his colleagues had refused to assist the Hutu Power extremists when they came to the municipal office and attempted to convince the authorities to promote the killings of Tutsi civilians.⁷⁶ Instead, realizing that genocidal violence was quickly overwhelming their community, he and his coworkers attempted to rescue local Tutsi by providing them with places of refuge in their homes and fields. However, as the violence spread within Rwanda, the Hutu extremists returned in greater numbers and threatened to kill

Daniel and his family if he did not join them in eradicating the Tutsi threat. As a result, Daniel joined the extremists, and in the following weeks, helped murder the Tutsi he had hidden, including his brother's father-in-law.

Daniel had been tried before gacaca several years before our first meeting, and after confessing to participating in the mass murder of the Tutsi in his community had received a reduced sentence. He expressed gratitude for the judges' leniency, and for this reason, following his trial, had committed himself to rehabilitating himself, attending prison workshops aimed at educating prisoners about the New Rwanda. To this end, Daniel was the only génocidaire I interviewed in the prisons who argued that Rwandans had lived in harmony during the pre-colonial period. He even went so far as to say that ubuhake, which most génocidaires described as a form of institutionalized slavery, was a good system because it gave the Hutu everything they needed without requiring them to have any specialized education or skills. His dedication quickly paid off: Daniel was found by prison administrators to have so successfully internalized the official narrative of national unity and reconciliation promoted by the Rwandan government that he was asked to formally counsel other génocidaires to confess their crimes and accept rehabilitation. He had taken on these new responsibilities with great enthusiasm, and spoke with pride about his work in the prisons and his gratitude to the RPF for having helped him turn his back on the genocide ideology he had internalized. Though I was initially unaware of his reputation, I later learned that he was both feared and mistrusted by his fellow génocidaires on the grounds that he had informed on them to prison officials in instances where they talked openly about their crimes, spoke out against the RPF and its policies, or complained about their treatment in the prisons.

Outside the prisons meanwhile, Maxime was a classic example of an individual whose public acceptance of the RPF's official narrative had proved an advantageous survival strategy. When we met, Maxime was a released prisoner who, despite having perpetrated atrocities during the genocide, had been permitted to serve the remainder of his sentence through Rwanda's *travaux d'intérêt général* (TIG)—a community service program introduced as an alternative to imprisonment for genocide.⁷⁷ Following the completion of ingando, he was returned to his home community with the expectation that he provide free manual labor toward Rwanda's many community development projects. Maxime claims the RPF's leniency made him realize that he should not be afraid of the Tutsi or the RPF,

and that he should speak openly about how he learned to overcome “the Hutu sin,” and encourage other génocidaires to do the same.⁷⁸ For this reason, following his release, Maxime dedicated himself to speaking to Hutu in his community about the need for them to abandon the ethnic hatred they felt toward the Tutsi. He believed strongly that the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes and the Catholic Church had misled the Hutu masses, and that the only hope for Rwanda’s future was for the Hutu to take responsibility for the ethnic hatred they had internalized for so long.

Maxime’s good fortune in the post-genocide period influenced the way he interpreted Rwandan history as well. While he acknowledged that he did not always feel this way, Maxime argued that anti-Tutsi rhetoric had been used by Hutu political elites to manipulate and distract the Rwandan people from more important issues. He no longer believed that the Tutsi had dominated the Hutu in the pre-colonial period, or that there was any reason going forward for the Hutu to feel oppressed. Instead, he believed the Tutsi had always tried to help the Hutu majority by providing them with access to cattle and representing their interests to the abami. He blamed the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes for misrepresenting this positive relationship to make the Tutsi seem like brutal oppressors and teaching Hutu from the time when they were small children to hate the Tutsi and force them to leave Rwanda. Maxime maintained that the resulting Tutsi refugees had every right to return to Rwanda using force when the Habyarimana regime refused to negotiate, and argued that it was bad governance that prompted so many Hutu civilians to blind themselves to the positive potential of RPF leadership. The civil war that followed was, in Maxime’s opinion, unfortunate but necessary, whereas the genocide that followed was the inevitable result of decades of bad governance and ignorance on the part of Hutu civilians that rendered them incapable of seeing through the political manipulations of their leaders.

During our conversations, Maxime deviated only twice from the official narrative promoted by the RPF. First, during his discussion of the civil war, Maxime claimed that the RPA killed many unarmed Hutu civilians, and that those responsible for these atrocities had never been brought to justice. In Maxime’s opinion, the leniency the Kagame regime showed these criminals was inexcusable, and made it hard for the Hutu to support reconciliation. Second, toward the end of our last meeting, Maxime deviated from his usual position of hope for a reconciled Rwanda to acknowledge that the psychology of Hutu civilians meant that they naturally hated the Tutsi. In Maxime’s opinion, this was “the Hutu sin” and he argued that it

was still alive and well among Hutu civilians, though they hid it from the government in order to survive.⁷⁹ When asked what he thought this meant for Rwanda's future, he replied: "I had been a good friend to Tutsi all my life, but [during the genocide] I decided to become a killer instead."⁸⁰

NOTES

1. For more on narrative burden as it relates to survivors of sexual violence, see Kimberly Theidon, "Gender in transition: Common sense, women and war," *Journal of Human Rights* 6(4) (2007): 453–478; and Kimberly Theidon, "The milk of sorrow: A theory on the violence of memory," *Canadian Woman Studies* 27(1) (2009): 8–16.
2. This statement is upheld by a 2014 study on suicide in Rwanda. Its authors found that while "being a survivor, having been physically or sexually abused during the genocide, and having lost a first-degree family member to genocide were not significantly associated with suicide," "having been convicted for genocide crimes was a significant predictor for suicide." They argue that this demonstrates génocidaires are proving less resilient in the post-genocide period to ongoing psychological disturbances. For more information, see Wilson Rubanzana, Bethany Hedt-Gauthier, Joseph Ntaganira, and Michael Freeman, "Exposure to genocide and risk of suicide in Rwanda: A population-based case-control study," *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 69(2) (2015), 117.
3. In practicing transparency with government gatekeepers, I was following a recommendation of sociologist Raymond Lee—an expert on managing danger in fieldwork—who argues against engaging in covert research on the grounds that "covert researchers are vulnerable to mistakes and misunderstandings about who they are and what they are doing. Because some clandestine organizations combine an endemic concern about concealed identities with the use of violence as a routine protective device, misattributions can have deadly consequences." Raymond Lee, *Dangerous Fieldwork* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), 75.
4. Interview with author, 2008.
5. For more information about how these narratives of victimization played out in my research among women génocidaires, see Erin Jessee, "Rwandan women no more: Female génocidaires in the

- aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide,” *Conflict and Society* 1 (2015), 60–80.
6. Bouris, *Complex Political Survivors*; and Baines, “Complex political perpetrators,” 163–191. 7. This term was first coined by Nigel Fielding in reference to his work among police officers. Nigel Fielding, “Mediating the Message: Affinity and Hostility in Research on Sensitive Topics,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 33(5) (1990), 608. In more recent years, the particular challenges of working with “unloved groups” has been addressed by a wide range of scholars in different settings, most notably Kathleen Blee in her work among white supremacist activists in the U.S. See for example, Kathleen Blee, “White Knuckle Research: Emotional Dynamics in Fieldwork with Racist Activists,” *Qualitative Sociology* 21(4) (1998), 387–388.
 7. I discuss the challenges of interviewing génocidaires and other highly politicized participants in more detail in an earlier publication. Jessee, “The limits of oral history,” 287–307.
 8. For example, following a 2003 presidential decree in 2005, Rwanda released an estimated 60,000 suspected génocidaires, including people who were too infirm to stand trial before gacaca and those whose time in prison awaiting trial was already greater than the sentences they would have received if found guilty. BBC News, “Rwanda starts prisoner releases,” 29 July 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4726969.stm> (accessed 27 July 2015); and BBC News, “Rwanda frees genocide prisoners,” 19 February 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6376979.stm> (accessed 27 July 2015). According to the 2012 Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST) report, “Gacaca courts in Rwanda,” a total of 606 génocidaires were granted early release, meaning they either had their sentences suspended or were permitted to serve the remainder of their sentences in community service. This program, while necessary for minimizing over-crowding in the prisons and demonstrating a degree of state leniency where low-level perpetrators are concerned, has proven highly controversial among genocide survivors. For more information, see Republic of Rwanda, “Gacaca courts in Rwanda,” June 2012, http://www.minijust.gov.rw/uploads/media/GACACA_COURTS_IN_RWANDA.pdf (accessed 25 July 2015).
 9. Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, many survivors feel they have been sacrificed by the RPF, and that many of the

opportunities available to them as survivors are failing to address the overall social and political inequalities that are rife in modern Rwandan society.

10. Jessee, "Rwandan women no more."
11. This observation is generally consistent with Straus' finding that most perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide were "fathers, husbands, and farmers who had average levels of education and who had no prior history of violence." Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, 96.
12. Interview with author, 2008.
13. Interview with author, 2008.
14. Interview with author, 2008.
15. Interview with author, 2008.
16. I have been unable to verify this practice in any of the sources on pre-colonial Rwanda. It is possible Gérard or someone in his family fabricated this story in order to emphasize the evils associated with the Tutsi monarchy, in this instance highlighting their lack of family values, which are otherwise highly valued in present-day Rwandan society.
17. Interview with author, 2008.
18. Interview with author, 2008.
19. I have previously framed the story of the Tutsi monarchs who stood by planting a weapon in the bodies of Hutu civilians as an "iconic story." For more information, see Erin Jessee, "The danger of a single story: Iconic stories and the democratization of history in the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide." *Memory Studies* 10(2) (2017).
20. Variations on the practice of decorating the drum Kalinga with testicles—more commonly those of slain enemies of the abami—can be found in several sources. See, for example, Adekunle, *Culture and Customs of Rwanda*, 7; Maximiano Ngabirano and David Tsimbi, "Memory and Historical Realities in Shaping Politics and Armed Conflicts in Rwanda," in Samuel Ewusi (ed.) *Weaving Peace: Essays on Peace, Governance and Conflict Transformation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2012), 50; and Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 10.
21. There is historical evidence that select Hutu and Twa could achieve high-level positions in the royal court, though this was not the norm. For example, Vansina notes that farmers and Twa could become *abagaragu* or "relatives of the king" through the acquisition of cattle, as seen in the seventeenth-century case of King

Mazimpaka's gift of a herd of luxury cattle to a Twa individual. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 48. Similarly, Des Forges recounts the story of Basebya, an early twentieth-century Twa rebel leader, who had been a client of King Rutarindwa prior to his assassination by Kanjogera and her brothers in 1896 and whose rebellion in the north posed a significant threat to the court of Musinga and Abega supremacy. Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 104–105.

22. Interview with author, 2008.
23. Octave Ugirashebuja, "The church and the genocide in Rwanda," in Carol Rittner, John Roth, and Wendy Whitworth (eds.) *Genocide in Rwanda: The Complicity of the Churches?* (New York: Paragon House, 2004), 51.
24. Ugirashebuja, "The church and the genocide in Rwanda," 53–54.
25. Interview with author, 2008.
26. Interview with author, 2008.
27. Interview with author, 2008.
28. Interview with author, 2008.
29. Interview with author, 2008.
30. Interview with author, 2008.
31. Interview with author, 2008.
32. Interview with author, 2008.
33. Interview with author, 2008.
34. This possibility is supported by Desrosiers' analysis of Habyarimana's political rhetoric. Desrosiers argues that while historians have tended to analyze Habyarimana's policies through the lens of the 1994 genocide, this approach lacks nuance and historical texture. A more accurate reading of his rhetoric supports the conclusion that Habyarimana sought to promote unity and stability, even going so far as to present plurality among Rwandans as enriching and a positive tool toward helping the nation achieve its development goals. Conversely, political agitation and ethnic and regional divisionism were regarded as inappropriate under Habyarimana and troublemakers faced strict punishments. For more information, see Desrosiers, "Rethinking political rhetoric and authority during Rwanda's first and second republics," 214–219. See also Desrosiers and Thomson, "Rhetorical legacies of leadership," 429–453.
35. While this alleged increase in intermarriage across ethnic lines could be perceived as a sign of decreased ethnic and political hostilities, for many Rwandans it was nonetheless embedded in the belief that

Tutsi woman were more beautiful and better mannered than their Hutu counterparts, conferring enhanced social status upon their Hutu spouses. As such, upwardly mobile Hutu political elites often sought out Tutsi brides as a means of immediately enhancing their social status among their peers. Taylor, "A gendered genocide," 45; and Baines, "Body politics and the Rwanda crisis," 483.

36. Interview with author, 2008.
37. Straus' work further supports this observation, citing out-group fear or revenge alongside in-group peer pressure as being the two primary motivations discussed by génocidaires to explain or justify their participation in the genocide. Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, 139. His findings regarding génocidaires' motivations during the genocide in Rwanda have since been upheld, broadly speaking, by the work of Lee Ann Fujii and Charles Mironko, in addition to my own research. Lee Ann Fujii, "The power of local ties: Popular participation in the Rwandan genocide," *Security Studies* 17(3) (2008): 568–597; and Charles Mironko, "Igitero: Means and Motive in the Rwandan Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1) (2004): 47–60.
38. There are a plethora of studies that stress the importance of Rwandan media, particularly *Kangura* and the RTL, for inciting anti-Tutsi sentiment in the lead-up to the 1994 genocide. See, for example, Alison Des Forges, "Call to genocide: Radio in Rwanda, 1994," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 41–54; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "RTL Propaganda: The Democratic Alibi," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 55–61; Marcel Kabanda, "*Kangura*: The triumph of propaganda refined," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 62–72; Jean-Marie Vianney Higiho, "Rwandan private print media on the eve of the genocide," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 73–89; Darryl Li, "Echoes of violence: Considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 90–109; Mary Kimani, "RTL: The media that became a tool for mass murder," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 110–124; Charles Mironko, "The effect of

RTLM's rhetoric of ethnic hatred in rural Rwanda," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 125–135; Thomas Kamilindi, "Journalism in a time of hate media," in Allan Thompson (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007): 136–144. However, Straus has argued that much of this literature is based on assumptions about the power of hate media rather than engagement with rural génocidaires' recollections of the pre-genocide and genocide period. His interviews with génocidaires support the conclusion that hate media was not as powerful a determinant of genocide participation as the literature assumes, a position my fieldwork with génocidaires similarly supports. Scott Straus, "What is the relationship between hate radio and violence? Rethinking Rwanda's 'Radio Machete,'" *Politics and Society* 35(4) (2007): 609–637.

39. Interview with author, 2008.
40. In Kinyarwanda, the chant Philippe cited is "*Gabutu we nturungare; Gatutsi we umvira.*"
41. Interview with author, 2008.
42. Interview with author, 2008.
43. Interview with author, 2008.
44. The phrase "restore the kingdom" refers to the RPF's alleged determination to reinstall the Tutsi monarchy and re-enslave the Hutu majority. Interview with author, 2008.
45. Interview with author, 2008.
46. Interview with author, 2008.
47. Interview with author, 2008.
48. In 2002, Alexander Hinton introduced the term "genocidal priming" to encapsulate the interwoven processes "that establish the preconditions for genocide to take place within a given sociopolitical context." Alexander Hinton, "The dark side of modernity: Toward an anthropology of genocide," in Alexander Hinton (ed.) *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 29.
49. Interview with author, 2008.
50. Straus documented a similar pattern of group attacks among low-level génocidaires. Straus, "How many perpetrators were there in the Rwandan genocide?" 85–98.
51. In Kinyarwanda, this phenomenon was translated as "*amaraso y'abo bishe arabakurikira.*"

52. Interview with author, 2008.
53. Interview with author, 2008.
54. Interview with author, 2008.
55. Interview with author, 2008.
56. Interview with author, 2008.
57. Interview with author, 2008.
58. For more on Devota's alleged crimes during the genocide, see Jessee, "Rwandan women no more," 67–69.
59. Interview with author, 2008.
60. René Lemarchand (2009, 1996) has studied the political massacres that occurred in Burundi following the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye, which he characterizes as "a spontaneous outburst of popular anger." For more information, see René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xvi. See also Tom Bundervoet, "Livestock, land and political power: The 1993 killings in Burundi," *Journal of Peace Research* 46(3) (2009), 357–376.
61. Interview with author, 2008.
62. Interview with author, 2008.
63. Interview with author, 2008.
64. Interview with author, 2008.
65. Interview with author, 2008.
66. Paul Rusesabagina has written an autobiography and had a Hollywood film, *Hotel Rwanda*, made based on his alleged heroic acts during the genocide. The Rwandan government and media has campaigned against these representations of his actions during the genocide, accusing him of having collaborated with the interim government and Interahamwe, making him a key perpetrator of the genocide, rather than a rescuer and hero. For more information, see Paul Rusesabagina, *An Ordinary Man: The True Story Behind Hotel Rwanda* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006). In terms of official opposition to Rusesabagina's version of events see, for example, Edouard Kayihura and Kerry Zukus, *Inside the Hotel Rwanda: The Surprising True Story ... and Why it Matters Today* (Dallas: BenBella Books, 2014); Eugene Kwibuka, "New book exposes lies in 'Hotel Rwanda'—experts," *The New Times*, 23 June 2015, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-06-23/189984/> (accessed 29 July 2015); Jonathan Beloff and Brendan Sitters, "Rusesabagina continues to exploit a

naïve West," *The New Times*, 28 August 2014, <http://www.new-times.co.rw/section/article/2014-08-28/77973/> (accessed 29 July 2015); Felix Muheto, "Paul Rusesabagina admits intimacy with génocidaires," *The New Times*, 19 June 2008, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2008-06-18/4205/> (accessed 20 July 2015).

67. According to Gerald Gahima, previously Rwanda's Prosecutor General and now member of Rwanda's political opposition in exile, there is no doubt that the RPA was responsible for perpetrating widespread human rights violations across Rwanda during the civil war, genocide, and their immediate aftermath. He groups these human rights violations into the following categories: ordinary crimes committed against civilians by RPA soldiers for reasons unrelated to the genocide, revenge or reprisal killings that were committed by individuals acting independently, killings of civilians by RPA soldiers during combat activities, indiscriminate killings of massacres by soldiers under orders, and targeted killings of political opponents and other undesirables who were suspected of criminal involvement in the genocide. Gahima also acknowledges that there is substantial evidence that the RPA engaged in atrocities in the DRC during the First and Second Congo wars. While some prosecutions have resulted, Gahima finds that in the rare instances where prosecutions have been pursued, the sentences have been very light and, in some instances, never executed. For more information, see Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda*, 227–232.
68. Interview with author, 2008.
69. Carina Tertsakian, *Le Château: The Lives of Prisoners in Rwanda* (London: Arves Books, 2008), 238–248.
70. Interview with author, 2008.
71. Interview with author, 2008.
72. Interview with author, 2008.
73. Throughout Rwandan history, it has been relatively uncommon for Rwandan women to participate in warfare, beyond providing indirect morale and materiel support to their male family and community members. Women were not allowed on the battlefield until after the fighting had ceased, and even prohibited from handling weapons, as it was believed that this would bring bad fortune upon the owner, resulting in his death or serious injury. There are, however, notable exceptions to this statement among female political

elites. For example, Queen Mothers Nyiramongi and Kanjogera engaged in the murder of political opponents, while a female spiritual leader Nyirashirembere led a violent rebellion against the Tutsi population in Fugi in the late nineteenth century. For more information, see Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 137, 144, 151; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 22–23; and Watkins, “Iron Mothers and Warrior Lovers.”

74. Conversely, Nicole Hogg argues that women génocidaires who participated indirectly in the genocide frequently received preferential treatment related to the chivalry of men, whereby “male witnesses, investigators, prosecutors and judges are to infected by gender stereotypes that they either cannot perceive of women as criminals or feel protective towards them in spite of their suspected or proven criminality.” However, when direct criminal responsibility for murder, mutilation, or other serious crimes was established, women génocidaires were “regarded as ‘evil’ or ‘non-women’ and treated with the full force of the law.” Nicole Hogg, “Women’s participation in the Rwandan genocide: Mothers or monsters?” *International Review of the Red Cross*, 877 (2010): 71.
75. Interview with author, 2008.
76. Interview with author, 2008.
77. Interview with author, 2008. For more information on TIG, see Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 156–158.
78. Interview with author, 2008.
79. Interview with author, 2008.
80. Interview with author, 2008.

Returnees: Looking Toward the “New Rwanda”

“When you know the country better, you’ll understand why the leadership is so careful about how much freedom of speech they can allow. I think they are going about it the wrong way—controlling public expression does not resolve the inner conflicts and questionings—but they do this because they think the country still needs time to settle down.”

—Rose-Marie

THE POLITICS OF RETURN IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

While many rural memorial staff, survivors, and génocidaires had internalized a host of complaints about life in post-genocide Rwanda, there was a significant cohort of Rwandans for whom RPF leadership and policies were largely regarded in positive terms: namely, returnees. I encountered returnees throughout my fieldwork, though mostly as gatekeepers within the government ministries and community-based organizations from which I required permission to conduct research, but also as colleagues and friends. To this end, I found returnees occupied a disproportionate number of positions of influence, both in the government and in civil society organizations. In nearly all instances, they came from elite Tutsi families who had some form of formal tie to the Rwandan monarchy during Rwanda’s colonial period. Their families had then fled ethnic and political violence in Rwanda beginning with the Hutu Revolution from 1959 to 1962, or subsequent periods of ethnic and political violence

that occurred during the First Hutu Republic.¹ Upon fleeing Rwanda, they brought with them little wealth, but were frequently able to leverage social and political relationships in a manner that ensured their survival, in some instances enabling them to thrive in their adopted homes. In many instances, this meant their children were able to achieve high levels of education compared to their Rwandan counterparts and, in the case of those who settled in Uganda, Kenya, and other former British colonies, proficiency in English rather than French. As a result, with the RPF's military success in Rwanda surrounding the genocide, many returnees found themselves able, for the first time in as much as 35 years, to return to Rwanda and upon returning were uniquely qualified to take up positions in the new government, military, and civil society organizations.

However, despite general consistencies among the types of experiences shared by the returnees with whom I interacted, the term *returnee* is typically applied within Rwanda to a cohort of Rwandans who share little in common beyond having spent much of their lives in exile. Those refugees who fled to Uganda, for example, had vastly different experiences of exile compared to those who fled to Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, and the DRC.² Refugees' experiences often varied noticeably within each host nation as well, depending on their economic, political, and social status. Refugees' experiences of returning to Rwanda were often similarly varied, with some returning to Rwanda as soldiers, beginning with the RPA's 1990 invasion, and others waiting until after political stability was restored in the months and years following the genocide. And in terms of reception within Rwanda, returnees who lived in exile in Uganda are widely perceived by Rwandans as privileged over other returnees and indeed other Rwandans. This perception emerges from the belief that returnees who lived in exile in Uganda will have inevitably been long-term supporters of the RPF. For this reason, returnees from Uganda are often regarded in a manner similar to the staff at the state-funded genocide memorials: while they may be formally recognized as survivors and Rwandans, they are nonetheless perceived as distinct from the rest of their Rwandan compatriots as likely RPF loyalists and potential spies. Further complicating returnees' status in Rwanda as a cohort is the fact that they have often spent much of their lives outside Rwanda, leaving them at times out of touch with Rwandan customs, particularly those upheld by rural peasants who have been slower to benefit from post-genocide opportunities for education and economic advancement.

Nonetheless, there are some important consistencies and contradictions in the manner in which returnees relate to Rwanda's past and present,

as represented by the RPF's official history. In particular, the returnees tended to uphold the RPF's depiction of Rwanda's pre-colonial and colonial past as idyllic, but with much stronger, nostalgic sentiments regarding the benefits of the Rwandan monarchy. This tendency is perhaps unsurprising given that many returnees are descendants of monarchists who fled political violence surrounding the rise of the First Hutu Republic. Having grown up hearing stories of benevolent kings and an idyllic life, combined with experiences of exile and a longing to return to Rwanda, many returnees expressed nostalgia for the Rwandan monarchy, even while expressing loyalty to Kagame and the RPF.

Under the circumstances, it is similarly unsurprising that the returnees with whom I worked had few positive words to describe their memories surrounding Rwandan independence. For most returnees, this was a period of intense political and social upheaval, as their families' perceived loyalties to the monarchy, coupled with resistance to a Hutu-dominated independent Rwanda, meant that their families were forced into exile to survive. Returnees often depicted the Hutu Revolution as the start of genocidal violence in Rwanda, recalling violence against loved ones and the appropriation of valuable herds of cattle and ancestral lands as evidence that the emergent class of Hutu political elites perceived the removal of Tutsi monarchists from Rwanda as necessary for the nation's long-term political stability. Over the decades, several returnees argued that the international community's failure to condemn the poor treatment endured by Tutsi exiles, as well as those Tutsi who remained in Rwanda under the Hutu-dominated regimes of Kayibanda and Habyarimana, served as evidence that they could escalate to occasional mass murder without having to worry about international interference or long-term consequences, setting a dangerous precedence for Rwanda's future. Perhaps for this reason, their narratives tended to focus not on the successes and challenges that surrounded their lives in exile, for example, but on the corruption and brutality of the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, which they experienced indirectly through family and friends who remained in Rwanda and interpreted with the perhaps heightened sense of injustice afforded by their lives in exile.³

For many returnees, the late 1980s was then recalled as a period of hope. The growing military power of the RPF in Uganda and its determination to fight for returnees' right to return to Rwanda united the Rwandan refugees throughout the Great Lakes region. To this end, in referencing the civil war, many returnees freely adopted the label "war of liberation"

used in official parlance in Rwanda's post-genocide period, and voiced genuine gratitude toward the RPF for having fought for their right to return to Rwanda and for having overthrown the dictatorial Habyarimana to ensure that those Tutsi who eventually returned to Rwanda would be treated as equals. They likewise expressed sorrow that so many Rwandans ultimately died in the civil war and later in genocide, though in their narratives they typically assigned primary responsibility for these deaths to the Habyarimana regime and the Hutu Power extremists.

To this end, there was often an uneasiness inherent in many returnees' narratives surrounding the genocide. Some returnees witnessed firsthand the brutality of the genocide while serving as RPA combatants, and recalled in horrifying detail the scenes that greeted them in each community they liberated from the Hutu Power extremists—scenes that they believed were often constructed in a manner that was intended to demoralize RPA troops. Most returnees, however, learned about the genocide from surviving neighbors, family, and friends, as well as by visiting the state-funded genocide memorials. Yet all were officially categorized in the post-genocide period as survivors, alongside those who had endured the worst abuses of the genocide.⁴ This made the subject an uncomfortable one for many of the returnee participants, to the extent that many of them eschewed labels related to return or survival in reference to themselves, preferring to identify first and foremost as Rwandan. Perhaps for this reason, few of my returnee participants were willing to say much about the genocide on the record, preferring to refer me for information on this period to survivors who had experienced it firsthand.

This discomfort has in many ways followed through to returnees' discussions of the post-genocide period as well. Having sustained themselves for many years on narratives of Rwanda's idyllic pre-colonial past, many returnees expressed an awareness that Rwanda's present was fraught with political challenges and tensions. Of interest, however, returnees rarely assigned blame for these problems to the RPF, even in instances where they recognized the negative attributes of Kagame's post-genocide regime. Conversely, they had a tendency to blame modern Rwanda's problems on the exceptional damage done to the nation by colonialism, followed by corrupt Hutu political leadership leading to the genocide, very much in keeping with the RPF's official narrative. And while they hoped for a more positive future for Rwanda, they often indicated that this positive future could only be achieved if the nation's citizens were successfully sensitized to the benefits of certain policies and programs being introduced by the RPF.

To this end, returnees often described Kagame as a benevolent but strict father who knew what was best for his children, the Rwandan people.⁵ The RPF’s official history, while inaccurate for many Rwandans, was thus regarded by many returnees as one initiative that, if embraced wholeheartedly by all Rwandans, could help ensure long-term political stability. Under the circumstances, losing the ability to discuss those elements of their lived experiences that differed from the RPF’s official history, at least in public settings, was a small sacrifice many returnees were willing to make in order to support the New Rwanda. Given the dangerous uses to which Rwanda’s history had been put in the past—first under European colonization and later under Presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana—several returnees claimed that history, whether personal or official, had no place in the public sphere, at least until Rwanda’s population had learned to view themselves as Rwandans before all else.

“THE PEOPLE ARE THE KING’S CATTLE”: REFLECTIONS ON PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL RWANDA

In private settings, returnees took great pride in narrating Rwanda’s pre-colonial history, and the part played by their families and ancestors. Many of the returnees I interviewed claimed descent from the prestigious Abanyiginya clan. Others claimed descent from the Abega and Abakono clans, the former of which boasted several notable Queen Mothers, including the infamous Kanjogera. Among the elderly returnees I interviewed, several claimed to have visited the royal court in their youth and been received by the mwami, further emphasizing their status as elites. As a result of these intimate connections with Rwanda’s royal court, many returnees expressed a powerful sense of nostalgia for Rwanda’s pre-colonial and colonial past. However, an additional explanation for this nostalgia may lie in the fact that many of the returnees I interviewed came from families that had been forced to seek refuge in neighboring countries surrounding the Hutu Revolution, during which monarchists—particularly those who openly supported UNAR—endured sporadic attacks on their property and persons.⁶ As monarchists and descendants of monarchists, their pro-monarchy sentiments likely endured over time and perhaps even intensified while living beyond Rwanda’s borders, as did their desire to return to their pre-revolution homes and ways of life.⁷ And when their right to return to Rwanda was finally realized following the genocide, returnees brought back with them memories and stories that, for the most part, emphasized the benevolent nature of the Abanyiginya kings.

For example, one returnee—a woman with an encyclopedic knowledge of Rwandan history—described the relationship between the Abanyiginya kings and their subjects thusly: “the people are the King’s cattle.”⁸ She acknowledged that foreigners who did not understand Rwandan culture might perceive this statement as unflattering. But given the high esteem in which all Rwandans hold cattle, she was adamant that there was no more honorable comparison to be made. The phrase indicates that mwami saw the well-being of his subjects as his primary responsibility, and in making policy decisions and choosing chiefs and sub-chiefs to implement them across the country, the king took great care to ensure the Rwandan people would thrive. Likewise, the Abanyiginya kings, with the help of the abiru, engaged in a range of ritual practices intended to ensure the spiritual and physical well-being of their subjects.⁹

To this end, returnees often referenced King Rudahigwa—one of the last of the Abanyiginya kings to rule Rwanda—as a powerful protector of the Rwandan people and an example of the benevolent nature of the monarchy more generally.¹⁰ One story in particular was prominent among returnees, whereby Rudahigwa publically challenged the authority of a Belgian businessman to engage in segregationist practices at his hotel. The story is set at Hotel Faucon, a popular destination in Butare for members of the Belgian colonial administration and other European elites in the years preceding Rwandan independence. Rudahigwa is said to have been traveling past the hotel when he saw a sign that said “*Interdit aux chiens et aux noirs*.”¹¹ Enraged, Rudahigwa took down the sign and confronted the hotel owner, slapping him across the face for the grave insult he had done to the Rwandan people. Rudahigwa then ordered his retinue to beat any white person who complained about the sign’s removal, or about the absence, going forward, of segregationist policies at the hotel. And to ensure that the hotel owner would not revert to his segregationist practices as soon as the king and his retinue passed, Rudahigwa commandeered the largest suite in the hotel for his personal chambers. In doing so, returnees recalled that Rudahigwa not only put an end to segregationist practices at Hotel Faucon, but delivered a powerful message to the Europeans who lived in Rwanda that their racism would not be tolerated.¹² In addition to demonstrating Rudahigwa’s benevolence and strength in the face of European racism, this story has the added value of demonstrating the evils of European colonialism in Rwanda, another prominent theme in returnees’ narratives of Rwanda’s colonial past, as well as the RPF’s official narrative.

In the rare instances where returnees presented a more complicated view of the Rwandan monarchy or called into question the idyllic life enjoyed by Rwandans in the pre-colonial period, they usually had distinctive personal reasons for doing so. One example of this is the well-known story of Kamegeli's Rock, as told to me by a Rwandan colleague, Grégoire, during a trip to Nyanza to visit the twentieth-century seat of Rwanda's royal court.¹³ In his version of the story, Grégoire spoke of an unnamed Tutsi king whose advisor, an unfortunate man named Kamegeli, advocated a disproportionately brutal punishment for a criminal—to chain the man to a large rock until he died slowly of exposure.¹⁴ The king was so horrified by this suggestion that he pardoned the criminal and sentenced Kamegeli to execution using the method he had devised.

On one hand, Grégoire's recounting of the story of Kamegeli's Rock could be interpreted as evidence of the king's benevolent nature, as he was unwilling to inflict disproportionate suffering upon one of his subjects, even a criminal. However, his narrative could be simultaneously interpreted as evidence that the king was not above resorting to the same acts of brutality he claimed to eschew if it served his purpose. Under the circumstances, Grégoire's life history becomes important for understanding the deeper meaning in his particular recounting of the story. His family claimed descent from the Abanyiginya clan, and in the years immediately preceding Rwandan independence, his father had been close to King Ndahindurwa. With Ndahindurwa's decision to accept exile following Rwanda's independence, Grégoire's family lost a powerful patron, leaving them vulnerable to attack from the more extremist members of PARMEHUTU in their community. Grégoire was a child at the time, but remembered the fear exhibited by his parents and older siblings as they made the decision to flee.

As a young adult in exile, Grégoire befriended a group of Rwandan refugees in the DRC who were RPF collaborators. Upon learning that the RPF was preparing an invasion of Rwanda in 1990, Grégoire joined the RPA to serve on the front lines of the civil war. When the RPF wrested control of the nation, formally ending the genocide, Grégoire committed himself to rebuilding the nation, moving his wife and children to Rwanda. However, shortly after, faced with a rapidly growing cohort of new recruits, Grégoire was arrested for stealing food—a crime he claimed was necessary to feed the men under his command. Grégoire was charged with theft and imprisoned, and, perhaps more significantly, claimed to have lost favor with his commanding officers. While his sentence was minimal, Grégoire was fearful following his release that he was regarded as

igipinga and subject to heightened government surveillance. As such, he was guarded when discussing RPF actions or policies in public, even when among trusted colleagues and friends, lest any criticisms he might have been interpreted as evidence of ongoing political dissidence.

Many Rwandans deemed such caution necessary when discussing the Rwandan monarchy, as showing too much enthusiasm for the monarchy could be interpreted by RPF officials as evidence of their desire to see the monarchy restored in the post-genocide period. Prior to his death in 2016, and from his home in exile in the United States, Rwanda's last king, Ndahindurwa, stated that he was open to repatriating to Rwanda if the right conditions were met.¹⁵ However, in casual conversations, Rwandan government officials acknowledged that the RPF had reservations about Ndahindurwa's return: many Rwandans harbored strong positive or negative sentiments about the monarch, making his return controversial and potentially divisive at a time when the RPF was struggling to unite the Rwandan people and ensure long-term political stability. One official went so far as to argue that Kagame would never allow Ndahindurwa to return, lest he have used old political loyalties to mobilize Rwandan elites—many of whom, as returnees, still harbored monarchist sympathies—against the RPF.¹⁶

However, Rwandans must simultaneously be cautious of appearing overly critical of the monarchy, lest RPF officials interpret the criticism as evidence that the speaker has internalized the genocide ideology of Presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana. As indicated in the previously discussed narratives of *génocidaires* and survivors, during the First and Second Hutu Republics the monarchy was cast as a predominantly Tutsi institution responsible for the oppression of the Hutu majority. As a result, in the post-genocide period many Rwandans feared that overt criticism of the monarchy could trigger officials' suspicions that an individual harbored lingering anti-Tutsi sentiments and was resistant to the RPF's efforts to present Rwanda's pre-colonial past as idyllic. Under the circumstances, Grégoire's narrative of an unspecified king's use of capital punishment was, given Rwanda's current political climate, necessarily complicated, as he felt he could not risk being wrongly identified through his words and actions as anything other than fully supportive of the RPF.¹⁷

RUPTURES AND DISPLACEMENTS: LIFE IN PROXIMITY TO THE KAYIBANDA AND HABYARIMANA REGIMES

In discussing Rwandan independence, meanwhile, most returnees focused on the violence that had forced their families into exile in neighboring nations. Their narratives were characterized by fear related to everyday

experiences of anti-Tutsi aggression on the part of their Hutu compatriots. However, much like the recollections of genocide survivors, whose experiences around independence rarely included direct physical violence, the families of the returnees I interviewed had typically fled to escape the possibility of physical violence. For example, Grégoire recalled seeing Tutsi homes being burned and cattle being confiscated at the start of the Hutu Revolution, but his family accepted exile without requiring further coercion.¹⁸ As a result, they were not physically harmed, though Grégoire acknowledged that other monarchists may not have been so fortunate. Most of the returnees I interviewed recalled similar experiences, recounting stories wherein their families' property was taken away and their belongings stolen, but ultimately they were not subjected to more serious forms of violence as long as they fled. This is not to say that this experience of flight was not terrifying and distressing for the refugees, but rather that this particular period of violence was distinctly different from the violence that would follow during the First and Second Hutu Republics.

To this end, few of the returnees I interviewed offered much information about their experiences of exile, preferring instead to comment on the dire treatment endured by those Tutsi who remained in Rwanda under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. To this end, returnees frequently referenced the atrocities endured by Tutsi who remained in Rwanda in a manner that overshadowed any negative experiences they may have had as refugees in neighboring countries. For example, when asked about his experiences as a refugee in the 1960s and 1970s, Samuel responded that the problems faced by refugees during this period were nothing compared to the ethnic violence endured by the Tutsi in his hometown in Cyangugu.¹⁹ His family kept in close contact with extended family and friends who remained in Rwanda, and as a result Samuel heard about how Kayibanda's soldiers constantly instigated anti-Tutsi violence in Cyangugu as a means of instilling fear in the Tutsi who remained. Under the circumstances, Samuel felt he had been very lucky, and any struggles his family endured in exile were minimal in comparison.

This relative silence is perhaps surprising given that many disporic Rwandans struggled to survive as refugees, particularly in Uganda and the DRC. Historians such as Lemarchand and Prunier, and political scientist Mamdani have written extensively about the challenges faced by the Banyarwandan refugees as they attempted to integrate into everyday life in their host nations.²⁰ In addition to the loss of much of their

wealth, and the relative disintegration or dislocation of their patronage networks, refugees struggled to resist prejudicial treatment from the surrounding indigenous communities where they had settled, as well as from the often unpredictable and occasionally hostile governments under which they lived. While refugees may have received some support and protection from the UN and were in some instances able to pursue advanced levels of education and military training, the everyday lives of the Banyarwandan refugees may not have been that different from that of the Tutsi who had remained in Rwanda during the First and Second Hutu Republics in terms of security and quality of living.

Yet for many Uganda-based Rwandan refugees, an area of hope emerged through participation in the military struggle between Obote and Museveni. RANU—renamed the RPF in 1987—was founded in the late 1970s and encouraged Uganda's Rwandan refugee population to support Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) as a means of protecting Banyarwandan interests in Uganda.²¹ By the time the NRA declared victory in 1986, an estimated 16,000 of its soldiers were Rwandan, several of whom were then granted prominent positions in Museveni's inner circle. Most notably, Fred Rwigyema and Paul Kagame were appointed Museveni's deputy Minister of Defence and acting Chief of Military Intelligence, respectively, granting them a high degree of visibility within his government.²²

However, while some Rwandan refugees enjoyed the benefits of close military and political relationships with Museveni and his inner circle, others endured discrimination at the hands of their Ugandan neighbors, a reality that undoubtedly contributed to an ongoing desire among refugees to ultimately return to their pre-revolution homes. Many of those who returned from Rwanda recalled periods of heightened tensions in Uganda that emerged directly from rumors that Museveni and the NRA more generally were controlled by Rwandan Tutsi refugees. While these tensions rarely escalated to physical violence, they did result in ongoing structural inequalities—most notably, the denial of Ugandan citizenship. As part of his political platform, and as a means of securing the support of Uganda's Banyarwandan communities, in 1987 Museveni promised to extent automatic citizenship to any Banyarwandan who had resided in Rwanda for more than ten years. In 1990, however, Museveni was forced to retract this promise in order to quell a major land dispute in southwestern Uganda and prove to his critics that he was not privileging Banyarwandan interests

over those of indigenous Ugandans. On being denied Ugandan citizenship, the RPF claimed Banyarwandan refugees had no alternative but to return to Rwanda using military force.²³

Many Rwandan refugees within and beyond Rwanda rallied behind the RPF, providing financial support in instances where they could not serve the movement more directly. One Rwandan returnee I interviewed had worked for an international NGO in the 1980s and early 1990s, and recalled sending hundreds of dollars each month to contacts in Uganda to support the RPF in its efforts to secure the Rwandan refugees' right to return to Rwanda.²⁴ Other participants recalled sending funds on a more sporadic basis, often in response to requests from other Rwandan refugees to support the RPF's "good work." For many of them, the RPF was their only hope of returning to Rwanda one day and reclaiming the ancestral lands from which their families had been forcibly exiled. As such, they saw these donations as a small but important sacrifice to make.

The relative silence that surrounded returnees' lives in exile was likely motivated by several factors. First, for many returnees, memories of life in exile were bittersweet: they had avoided the structural discrimination endured by Rwanda's minority Tutsi population under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, but were simultaneously subject to the sometimes rapidly shifting political will of the governing regimes in the countries where they sought refuge, leaving them in a state of limbo with regards to their future citizenship and personal security. Related to this, because the broader population of Rwanda tended to think of the returnees primarily in terms of their imputed monarchist affiliations and later support for the RPF leading to the civil war, there was little public space to discuss their life experiences in other, perhaps more meaningful, ways. Among Rwanda's peasant majority—whether Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa—there was a tendency to dismiss returnees first as monarchists who then became *inyenzi*, and second as the militants who triggered the civil war, leading to the genocide. In both instances, the Rwanda peasantry suffered the consequences, leaving them with little empathy for returnees' suffering in exile. And among Rwandan elites, there was often the sense that the returnees had all endured the same basic experience, leaving no need to talk about exile beyond the unquenchable desire to return to Rwanda. They expressed a consistent preference to focus on Rwanda's positive future, rather than dwell on its negative past.

A WAR OF LIBERATION: THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

However, this relative silence quickly dissipated when the subject of Rwanda's civil war was raised. For many returnees, the 1990 RPA invasion of Rwanda represented a sudden point of hope for the future, despite the chaos that accompanied it. Several returnees recalled the RPF invasion with excitement: in Bianca's recollection, when news of the RPF invasion arrived in her community in Kenya, it seemed like anything was possible and that justice for Rwanda's various diasporic communities was finally going to be served. In Bernardin's community in Burundi, the Tutsi celebrated the news of the invasion, believing that Habyarimana's oppressive and corrupt regime was certainly coming to a quick end.²⁵ To this end, in their narratives they frequently termed it a "war of liberation," in keeping with official parlance, rather than the preferred label of civil war used by other Rwandans. Yet while they recognized that their war of liberation had a serious and often negative impact on the lives of the Rwandans who lived in the northern communities worst hit by the fighting, they highlighted the necessity of the war for casting off the oppressive Habyarimana regime and realizing the returnees' right to live in Rwanda as full and equal citizens.

Patrick's narrative offers insights into how returnees who fought with the RPA make sense of the civil war in the post-genocide period.²⁶ Patrick was born in Burundi and as such his knowledge of Rwanda prior to his return to the country was limited to the stories that were passed down within his family and circulated among other refugees in his community. Nonetheless, he felt deeply committed as a teenager to returning to Rwanda, and followed with interest efforts that were being made among the Banyarwandan refugees in the region to negotiate their right to return to Rwanda using diplomatic measures.²⁷ Patrick traveled to Uganda to join the RPF as soon as he heard news of the RPA invasion and, after brief training, was sent to the front lines in northern Rwanda. Once there, he encountered a nation deeply divided along political lines between those civilians who were pro-RPF and those who were pro-Hutu Power. Among the peasants he encountered, he heard occasional rumors that the RPA intended to kill all Hutu, but he argued that the average peasant knew that they had nothing to fear from the RPF. He recalled that the RPF engaged in a steady stream of propaganda to convince Rwanda's Hutu majority that the RPF, once in control of the nation, intended to serve them well. As part of this, the RPF actively sought out Hutu members, particularly

trusted affiliates of the Habyarimana regime who sought to distance themselves from the increasingly extremists attitudes of the Habyarimana regime, as a means of demonstrating to the Rwandan people that the RPF was above ethnic divisionism.²⁸

In terms of RPA troops’ everyday behavior, Patrick remembered strict guidelines and procedures were in place to ensure that the Hutu masses did not regard them as a threat. In Patrick’s experience, these guidelines were easy to follow, as the RPA quickly realized that ordinary Rwandans civilians were not a threat, nor were members of the *Forces armées rwandaises* (FAR)—then the national army of Rwanda. The FAR was poorly prepared for the invasion and, in Patrick’s experience, many of its troops preferred to surrender without firing their weapons, rather than risk death in combat to preserve Habyarimana’s declining regime. For these reasons, Patrick claimed he neither saw evidence of the RPA atrocities that allegedly prompted the flight of northern Hutu from Rwanda, nor did he believe such atrocities could have occurred anywhere along the frontlines.

With the emergence of the Interahamwe in 1993, however, Patrick recalled an important shift in the civil war. The Interahamwe immediately proved itself to be a significant threat, as its members began targeting civilians in the north, particularly those Tutsi who were believed to be providing support to the RPF. These alleged inkotanyi were often arrested and, he heard, subject to unspeakable tortures before being released back into their communities to spread fear among civilians about the consequences of supporting the RPF. In a few instances, he recalled coming across alleged RPF spies who had been executed by the Interahamwe, again with the purpose of spreading fear among civilians. At that time, however, RPA troops were under strict orders not to retaliate, as in Patrick’s experience, the RPF was determined that a major part of their battle for Rwanda would be demonstrating to the Hutu majority that they intended no harm to come to ordinary civilians.

UNSPEAKABLE EVIL: THE 1994 GENOCIDE

With Habyarimana’s assassination, however, Patrick observed an immediate and dramatic onslaught of extreme anti-Tutsi violence. In the community where he was based, Hutu Power extremists responded to Habyarimana’s death by decapitating a number of a high-profile Tutsi, and impaling their heads on sticks that were then displayed for the public. Patrick believed this act was intended to signal the start of the genocide in this town.

Roadblocks appeared soon after, and Tutsi were killed wherever they were found, regardless of their age or gender. Patrick claimed he was still traumatized by the atrocities he witnessed in the early days of the genocide. He recalled a common method of execution reserved for Tutsi men during this period was called *kandoyi*, and involved tying the victim's elbows behind his back and then hanging him so that his toes only just touched the ground. The victim would be left hanging in this manner, causing him great pain. As he reached the point of exhaustion, the Hutu extremists would then attack the victim with nail-studded clubs, beating him about the head until he died. The deceased victims were often left hanging, and on multiple occasions, Patrick recalled being ordered to cut down the bodies to give the victims a proper burial. These experiences were some of his most powerful memories of the genocide, and formed the foundation for the ongoing nightmares he endured in the post-genocide period.

Patrick also had firsthand experiences with the extreme forms of violence that Tutsi women were forced to endure. He recalled that with the start of the genocide, rape became very common. In most instances, the women were raped and then impaled using sharpened sticks and other objects, ensuring their slow but certain death. Once again, when the RPA troops encountered the aftermaths of scenes like this, individual soldiers were often charged with burying the bodies in a respectful manner, though there was not always time. In the rare instances where they encountered women who had survived these atrocities, individual soldiers were charged with ensuring they were transported to RPF camps where they received prompt medical care and support.

Taken together, Patrick believed much of the violence that occurred during the genocide was intended to spread fear among civilians to discourage them from resisting the will of the interim government or from joining the RPF. However, he also argued that the violence served an additional essential purpose—to demoralize the RPA troops. In instances where they captured Interahamwe, the perpetrators of these rapes claimed that they were not just raping Tutsi women, but the mother, sisters, and wives of the RPA troops. Patrick recalled the perpetrators also frequently claimed that such violence was necessary to punish Tutsi women for their superior beauty and excessive pride, and to highlight the RPA's inability to protect them, undermining their status as men. These tactics were largely successful in demoralizing the RPA. As the genocide escalated across the country, Patrick recalled he and his fellow soldiers grew increasingly depressed and angry, and were quick to lash out at the Interahamwe

they encountered. While he claimed to have no knowledge of atrocities perpetrated by RPA troops against Hutu civilians during the genocide, he admitted that they rarely allowed Interahamwe, Presidential Guard, and FAR combatants to surrender. Patrick claimed that most RPA soldiers felt it was more important to use their limited resources to save genocide survivors, rather than Hutu Power extremists.

“I DON’T KNOW IF IT’S MY COUNTRY ANYMORE,
BUT I LOVE IT”: LIFE IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

For those returnees who were not part of the RPA invasion or subsequent battle for control of Rwanda during the genocide, knowledge of the atrocities overwhelming the country was widespread. Many returnees remembered seeing images of violence on their televisions and reading reports in the local media that described in detail the atrocities that were taking place, often a matter of hours after the atrocities had occurred. However, it was not until they returned to Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide that the reality of these atrocities hit home for most returnees. For example, Grégoire sent for his wife and children to join him immediately after the RPF formally took control of the country in July 1994. His wife was an educated woman with extensive experience working for international NGOs, and as such was by no means unfamiliar with human suffering. Nonetheless, the extreme suffering she witnessed upon coming to Rwanda shocked her. The country’s infrastructure was non-existent, and yet the nation seemed overwhelmed by civilians who were injured and dying, and in desperate need of medical attention and other forms of support. She began volunteering at a local medical clinic, where due to the absence of clean drinking water, they only had beer and banana wine for patients to drink. Grégoire joked that most Rwandans spent the immediate aftermath of the genocide drunk, which served the dual purpose of drowning their memories of the genocide and avoiding death from dehydration.

Ghislaine also returned to Rwanda in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, though in her case the decision was inspired by a sense of duty and the realization that as a trained nurse, she had much-needed skills. She recalled:

Mostly, I was thinking of this country. I was thinking that if this country doesn’t have people to tackle its problems, who will do it? What about

tomorrow? How will we have people to build this country? We have young children. How will they live in this country? They need people to help them, to direct them, to show them the right ways of doing things, and living together in peace. That was my thought.²⁹

Upon arriving in Rwanda, Ghislaine began volunteering wherever she felt her skills could be useful. She was aware of the various forms of sexual violence endured by many Tutsi women during the genocide, in particular the mass rape, sexual slavery, and forced maternity perpetrated by many Hutu Power extremists. Fearing that their communities would likely reject these women and recognizing that they would need unique forms of social and psychological support to ensure their survival in the post-genocide period, Ghislaine decided to pursue training as a trauma counselor. Soon after, she was hired by a CBO that provided support to women genocide survivors.

This organization was started immediately after the genocide, so first I had to do sensitization with the women because they didn't know what trauma was—what the symptoms were and what was happening to them. So I had to do sensitization and make them aware of what trauma is. I talked about signs and symptoms, why trauma affects people because of war. So people became aware and they knew what was happened to them. After that, I told them they could solve these problems by talking to me.³⁰

One of the key challenges Ghislaine faced related to her patients' lack of familiarity with counseling. She explained:

Rwandan people are closed and they don't want to tell someone they don't know about their problems. But because I'm Rwandese and I speak the same language, I can tell them "we used to speak our problems among the family, but now the families are not there. People have died." So I tell them I am another way of helping them. They always want to know why you are there, whether it's to write or what. After that, they go and think about it, and come back to me.

Ghislaine's efforts to expose people to the possible benefits of counseling were largely successful. She noted "[a]t first, there were so many. It was even too much for me because the stories they were telling were very painful stories."³¹ As the women began opening up individually about their experiences, however, Ghislaine began organizing them into small support groups according to common types of experiences, in order to provide

targeted group counseling to women who had been forced into sexual slavery or forced to give birth to children conceived through rape, for example. As the group counseling continued and the women began processing their experiences of the genocide, the organization then provided them with other forms of support, such as skills training toward becoming financially independent. In this manner, Ghislaine believed her organization was facilitating meaningful positive change in the lives of women survivors, and she expressed no regrets over her decision to return.

Bianca’s decision to return to Rwanda was motivated similarly by personal and professional circumstances. From her home in Kenya, she gradually learned of the death of her entire extended family during the genocide. For this reason, when her husband suggested they return to Rwanda to help the survivors, she was reluctant to go with him. She explained:

My husband was a pastor and he was called upon to rebuild one of the churches. I told him I didn’t want to go with him—I didn’t want to see Rwanda—so he came alone. Once the church was rebuilt, he called me and said “come and see. You don’t have to stay, but come and see what happened. Maybe you can find some relatives.”

I came in July. Bodies were still on the ground being eaten by birds and dogs. I was shocked and I returned to Kenya. I thought I would never return to Rwanda. I would become a refugee. My husband stayed and a few months later he called me again to come and visit. I agreed to come for one week, but no more. I came back and in July, the whole country stunk. You couldn’t find water—people were drinking and washing with beer from Burundi. So I came a few months later. I had lost all my family, but my husband argued that all those children who had no parents were worse off. I still had my husband and my children, and my house. The people left behind in Rwanda had nothing. My husband asked me if I couldn’t do something. And I agreed. I didn’t have to be selfish. So I decided to take care of the orphans, to help those who were taking care of the orphans. I said “I have my health, I have my husband, I have my children, I have my house. I have to do something.” So that is how I decided to stay in Rwanda and do something.³²

Bianca’s subsequent experiences of helping to rebuild Rwanda proved rewarding. She found work with a CBO that was dedicated to providing genocide survivors, particularly widows and orphans, with the financial support and skills training necessary to start and maintain small businesses. Overall, she felt the CBO was very successful, as she had witnessed

a dramatic change in their members' lives over the years the CBO had operated.

Those who came to us for the first time were crying. They were helpless. Over time, they were smiling and thanking us for what we had done for them. And when we give them a loan so they can plant tomatoes or buy a goat. That is how we have seen that their lives have changed.³³

However, just as Bianca saw reasons to feel hopeful about Rwanda's future, she was aware of the many problems people faced. Key among these, in Bianca's opinion, was the high levels of poverty endured by the majority of Rwandans, particularly those in rural communities. Even though the CBO Bianca worked for provided ongoing support to survivors, she acknowledged that poverty was never far from reality for their members. Most members earned just enough to feed themselves, but had little money left over to pay for extras, such as repairs to their homes or additional help in the fields.

Bianca also admitted to having growing increasingly fearful for the lives of many of her CBO's members, as she felt post-genocide Rwanda was often unsafe for genocide survivors. Over the years, several of the survivors she worked with had experienced community and government persecution related to the RPF's efforts to promote transitional justice in the post-genocide period. While she refrained from providing specific examples, she noted that "survivors are still dying from the killers because when they go to gacaca to give their testimony, their attackers kill them."³⁴ She claimed people in her community had attempted to draw attention to this problem after some of their members had been killed, allegedly by the family and friends of the accused *génocidaires* against whom they testified.³⁵ However, their efforts to encourage the Rwanda National Police to investigate were unsuccessful, leading Bianca to conclude that there were certain negative aspects of life in post-genocide Rwanda that the authorities preferred to cover up in order to uphold the image of a successfully reconciling the New Rwanda.

To this end, Bianca found herself often feeling torn in the post-genocide period. She concluded our interviews by noting:

[T]he government has done a lot. They have put a lot of effort, but when you are dealing with people, you never know what they are thinking and feeling. In general, we hope that everything is okay in Rwanda. Compared to other countries in Africa, Rwanda is better. I don't know if it is my country anymore, but I love it.³⁶

Bianca’s concluding comments touched upon a sentiment that was commonly voiced by the returnees I interviewed: namely, the sense that Rwanda, while arguably a better place to live compared to many neighboring African nations at that moment in time, nonetheless had an uncertain future regarding the possibility of renewed political and ethnic violence. However, in explaining the roots of this uncertain future, most returnee participants did not find ultimate fault with the RPF or Kagame’s authoritarian style of leadership. Having experienced exile and return, as well as everyday life under authoritarian regimes elsewhere in the region, they seemed content to support any politician who would allow them to remain living peacefully in their native Rwanda. As such, and in keeping with the RPF official narrative, they placed blame upon the Belgian colonists and the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes for having forced the Rwandan people to internalize dangerous ethnic divisions leading to genocide, and tended to present Kagame’s resulting authoritarian tendencies as a necessary and logical response.

To this end, returnees often expressed frustration with other cohorts within and beyond Rwanda who were perceived to be critical of Kagame and the RPF, particularly rural Rwandans and members of Rwanda’s political opposition in exile, but also extending to critical foreign scholars. Such critics, they argued, could not comprehend the unique post-genocide context in Rwanda and the challenges faced by the Kagame regime in attempting to ensure long-term political stability and reconciliation among Rwandan civilians. Several of the government officials I interviewed argued that Rwandans needed constant sensitization to accept RPF policies that, while intended to serve the best interests of the Rwandan people, perhaps seemed at odds with the interests of individual Rwandans, and particularly the rural majority. For these reasons, they often argued that critics should take a more balanced approach to post-genocide Rwanda, one that accounts for its recent genocidal past.³⁷

Rose-Marie Mukarutabana was particularly helpful in explaining this general perspective on post-genocide Rwanda, and indeed her insightful comments seem a perfect way to conclude this particular chapter. At one point, we exchanged emails regarding a rumor I had heard about the disbanding of the National University of Rwanda’s History Department, a move I feared had to do with the RPF’s interest in minimizing critical public discourse on Rwanda’s past. Rose-Marie responded as follows:

I don’t have all the details about the history of these decisions and counter-decisions that you mention, but while “minimize critical public discourse”

is correct, and while there is some truth in the suspicion of “bolstering the dissemination and acceptance of the RPF’s official narrative,” the situation is really more complex.

The idea was that continued teaching of History according to the old textbooks—these are in fact Alexis Kagame’s “Abrégés” or syntheses of traditional oral accounts—would prevent the desired renewal of Rwandan society. The problem has been that curriculum writers and historians have been trading accusations: the former complaining that the latter have failed to produce the “new” material on which to base textbooks, while the latter retort that the material has been produced, only that textbook writers are looking for politically correct data rather than facts.

The bone of contention has not been recent history—colonial period to date, this period is reasonably well documented—but the previous, more ancient periods. And the issue seems to be far from being resolved, for it is a veritable conundrum ...

Hutu and Tutsi intellectuals see their common past through different lenses. The discussion may have been, as you point out, limited to the genocide, the colonial period and the more recent reigns, but the root of the problem is to be found in divergent attitudes to older history as Kagame presented it—as an account of the life and deeds of the kings. And this raises the issue of different attitudes to the monarchy as an institution, which the Hutu rejected in the 1959 “revolution,” but which Tutsi intellectuals continue to view as the creator of Rwanda and maker of national history.

Hutu intellectuals particularly resent what they view as a marginalization of the precolonial Hutu kings, the Bahinza, known in Kagame’s books as “roitelets,” kinglets, petty kings. By this term Kagame may have meant no more than the small size of these “kingdoms,” but the pejorative connotation, combined with Kagame’s scant coverage of the history of these rulers, has been assessed as an intentional dismissal of the contribution to Rwanda’s history of these Hutu rulers, because they were Hutu, and Kagame was a Tutsi, and a monarchist to boot ... History should therefore be reviewed to correct this pro-Tutsi bias in Kagame’s syntheses, the teaching of which has given the Hutu an inferiority complex, which was fanned into hatred and eventually into the committal of genocide. However, while almost every Rwanda now agrees that the teaching of “amateka mabi,” or “bad” history—meaning divisive and one-sided history—played a role in the events which led to the genocide, it has been difficult to determine what the right kind of history should be.

The Hutu intellectuals who, over the last several decades, have criticised history as Kagame presented it, did not produce textbooks based on their interpretation: Kagame continued teaching history at university level and his books remain on the syllabus.

Today, trained historians have actually reviewed Rwanda's history in order to produce a more professional picture of this history, but the production of actual school textbooks based on these works is yet to make headway, because "certain issues" remain contentious.

Running through all this is the strange fact that the Hutu elites suspect their Tutsi colleagues to want an unduly long history simply to glorify their own ancestors, while the Tutsi suspect the Hutu of wanting to "to shorten the country's history," by insisting on making the earliest Nyiginya kings contemporary with the known Hutu kings, which makes for a history going no further back than the late 19th century

The real problem as I see it is that Rwandans are still struggling to determine how to discuss the identity of both country and citizens, how to handle issues of origin, of the nature and roots of past social inequalities, and the effects of these and other problems on living together as a national community. When and how Rwanda was created, who created it, who ruled it, what is the origin of the three ethnic groups, how did they relate to each other in the recent and distant past, why and to what extent were they unequal, etc.

In order to function properly, a textbook has to provide answers to this broad range of issues, failing which it will create more problems than it solves.

As you can see, it is therefore not a simple matter of the government wanting to impose the official narrative, and preventing people from analyzing it publicly. It is that positions are right now still rigid, and no solution has yet been found.

Actually, this protracted process rather leads one to suspect there is really no official narrative, no "party line," for if one sufficiently coherent line had been available, it would have been a simple matter to impose it: just write the textbooks, and get everyone to use them.

What we see instead is a painstaking soul-searching, a long-drawn effort to reconcile rather divergent views on what is perhaps the key to achieving a normal life as a nation.

Meanwhile, the country survives on what you view as “simplified propaganda,” but is really a meager diet of temporary expedients, hoping for a proper diet—“soon.”³⁸

NOTES

1. The waves of refugees that fled Rwanda during the First Hutu Republic represent only one of four historic patterns of Rwandan mobility, including flight from pre-colonial dynastic expansion; colonial era flight due to economic migration, particularly in the early 1900s; flight related to decolonization from 1959 to 1964; and flight from genocide and related mass atrocities in 1994. Among these diverse clusters of refugees, however, David Newbury argues that refugees of the first Hutu Republic were most vocal about their desire to return home. David Newbury, “Returning Refugees: Four Historical Patterns of ‘Coming Home’ to Rwanda,” *Society for Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47(2) (2005): 260–261.
2. See, for example, Lemarchand’s comparison of the experiences of Rwandan refugees who fled to the DRC and Uganda. René Lemarchand, “Exclusion, Marginalization and Political Mobilization: The Road to Hell in the Great Lakes,” Occasional Paper, Centre for African Studies, University of Copenhagen (2000), 8, http://teol.ku.dk/cas/research/publications/occ_papers/lemarchand20012.pdf (accessed 3 January 2015).
3. In her work among Hutu civilians who lived in refugee camps in Tanzania following the 1972 genocide in Burundi, Liisa Malkki identified certain mythico-histories that played a significant role in maintaining and reproducing perceived differences between Hutu and Tutsi. These mythico-histories were typically constructed in opposition to the Tutsi-dominated official history being disseminated in Burundi, representing a radical recasting of Burundi’s past that privileged the Hutu as Burundi’s “rightful natives” and dismissed the Tutsi as foreigners who had, through trickery and deceit, stolen the nation. These mythico-histories served to reorder the refugees’ social and political world in the camps, and while questionable in terms of their historical accuracy, were nonetheless psychologically true for the narrators. Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 3, 54–55.

4. Ibreck, "The politics of mourning," 341.
5. As noted by Desrosiers and Thomson, Habyarimana cultivated a similar persona during his time as president, presenting himself as a benevolent leader of the Rwandan people. Desrosiers and Thomson, "Rhetorical legacies of leadership," 429–453.
6. In some instances, these attacks were unprompted. However, it is important to note that the Hutu Revolution was triggered in 1959 by an attack orchestrated by the UNAR on Dominique Mbonyumutwa, the popular Hutu leader of PARMEHUTU. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 48.
7. A similar phenomenon has been identified by Liisa Malkki in her work among Burundian refugees of the 1972 genocide in Burundi, whereby the Burundians who fled in the Tanzanian refugee camps over time developed and internalized mythico-histories that allow them to position themselves as "pure" Hutu and the "rightful natives" of Burundi. Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 3.
8. Personal communication with author, 2012.
9. See, for example, David Newbury's analysis of Umuganura—Rwanda's First Fruits Festival. David Newbury, "What Role has Kingship? An Analysis of the Umuganura Ritual of Rwanda as Presented in Marcel d'Hertefelt and André Coupez, *La sacrée de l'anien Rwanda* (1964)," *Africa* 27(4) (1981): 89–101.
10. Rudahigwa was succeeded by Ndahindurwa on 25 July 1959. However, Ndahindurwa was forced into exile after an estimated 80% of Rwandans voted that the monarchy should not be retained after independence. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 53–54.
11. English translation: "dogs and blacks are forbidden."
12. A similar version of this story is recounted in a recent magazine article. The Eye Magazine, "Hotel Faucon: Where racists met a king's fury" 29 July 2014, <http://theeye.co.rw/hotel-faucon-where-racists-met-a-kings-fury/> (accessed 15 January 2015).
13. This story is widely known by Rwandans, and has been documented by Rwandan historian Alexis Kagame in his 1972 publication *Un abrégé de l'ethno-histoire du Rwanda*. In most instances, Rwandans attribute the actions recounted in the story to Mibambwe Mutabazi Gisanura, also known as Gisanura the Just, who is a popular figure in Rwandan history due to his legacy of having provided pre-colonial Rwanda with its first comprehensive legal system. His court at Mutakara has given rise to the Rwandan proverb "the case

was tried at Mutakara,” which means the matter has been considered thoroughly and with great fairness. Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'ethno-histoire du Rwanda*, 123.

14. In Kinyarwanda, the word *kamegeri* means “little mushroom” and references a type of mushroom that is grilled in a hot earthenware pan. Rwandan historian Rose-Marie Mukarutabana argues this name is evidence that the story was invented by Rwandans as a parable, evoking the Rwandan equivalent of “an eye for an eye.” Personal communication with author.
15. See, for example, a recent article in *Igihe* that describes the terms presented by Ndahindurwa to a Rwandan delegation that had been sent to encourage him to repatriate to Rwanda. Ange de la Victoire Dusabemungu, “Kigali V Ndahindurwa sets conditions to repatriate to Rwanda,” *Igihe*, 12 December 2014, <http://en.igihe.com/news/kigali-v-ndahindurwa-sets-conditions-to.html> (accessed 16 January 2015).
16. Interview with author, 2007.
17. For further analysis of the story of Kamegeli’s Rock as published by Alexis Kagame in 1972, see Jessee and Watkins, “Good Kings, Bloody Tyrants, and Everything In Between,” 35–62.
18. Interview with author, 2007.
19. Interview with author, 2008.
20. See, for example, Lemarchand, “Exclusion, Marginalization and Political Mobilization”; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 61–74; and Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 159–184.
21. Previously, RANU was called the Rwanda Refugee Welfare Foundation. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 67.
22. Lemarchand, “Exclusion, Marginalization and Political Mobilization,” 8.
23. Jean-Paul Kimonyo, “RPF: Political and cultural awakening,” *The New Times*, 28 July 2014, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-07-28/77159/> (accessed 29 July 2015).
24. Interview with author, 2008.
25. Interview with author, 2012.
26. Interview with author, 2008.
27. As noted by Kimonyo, Mamdani, Prunier, and Lemarchand, throughout the Great Lakes region of Africa, the Banyarwandan refugee communities engaged in various diplomatic efforts to pur-

sue full and equal citizenship in both their host countries and their native Rwanda. Kimonyo, Mamdani, and Prunier highlight the efforts of Uganda’s Rwandan refugees, noting that as early as 1979 they had organized with the purpose of pursuing diplomatic resolution to their refugee status. Initially, they sought to negotiate the right to return to Rwanda. In the early 1980s, however, lack of progress prompted a small cohort of Uganda-based Rwandan refugees, including Fred Rwigyema and Paul Kagame, to join forces with Museveni to overthrow the then-President Milton Obote. These early members of RANU, soon to be renamed the RPF, were provided with military training and material support, setting the stage for the 1990 invasion. For more information, see Kimonyo, “RPF—The political and military mobilization,” *The New Times*, 30 July 2014, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-07-30/77259/> (accessed 29 July 2015); Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 158–184; and Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 67–74. In the case of the DRC, Lemarchand, drawing upon Reyntjens, notes that the DRC-based “fifty-niners” opted almost immediately following their exile for “a ‘direct action’ strategy and proceeded to launch armed raids from Burundi, the Congo and Uganda, only to be repulsed – a great cost to themselves and Tutsi civilians inside Rwanda – by the Rwandan National Guard and their Belgian advisors.” Lemarchand, “Exclusion, marginalization and political mobilization,” 7. See also, Filip Reyntjens, “*Les mouvements armés de réfugiés Rwandais: Rupture ou continuité?*” *Civilisations* 40(2) (1992): 170–182.

28. Kimonyo reports a similar pattern of recruitment by the RPF, noting that following his designation as president of the RPF in 1989, Rwigyema refused to launch an armed invasion of Rwanda without Hutu allies by his side. As a result, Kimonyo claims that the RPF began actively seeking Hutu recruits from within and beyond Rwanda, including senior army officers who had fallen out with the Habyarimana regime. Kimonyo, “RPF – The political and military mobilization.”
29. Interview with author, 2008.
30. Interview with author, 2008.
31. Interview with author, 2008.
32. Interview with author, 2008.
33. Interview with author, 2008.
34. Interview with author, 2008.

35. Rwandan survivors' organizations such as Ibuka have attempted to draw international attention to this issue, releasing reports as recently as 2014 that documented murders of genocide survivors allegedly to prevent them from giving testimonies before gacaca. For more information, see Sabiiti, "IBUKA raises alarm over killing of survivors," *East African*, 18 April 2014, <http://reliefweb.int/report/rwanda/ibuka-raises-alarm-over-killing-survivors/> (accessed 16 Feb 2015); and Hirondele, "IBUKA report: 167 Genocide Survivors Murdered Since 1995." In both instances, Ibuka argued that the cases they documented likely represented only a fraction of the actual murders of genocide survivors that had taken place across the country as a means of retaliating against or preventing survivors from testifying before gacaca. In addition, Human Rights Watch and Penal Reform International have documented alleged reprisal killings and other silencing tactics aimed at survivors who testified before gacaca. For example, see Human Rights Watch, "Killings in Eastern Rwanda," January 2007, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/africa/rwanda0107/rwanda0107web.pdf> (accessed 1 August 2015); and Penal Reform International, "Final monitoring and research report on the gacaca process," 2010, <http://www.penalreform.org/resource/final-monitoring-research-report-gacaca-process/> (accessed 1 August 2015).
36. Interview with author, 2008.
37. Reyntjens has identified a similar pattern among RPF officials and their supporters, which he has termed the "genocide credit" and argues is actively used by the RPF to escape condemnation for their many human rights abuses and maintain their legitimacy as the ruling party in Rwanda. Reyntjens, "Rwanda, Tens Year On," 199.
38. Personal communication with author, 2012.

Considering Silences: Hutu Survivors? Tutsi Génocidaires? And What of the Twa?

“People like me will never get peace.”
—Elliot

CONSIDERING SILENCES IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

Thus far, the previous chapters have addressed the narratives of Rwandans who fit relatively neatly into the dichotomous vision of Rwandan society promoted by the RPF’s official narrative: namely, innocent (Tutsi) survivors and guilty (Hutu) perpetrators. But what of those Rwandans whose very existence defies these social categories: for example, Hutu civilians who suffered unimaginable losses during the genocide and related mass atrocities, and Tutsi génocidaires who engaged in the torture, murder, and mutilation of their fellow Tutsi, whether as a survival strategy or due to animosity toward their victims? This dichotomy also leaves little room for discussion of Twa civilians’ experiences surrounding the genocide—during which they were often targeted as alleged Tutsi supporters, as well as coerced into contributing to the genocide—and Rwandan history more broadly. This chapter begins to address these relative silences, among others, affecting post-genocide Rwanda.

Gaining access to individuals whose very existence contradicts the RPF’s official narrative is not easy. As a foreign researcher, there was no government agency I could approach for a permit, nor could I work under the radar without my presence in a particular community or participant’s

home or office being noticed. Likewise, there was no way to phrase my interest in searching out these Rwandans to official gatekeepers without potentially placing participants, research assistants, and myself at risk of government surveillance and harassment. I could not ask to speak to Hutu genocide survivors or Twa civilians without exposing myself as someone who was interested in politically sensitive subject matter: namely, those experiences of suffering related to the genocide that in the post-genocide period are often conflated with genocide denial, rejection of national unity and reconciliation, or historical revisionism. As a result, my ability to engage with these areas of silence was limited to observations and encounters of everyday life in post-genocide Rwanda, during which I could try to casually probe these subjects, and interview those rare individuals who actively sought me out with stories to tell, often at substantial risk to themselves.

To this end, the life history narratives of two individuals ultimately stand out as distinct from the majority of interviews I conducted in Rwanda. The first individual, Jeanne, was a middle-aged Hutu woman who lost all but one member of her family during the genocide. Upon ascertaining that I was studying the genocide memorial in her community, Jeanne felt compelled to tell me her story as a genocide survivor—a label she was discouraged from applying to herself by memorial staff, not because they did not recognize her losses surrounding the genocide, but because they recognized the dangers inherent in her claiming this status as a Hutu. The second individual, Elliot, was a middle-aged Tutsi man who was convicted as a *génocidaire* after having allegedly enthusiastically orchestrated and participated in the murder of Tutsi civilians in his community. While their narratives are by no means exhaustive of the kinds of experiences that are silenced in the post-genocide period, they speak of the pressures endured by Rwandans who do not align nicely with the RPF's official narrative of innocence and guilt surrounding the genocide.

JEANNE'S STORY: A (HUTU) GENOCIDE SURVIVOR

My one fleeting encounter with a Hutu who self-identified as a genocide survivor emerged from my work at a rural state-funded genocide memorial. I had been fortunate that one of the local guides, Olivier, had taken me under his wing early in my fieldwork. I visited him often at his work, during which he switched between walking me through the memorial, attending to daily responsibilities, and giving me more formal interviews in which he would educate me about particular events in

Rwanda's history. As we were saying goodbye one afternoon, I noticed a woman watching us. The presence of foreigners at the genocide memorials was nothing new to the local community, and so I doubted she was simply interested in watching the comings and goings of the site. As a result, I approached her. She asked me about the purpose of my research, and responded enthusiastically when I mentioned my interest in understanding how Rwandans made sense of the genocide and other periods in their nation's past. Jeanne explained that she was also a survivor of the genocide, and would appreciate an opportunity to tell me her story.

As we made arrangements to meet the following week, Olivier suggested that we conduct a preliminary interview then and there at the memorial. It was a quiet afternoon, and there was a private space for us to use, so we agreed. He asked if he could sit and listen, to which Jeanne consented without any overt signs of discomfort or anxiety. Conversely, I got the sense that this was perhaps a story she had told many times before, and indeed one with which Olivier was familiar. Within minutes Jeanne was narrating her life history. However, Jeanne's story was not what I had come to expect from the genocide memorials, and Olivier's presence increasingly introduced tensions as he struggled to reframe elements of Jeanne's narrative in keeping with the RPF's official narrative.

Jeanne was a Hutu whose decision to identify herself as a survivor of the genocide was a significant source of tension throughout the interview. Jeanne began her story by explaining how she came to meet her husband, a Tutsi man she married for love, and who had died during the massacre at the memorial along with all of their children except for their youngest—an infant whom Jeanne had been carrying on her back at the time of the attack.¹ She attributed her survival to her husband's bravery, as it was he who forced her to show the extremists her identity card proving her Hutu ethnicity, and who then pleaded with the Hutu extremists to have mercy on Jeanne and their youngest child. Eventually, her husband convinced one of the attackers to escort Jeanne and their youngest child home. Though Jeanne did not know the exact circumstances of what transpired next, she later learned that her husband and remaining children were killed later that day with the rest of the Tutsi who had sought refuge at the site.

As Jeanne spoke, Olivier interrupted her at various points to complicate and contradict her narrative. For example, he corrected her use of the term "survivor" in reference to herself, noting that it was not possible for there to be Hutu survivors of the genocide because the Hutu were not the intended

targets. Olivier's strict definition of what constituted a survivor, however, failed to account for the fact that Jeanne had suffered a great deal during the genocide because of her affiliation with Tutsi. She had married a Tutsi man and, due to the Rwandan custom of patrilineal inheritance of ethnicity, produced Tutsi children. For this reason, she was at risk of being tortured and murdered during the genocide because her attackers perceived her as Tutsi or arguably worse—someone who had betrayed her Hutu compatriots. Under the circumstances, Jeanne argued she had every right to self-identify as a survivor of the genocide. However, this was an inherently provocative political act, perhaps even intended to draw Olivier into an argument so as to highlight the ongoing tensions in post-genocide Rwanda.

Jeanne's interpretations of Rwanda history more generally then proved to be another source of tension. When speaking about the Hutu Revolution and the anti-Tutsi violence that occurred under Kayibanda, Jeanne claimed that her community had remained free of such ethnic tensions, and that no Tutsi had died. Furthermore, she maintained that her family had been very religious, and as such, had enjoyed good relations with all of their neighbors, making it comparatively easy for her to fall in love with and marry a Tutsi man. She recalled hearing about anti-Tutsi massacres in school, but argued that these attacks were small, infrequent, and, in her experience, limited to border communities in Rwanda where Tutsi refugees of the Hutu Revolution were instigating violence against Rwandan civilians in the hopes of forcing Kayibanda to permit them to return to Rwanda.

At this point Olivier prompted her to talk about the other forms of ethnic tension that had been rampant in her community in the past. Jeanne acquiesced, noting that when she was in primary school, her teachers always asked the Hutu and Tutsi students to identify themselves by standing separately. Jeanne acknowledged that these acts were intended to shame the Tutsi, particularly when discussing the Tutsi monarchy. She also acknowledged that the Tutsi were subjected to ethnic quotas that limited the number of Tutsi who could attend secondary school, and so for this reason, forcing them to identify themselves emphasized the fact that they were in the minority in relation to the Hutu students. However, Jeanne once again made the point that the people in her community bore no ill feelings toward the Tutsi, and that such efforts to expose the Tutsi to ridicule never resulted in physical violence.

At Olivier's prompting, Jeanne provided further details regarding the complex relationship that existed between Hutu and Tutsi in her

community prior to the genocide. She remembered being told stories by her parents about the Tutsi monarchs, all of which emphasized what bad leaders they had been. These stories related how the monarchs had considered the Hutu their slaves, and had convinced the *bazungu*—by which she meant the German, and later Belgian, colonists—that the Hutu should be treated as inferiors. Initially, the *bazungu* were easily manipulated by the monarchy, and promoted the separation of the rich Tutsi from the poor Hutu, which led to animosity and occasionally, violence.

Jeanne's interpretation of the interactions between the Tutsi monarchy and the German and Belgian colonial administration is significant. Compared to RPF's official narrative, she placed far more importance on Tutsi collaboration with the colonial administrations to establish fixed ethnic boundaries between themselves and the Hutu to ensure the ongoing political dominance of the Tutsi. Olivier did not agree with Jeanne's perspective, and stated that the *bazungu* decided on their own to formally distinguish between the Hutu and Tutsi, and that the Tutsi were unsuspecting victims of the subsequent policies, just like the Hutu. According to Olivier, the *bazungu* believed the Hutu originally migrated to Rwanda from Uganda, making them true Africans, while the Tutsi originally migrated from Ethiopia and were of Caucasian descent. This belief would lead to the practice, during the genocide, of throwing slaughtered Tutsi in Nyabarongo River to return them to Ethiopia.² An argument ensued, during which Jeanne maintained that the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi went deeper than this. Jeanne argued that even before the arrival of the *bazungu*, the Tutsi were distinct from Hutu. Because Tutsi were wealthy and drank milk, they were more beautiful, taller, slimmer, and had lighter skin compared to the Hutu. Their beauty and wealth made them superior to the Hutu, who, by comparison, worked in the fields and had few opportunities to better themselves. According to Jeanne, all the *bazungu* did was to recognize this difference and formalize it by adding it to identity cards.

A final point of tension between Jeanne and Olivier emerged during our discussion of the memorial where we were conducting our interview. Jeanne had lost most of her immediate family during the massacre at the memorial, and in the immediate aftermath of the genocide had returned to the site to identify their bodies and bury them on ancestral land. However, local officials had intervened. The authorities in Rwanda rarely considered such requests, she claimed, because they wanted to have a large number of bodies on display to help combat genocide denial—a necessity, according to Olivier, that he agreed with completely.³ Jeanne disagreed with this

practice, however. She noted that a respectful burial was very important in Rwandan culture because blood spilled in violence was very dangerous to those who came in contact with it, allowing the spirit of the deceased to attack the person and their family, causing symptoms ranging from mental and physical illness to sterility of the victims and their livestock, and poor yields at harvest time.

To avoid haunting by angry spirits, Jeanne believed it was vital that the victims of the genocide be buried with respect, which in her family meant washing the bones and burying each individual in a separate grave on ancestral land, accompanied by a formal Christian ceremony attended by surviving family.⁴ She argued that only this kind of formal burial could appease the angry spirits of the victims of the genocide. However, Jeanne argued that the current government dismissed rural Rwandans as primitive and superstitious, and so denied them this right. As a result, she claimed hauntings were common in rural Rwanda, causing much pain and suffering, particularly to Hutu who were victimized alongside the Tutsi due to their refusal to abandon their Tutsi loved ones or to collaborate in the genocide.

Similar sentiments have been voiced by many of the Rwandans I have met over the years, regardless of ethnicity or political affiliations. While few were comfortable speaking about this subject, I have consistently encountered attitudes whereby the RPF's policies related to Rwanda's anonymous deceased victims of the genocide were portrayed as a substantial impediment to social repair in the post-genocide period. On one hand, many genocide survivors—particularly those who were unable to identify their missing and murdered loved ones prior to their bodies being incorporated in the memorials—often complain that the memorials could not offer them peace in the post-genocide period because they served as a tangible reminder of survivors' failure to locate and rebury their loved ones with respect, inflicting long-term emotional, spiritual, and physical suffering on survivors. On the other hand, Hutu civilians like Jeanne who endured the murder of Tutsi family members and friends, or Hutu loved ones who attempted to resist the violence or were targeted in RPA-perpetrated war crimes, for example, often accurately believed these victims were being incorporated into the state-funded genocide memorials as evidence of Tutsi civilians who were murdered during the genocide. This meant that the specific individuals and circumstances they sought to remember and mourn through these sites were largely obliterated by the politicalized message inherent in RPF's program of nationalized commemoration.⁵

Ultimately, Jeanne's story, while representative of one Hutu woman's experiences of loss during the genocide, speaks to the broader silences impacting Hutu civilians who were not complicit in the genocidal violence and yet feel they are being silenced by the RPF's official narrative and related policies because they are perceived as somehow "diminishing" or denying the genocide. Yet even Jeanne's account of loss is relatively safe in relation to the narratives shared by other Hutu civilians, as well as many of the *génocidaires* with whom I worked, who spoke volumes on the brutalities they endured at the hands of RPA troops during the civil war, for example, or in the refugee camps in the DRC.⁶ Indeed, this factor—that her murdered family members were Tutsi rather than Hutu and had died at the hands of Hutu extremists—may indicate why it was possible for her to speak to me, particularly in front of memorial staff, about her losses during the genocide without significant risk of being condemned by Olivier as a genocide denier. Thus, while her narrative and her insistence on self-identifying as a genocide survivor speak of an experience that is largely silenced by the RPF official narrative, the risks she faced in speaking somewhat publicly about her losses were perhaps less than those faced by her Hutu compatriots. This likely explains why beyond the prisons, so few Hutu were willing to speak publicly about the suffering they endured, let alone at the hands of the RPF.

ELLIOT'S CONFESSION: A (TUTSI) GÉNOCIDAIRE

Elliot similarly represented a category of Rwandans—admittedly a very small minority—whose experiences surrounding the genocide were silenced by the RPF's official narrative: namely, Tutsi *génocidaires*. I first met Elliot in a prison director's office where he was summoned to help me make contact with potential research participants. Because I was trying to recruit convicted *génocidaires* in a manner that did not involve coercion from prison administrators, I had requested permission to work directly with prisoners who, in addition to serving sentences for their crimes surrounding the genocide, were also working within the prisons to convince their fellow *génocidaires* to confess their crimes before *gacaca*, for example, or who had emerged as a leader among the prisoners and thus had the kinds of intimidate connections and knowledge of *génocidaires'* crimes and perspectives on the conflict to be able to recommend me to people and vice versa. Elliot was one of these leaders within the prison, who in the early days of our work together said little and expressed no interest in

being interviewed. He did, however, agree to the confidentiality requirements of the project, and to search out génocidaires within the prison who fit the ethical and methodological criteria to which I was bound. As my interviews in the prison progressed, Elliot requested that I interview him as well. He had a story, he claimed, that he had never told anyone before and which he believed I would find very different to the life histories to which I had thus far been exposed.

Elliot's story began with a confession: he was not a Hutu—despite being known within the prison as such—but a Tutsi.⁷ His parents had withheld his true ethnicity from him for most of his life, not to protect him from potential ethnic violence, but to protect his father and his father's family's reputation as dignified and respected members of the community. Elliot's father was, he claimed, born of an affair between his Hutu grandmother and a wealthy Tutsi man from their community, making his father and his offspring Tutsi rather than Hutu as they claimed.⁸ As such, Elliot perceived himself as both a victim and a perpetrator during the genocide due to relatively unique circumstances of his family's pre-genocide history.

Elliot was born just prior to the start of the Hutu Revolution into a poor Hutu family that survived through subsistence agriculture. His childhood, he recalled, had been marked by rumors that were never fully voiced in his presence. He recalled arguments between his mother and father, and periods where his relationship with his father had seemed strained—in part because of his father's outspoken dislike of the Tutsi and the fact that Elliot chose to marry a Tutsi woman—but for years Elliot claimed he did not know the reason for these tensions. When Habyarimana took power, Elliot remembered that some of his family's neighbors had spoken out against his family for being of mixed ethnicity—allegations that his parents quickly refuted. He recalled that baseless rumors of alleged Tutsi heritage were not uncommon during periods of ethnic and political tension in Rwanda, particularly when the accusers had something to gain from exposing their victims as Tutsi spies and political subversives, and so Elliot did not put any stock in the possibility that his parents might be keeping an important secret from him.

With the start of the civil war, however, Elliot—now a teacher and local government official—was faced with renewed rumors of his Tutsi ethnicity. In the local bars, Elliot learned that people were claiming that Elliot's father had known that he was a Tutsi, but that his father had turned against his biological father and Tutsi heritage after his biological father died and failed to include him among the children who inherited his wealth and property.

Elliot confronted his mother with these allegations, which she confirmed, much to his surprise. However, rather than making him more empathetic to the increasing discrimination and violence to which his fellow Tutsi compatriots were being subjected, Elliot became angry toward the Tutsi. He, like his father, rejected his Tutsi ethnicity and threatened to kill anyone who continued to spread rumors that he was anything other than a pure and loyal Hutu.

As the civil war progressed, Elliot became increasingly interested in politics, and with the formation of the CDR, became one of its most outspoken advocates in his community. His political career advanced quickly, and with the start of the genocide, Elliot was made responsible for maintaining lists of the names of Tutsi civilians who had escaped the Hutu extremists and assisting in the organization of roadblocks and massacres in the community. He had confessed to these crimes, establishing himself as a Category One génocidaire, but he claimed he never directly murdered anyone, and actually saved thousands of Tutsi from his district by listing them as deceased when in fact they were in hiding or had fled. In doing so, Elliot claimed that the Hutu Power extremists stopped searching for these individuals, dramatically increasing their chances of survival as the genocide continued, thus giving the Tutsi from his community a higher survival rate compared to other districts.

With this complex confession of complicity surrounding the genocide, Elliot's narrative returned to the subject of his victimization in the post-genocide period. Due to his alleged efforts to save Tutsi civilians in his community during the genocide, Elliot claimed he was initially celebrated as a rescuer. It was his own family that eventually turned him in to the authorities, suspecting that his pre-genocide advocacy for the CDR placed them all in danger of RPF persecution for harboring a génocidaire. The investigation surrounding Elliot's alleged crimes lasted five years, at which point he was brought before *gacaca* to confess. He was subsequently scheduled for release based on the time he had already served and sent to *ingando* for re-education. While attending *ingando*, however, a group of survivors from Elliot's community, having heard of his pending release, raised new allegations against him that he had murdered several Tutsi during the genocide. Instead of being released, he was returned to prison to await the results of a new investigation that lasted over a year and, according to Elliot, turned up no new evidence of his crimes during the genocide. Elliot was once again scheduled for release and sent to *ingando*, only to be forcibly returned to prison two days later after new allegations were levied against him by survivors from his community—this time claiming that he had helped mobilize

the police in his community to massacre Tutsi civilians. Elliot denied all of these allegations, but was required to remain in prison until the investigators determined whether the allegations were credible or not.

Elliot attributed the stream of allegations raised against him to the fact that he came from a family of mixed ethnicity. While he claimed that the authorities and members of his community did not know that he was actually Tutsi, several members of his extended family had married Tutsi and during the genocide had resisted the violence that threatened to overwhelm their nation, in some instances at dire cost to themselves and their children. Elliot had lost several members of his family during the genocide for this reason: faced with the option of either abandoning their Tutsi spouses and children to certain death at the hands of Hutu Power extremists or dying with them, they chose murder alongside their loved ones. Other members of his extended family died because of rumors that his father, while masquerading as a Hutu, had been one of the RPF's most effective spies. According to Elliot, families such as his that muddled the boundaries between Hutu and Tutsi were discriminated against in the post-genocide period because they complicated the RPF's official narrative surrounding the genocide, whereby Tutsi were innocent victims and Hutu were guilty perpetrators. For this reason, Elliot argued that Rwandans of mixed ethnicity "will never get peace" in the post-genocide period.⁹

However, Elliot believed his situation could get substantially worse if the authorities were to learn that he was actually Tutsi. While he was being held in prison indefinitely despite having served his initial sentence, Elliot believed that were his Tutsi heritage to become known to the authorities, he would likely be killed for the shame he inflicted upon his family, community, and nation, for having aided the murder of his compatriots. During the genocide in his community, Elliot claimed that several Tutsi perpetrated atrocities against other Tutsi, often in a desperate attempt to save their own lives or those of their loved ones. In the months following the RPF victory, Tutsi *génocidaires* were generally murdered by the RPA troops who wanted to punish them for having betrayed their Tutsi compatriots. As a result, Elliot guarded his Tutsi heritage carefully lest he be tortured and murdered for having betrayed his fellow Tutsi during the genocide.

AND WHAT OF THE TWA?

Finally, Twa life histories were completely absent from the life histories I collected—a conspicuous trend in the RPF's official narrative and much of the post-genocide academic literature as well.¹⁰ I did not intentionally

exclude Twa from my fieldwork, and on a few occasions made a concerted effort to seek out Twa participants, hoping to rectify their absence among the varied perspectives I was documenting on the genocide and Rwandan history, more generally. However, in May 2007—a matter of months before I started fieldwork in Rwanda—the Community of Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda (CAURWA) was forced to change its name to *Communauté des Potiers Rwandais* (COPORWA).¹¹ Having failed to convince the Rwandan government that its efforts to advocate on behalf of the Twa minority population were not promoting ethnic divisionism and genocide ideology, CAURWA was given an ultimatum: either remove all mention of indigenusness and ethnicity from their name, or accept the closure of their offices and programs. To ensure compliance with its demands, the Rwandan government had allegedly threatened key members of CAURWA with imprisonment.¹² These alleged threats, alongside concerns that Twa communities were being surveilled by the Rwandan government, were cited by many of the Twa civilians I subsequently met as a reason why it was unsafe for Twa to be seen speaking with foreign researchers. While my Twa contacts seemed generally supportive of any efforts to maintain their identity as indigenous Twa, they did not want to be perceived as contributing to this movement in any meaningful way to avoid attracting unwanted government attention, and the threats and violence that often accompanied it.¹³

Under the circumstances, the safest way to address the public silencing of Twa voices is through existing literature, enhanced by ethnographically informed analysis that draws upon my brief, off-the-record encounters with Twa civilians, and the ways Twa were depicted in interviews and conversations with other Rwandan participants. In terms of existing literature, the Twa are an indigenous minority population found throughout the Great Lakes region of Africa. With regards to the historiography on Rwanda, they are often described as the nation's earliest inhabitants, who in the past relied primarily on hunting and gathering for subsistence.¹⁴ However, as noted by Marjaana Kohtamaki, such descriptions may be an oversimplification: anthropologists and historical linguists have failed to find sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that the Twa are indigenous to Rwanda or that they constitute a distinctive ethnic group, more generally.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the Twa typically self-identify as an indigenous minority population that is distinct from their Rwandan compatriots. Their common identity has a long history in Rwanda, dating back to the pre-colonial period. Though rarely mentioned in the official histories and early archival sources pertaining to this period, some Twa men gained

prominence, and indeed over time were perhaps even able to transition to Tutsi, by gaining favor with the Rwandan court. Rwandan abami often included Twa musicians and entertainers among their retinue, as well as a supplemental company of Twa among their guards.¹⁶ Des Forges offers an account of Basebya—a Twa client of mwami Rutarindwa—who, following the death of Rutarindwa at the hands of court warriors loyal to the Abega-dominated regime of incoming mwami Musinga, orchestrated a series of raids in north-central Rwanda in the early twentieth century that destabilized the region so effectively that many local Hutu and Tutsi opted to join his forces rather than risk starvation.¹⁷ Similarly, Felix Ndahinda recounts the Twa origins of the Abasyete clan, whose members are allegedly descendants of Busyete—a Twa man charged with the execution of a Queen Mother in the late seventeenth century, as part of broader power struggles within the royal court.¹⁸ Busyete spared the Queen Mother's life, and as a reward was ennobled. In the process, he was granted land and cattle, and expected to adopt a Tutsi lifestyle.¹⁹

Those Twa who gained political prominence and prestige were the exception, however. Most Twa civilians endured discrimination through a series of practices known as *kuneena batwa*, which, according to anthropologist Christopher Taylor, may have emerged as early as the seventeenth century.²⁰ While the categories of Hima (pastoralists), Tutsi (pastoralist elites), and Twa were more commonly used during this period, *kuneena batwa* prevented the Hima and Tutsi from intermarrying with the Twa due to beliefs that the Twa were inferior and their bodies dangerous and polluting.²¹ Similarly, these practices meant that even those Twa who had Hima or Tutsi patrons lived apart from their patrons, and when participating in celebrations or rituals, they were served from separate vessels to prevent contamination of their superiors.

Tensions increased over time, however, due to incursions by cultivators and pastoralists into the forest regions the Twa relied upon for their subsistence. This loss of hunting and gathering opportunities left many Twa dependent on farmers and herders for access to land, further entrenching existing social inequalities between Twa and their Hutu and Tutsi compatriots.²² The jobs subsequently taken up by the Twa as blacksmiths, potters, and day laborers, for example, involved direct and sustained contact with the earth. As such, the Twa continued to be associated with forms of labor that were perceived as low-status and contaminating by contemporary Rwandan standards.²³ Twa relations with Hutu and Tutsi suffered as a

result, as indicated by the Rwandan proverb: "If you shelter from the rain in a Twa house, then remain there."²⁴

With the arrival of the German and Belgian colonists, meanwhile, Twa opportunities for land acquisition and social mobility were dramatically reduced despite the tendency for the Twa to be neglected by colonial administrators.²⁵ Kagabo and Mudandagizi note that a handful of Twa families were granted plots of land by mwami Rudahigwa, under Belgian tutelage.²⁶ However, the arrival of the colonists ultimately resulted in less land and opportunities for social mobility for the Twa than they had experienced under the monarchy. Further exacerbating the plight of the Twa, many of the properties that were given by Rudahigwa to the Twa were lost to the rising class of Hutu political elites surrounding the Hutu Revolution. Despite the fact that few Twa were actively involved in the political turmoil that accompanied Rwandan independence, the allegedly close relationship between Twa landholders and the Tutsi monarchy prompted Hutu political elites to target Twa landholders as likely monarchists and strip them of their land.²⁷

Realizing that Rwandan independence was rapidly approaching, the *Association pour le relèvement démocratique des Twa* (AREDETWA) was founded on 1 July 1960 with the objective of promoting Twa political representation. Faced with opposition from Tutsi political elites, AREDETWA gradually merged with PARMEHUTU, which according to its leader, Laurent Munyankuge, provided the party with the best means for defending Twa interests.²⁸ For a brief period, Munyankuge served PARMEHUTU in the Rwandan National Assembly. However, his decision to leave politics in 1965 left the Twa without formal political representation, a situation that then persisted until 1990. Testimonies documented by Kagabo and Mudandagizi reveal the exploitation and discrimination that continued to affect the Twa on a daily basis.²⁹ Under Kayibanda, despite efforts to align Twa interests with PARMEHUTU, political violence forced a number of Twa families into exile in neighboring countries.

For those Twa who remained in Rwanda, political exclusion and disenfranchisement continued under Habyarimana. Faced with growing population pressures, particularly in the later years of the Habyarimana regime, the *impunyu*—those Twa who had continued to subsist as foragers and hunter-gatherers in Rwanda's forests—were evicted to make room for agriculture, development projects, and national parks intended to attract tourism.³⁰ They did not receive reparations following these evictions, nor were official efforts made to see them resettled and provided with training

opportunities that might minimize their vulnerability to social discrimination and poverty. Meanwhile, among those Twa who made a living as potters, the influx of cheap, industrially produced metal and plastic containers that started in the late 1970s made this means of subsistence largely redundant. Many Twa resorted to casual labor and begging to support themselves, further exposing their communities to discrimination.

The civil war, meanwhile, provided both opportunities and challenges for Rwanda's Twa minority population. With the emergence of the multiparty system, a group of politically motivated Twa decided to create the *Association pour la promotion des Batwa* (APB) in 1991. This was quickly followed by the creation of the *Association pour le Développement Global des Batwa du Rwanda* (ADBR) and the *Association des Batwa Progressives du Rwanda* (ABPR), though these latter organizations were quickly disbanded due to inconsistent funding, and allegations of disorganization and corruption.³¹ Nonetheless, faced with opening political space in Rwanda during the civil war and inspired by the realization that the RPF was gaining traction, Rwanda's Twa were emboldened to the point that many Twa refugees living in Uganda decided to return to their home nation.³² This decision proved catastrophic for Twa communities around Rwanda with the start of the genocide, as this migration—combined with Twa communities' perceived history of collaboration with the Tutsi monarchy—provided Hutu extremists within Rwanda with evidence of their ongoing support for the Tutsi.

Thus, with the start of the genocide, the Twa quickly found themselves subject to much of the same violence that was being inflicted on their Tutsi compatriots. According to Lewis, an estimated 30% of Rwanda's Twa population was killed during the genocide, not only by Hutu extremists associated with Habyarimana's Presidential Guard and the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi, but by RPA troops as well.³³ In the early days of the genocide, the Twa were reportedly often caught off guard by the violence as they did not follow RTLM and other Rwandan media closely, and did not anticipate being perceived as RPF supporters. This made them easy targets for the Hutu extremists and likely explains the high death rates among Twa communities, some of which saw the murder of up to 80% of their population.³⁴ Indeed, among the Twa communities that I reached out to during my fieldwork, all had been negatively impacted by the genocide and reported having endured massacres at the hands of Hutu Power extremists due to their historical "friendship" with the Tutsi monarchy and allegations of their ongoing support for the RPF.

Complicating matters, some Twa acted as génocidaires during the genocide. The Underrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) recounts the experience of Masango's Twa community in the months preceding the genocide, whose mayor bribed them with offers of food, work, and political protection if they joined the MRND.³⁵ While the Twa of Masango allegedly did not participate directly in the genocidal violence, several of them entertained the Interahamwe as dancers and singers, while others participated in looting the homes of the Interahamwe's victims. However, other sources provide details regarding how the Twa were used to carry out violence and further dehumanize the Tutsi. For example, African Rights allegedly documented an practice during the genocide in Gitarama whereby the Interahamwe "gave Tutsi women to Twa men to be raped in the street, especially near roadblocks."³⁶

Meanwhile, in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, some Twa communities endured violent attacks that claimed many lives. The UNPO documented several attacks on Twa civilians during this period, perpetrated by both severely traumatized Tutsi survivors and RPA troops seeking revenge after Twa had allegedly stolen their murdered Tutsi compatriots' cattle or participated in the genocide in other ways.³⁷ Still other Twa became victims of political violence while fleeing their homes during the genocide and its aftermath. They quickly found themselves caught up in the mass migration of Hutu refugees who fled Rwanda for the DRC, only to end up living in refugee camps along the border where they were subjected to the same forms of discrimination they had endured prior to the genocide. For these reasons, the Twa have been labeled "double victims" surrounding the genocide.³⁸

In the post-genocide period, the Twa continue to be marginalized. Danielle Beswick argues that this marginalization emerges in large part from the Rwandan government's decision to make references to ethnicity taboo. For the indigenous Twa, the inability to organize according to their shared ethnic affiliation means that they are politically excluded and overlooked by many of the post-genocide government's policy initiatives. This political exclusion is not resolved by the government's efforts to include the Twa among the *ababejejwe inyuma n'amateka* or "those who are left behind by a history"—a phrase that avoids ethnic labels while still highlighting the vulnerability of those who might claim this categorization.³⁹ Indeed, during her fieldwork, Christiane Adamczyk found that few Twa were aware that this phrase was being applied to them in official discourse, but perceived it as insulting, denying them their heritage while highlighting their status on the outskirts of mainstream Rwandan society.

Faced with Twa resistance to its policies of national unity and reconciliation, Beswick found that the Rwandan government employed three strategies to ensure their mistreatment of the Twa could not be addressed: “accusing critics of divisionism, working to co-opt potential challengers, and to force changes in their political behaviour to maintain the integrity of the government’s vision of national unity.”⁴⁰ These observations led Beswick to conclude that “there is little room for effective representation and accordingly for a political voice for the indigenous Batwa in such a tightly managed system,” a position that several others NGOs and experts on Rwanda have confirmed.⁴¹

As a result, economic hardship is a daily reality for many Twa. Unable to earn an adequate living through pottery, begging, and day laboring, Thomson notes that many of the Twa she interviewed in 2006 exhibited signs of malnutrition, and less commonly, starvation.⁴² Several of the Twa communities with whom I interacted acknowledged that they often went hungry and struggled to achieve and maintain financial security. This hardship had not been improved in one community I encountered that was participating in the Rwandan government’s *Girinka* program, through which families are given a cow to increase their household income.⁴³ The cost of feeding and maintaining the cow was such that the Twa families who had received a cow complained of being more impoverished by its presence. Making matters worse, they could not sell the cow or ask the government to take it back lest they be seen by officials as ungrateful or incompetent, and excluded from other opportunities that might arise. Such encounters affirmed the observations of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights mission to Rwanda in 2008, which noted the inappropriate measures implemented by the Rwandan government to address the needs of the Twa without first consulting them, resulting in poor outcomes.⁴⁴

Taken together, the life history narratives of Jeanne and Elliot, and the silences that surround everyday life for Rwanda’s Twa minority population are but a few examples of Rwandans whose lived experiences challenge the RPF’s official narrative, and for this reason have been largely silenced and excluded from the public sphere. Their experiences, however, add much-needed depth and complexity to current understandings of how Rwandan civilians relate to their nation’s past and present. In Jeanne’s case, her story and efforts to identify as a survivor of the genocide despite her Hutu heritage demonstrates—perhaps more clearly than the other Hutu narratives I documented—a critical point of tension common to many Hutu

civilians, namely, the inability to have their losses surrounding the “1994 genocide of the Tutsi” officially recognized and the political resentment it inspires. It is relatively easy for people to dismiss on ethical grounds the claims to victimization and disenfranchisement commonly voiced by convicted génocidaires on the grounds that they are known criminals who are perhaps exaggerating their experiences of loss and suffering in order to minimize the crimes they committed against their Tutsi compatriots. Such ethical concerns often shut down public conversation about the suffering or injustices endured by génocidaires before it can even begin. However, Jeanne committed no crimes during the genocide, and indeed barely escaped the same fate as her murdered husband and children. In comparison, her efforts to draw attention to her losses surrounding the genocide create space for discussion regarding the legitimacy of the RPF’s efforts to cast the Hutu masses, broadly speaking, solely as perpetrators of the genocide. Simultaneously, by claiming status as a genocide survivor, Jeanne gives her criticisms of the RPF’s law regarding the burial of “genocide victims” and other insights on Rwandan history greater weight.

Similarly, Elliot’s narrative offers insights regarding the complexity of Tutsi’s experiences during the genocide, in particular, providing a rare glimpse into the mechanisms through which Tutsi might come to participate in the genocide and related atrocities. Though Elliot went to great lengths to hide it, he nonetheless learned of his Tutsi heritage prior to the genocide, and it had actively contributed to his decision to join the Hutu extremists in his community in killing their Tutsi compatriots once the genocide began, making him feel both betrayed and vulnerable. He participated in the genocide in part to reduce the risk of rumors of his Tutsi heritage from spreading, endangering him and his immediate family. However, his newfound Tutsi heritage simultaneously informed his decision to allegedly rescue local Tutsi wherever possible, by claiming they had been killed when in fact the Hutu extremists had yet to find them. Under the circumstances, Elliot’s narrative reveals some of the often difficult circumstances through which some Tutsi might have been coerced to participate in the genocide, circumstances that would then undermine or at the very least complicate their ability to claim victim or survivor status in the post-genocide period.

Finally, while this study has been able to contribute little toward remedying the relative silences that persist surrounding Twa’s interpretations of Rwandan history or their lived experiences of the genocide and its aftermath, the fact remains that the Twa have much to contribute to discussions

of the RPF's official narrative and its impact on Rwandans' lives in the post-genocide period. There is ample evidence to suggest that the Twa still endure discrimination and neglect in post-genocide Rwanda. However, these circumstances are largely obscured by the RPF's efforts to make taboo public discussion of ethnicity and frame Twa efforts toward recognition as an indigenous minority as contrary to national unity and reconciliation.

NOTES

1. Interview with author, 2008.
2. The most infamous example of this is Léon Mugesera's speech to Kabaya-based members of the MRND in 1992, after which Mugesera fled to Canada. This speech was translated and analyzed for criminal intent during Mugesera's immigration hearing before Canada's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in 2003. J.A. Décary, J.A. Létourneau, and J.A. Pelletier, "Dockets: A-316-01 and A-317-01: Léon Mugesera, Gemma Uwamariya, Irénée Ruteman, Yves Rusi, Carmen Nono, Mireille Urumuri And Marie-Grâce Hoho vs. The Minister Of Citizenship And Immigration" (2003), <http://www.law.utoronto.ca/documents/Mackin/mugesera.pdf> (accessed 22 September 2014).
3. Some months after my interview with Jeanne, the Rwandan government passed a law demanding that all suspected victims of the 1994 genocide must be interred at the local state-funded genocide memorial site. Government of Rwanda, "Law No. 56/2008 of 10/09/2008 Governing Memorial Sites and Cemeteries of Victims of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda." (Kigali: Government of Rwanda, 2008), 63–78.
4. As noted previously, Rwandans observe a range of customs in order to demonstrate respect for their dead. For more information on practices since the 1994 genocide, see Déogratias Bagilishya, "Mourning and Recovery from Trauma: In Rwanda, Tears Flow Within," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 37(3) (2000): 337–353; and Eugénie Mukanoheheli, "Facilitating Bereavement Recovery and Restoring Dignity to the Genocide Victims in Rwanda," in S. Earle, C. Komaromy, and C. Bartholomew (eds.) *Death and Dying: A Reader* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2009), 184–189.

5. For more information regarding these allegations, see Jessee, "Promoting reconciliation through exhuming and identifying victims in the 1994 Rwandan genocide," 1–24.
6. For example, see Marie Beatrice Umutesi's account of the civil war, genocide, and post-genocide period, which is written from the perspective of a Hutu sociologist and social worker and includes detailed descriptions of the atrocities endured by Hutu refugees in the DRC. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*.
7. Interview with author, 2008.
8. Extra-marital relationships may have been relatively frequent in Rwanda's past, particularly prior to the spread of Roman Catholicism and other forms of Christianity. Indeed, many Rwandan elders I interviewed recalled that monogamy was not common in their youth, and that men and women were free to have sex with whomever they chose, as long as these extra-marital relationships did not interfere with having children—an attitude that, according to Ina Schaffé and Margrethe Silberschmidt, may persist in the present. Ina Schaffé and Margrethe Silberschmidt, "Female gratification, sexual power and safer sex: Female sexuality as an empowering resource among women in Rwanda," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 16(1)(2014), 1–13.
9. Interview with author, 2008.
10. Most studies of Rwandan history only consider the Twa in passing. In the post-genocide context, the primary exceptions to this statement are Susan Thomson's "Ethnic Twa and Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Policy" and Danielle Beswick's "Democracy, identity and the politics of exclusion in post-genocide Rwanda: the case of the Batwa." Susan Thomson, "Ethnic Twa and Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Policy," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 21 (2009): 313–320; and Danielle Beswick, "Democracy, identity, and the politics of exclusion in post-genocide Rwanda: The case of the Batwa," *Democratization* 18(2) (2011): 490–511. Meanwhile, Alison Des Forges and Jan Vansina have dedicated some attention to understanding the place of the Twa in pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda. See, for example, Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 114–115 & 238; and Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 102 & 193.
11. Beswick, "Democracy, identity, and the politics of exclusion in post-genocide Rwanda," 503.

12. Some months later, in October 2008, the RPF refused to recognize the Twa as an indigenous minority group and to honor its international legal obligations to protect the rights of the Twa. The official position was that given the ethnic divisionism that led to the 1994 genocide, it was unsafe for the post-genocide Rwandan government to recognize the rights of specific cohorts within its civilian population. Thomson, "Ethnic Twa and Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Policy," 315.
13. Susan Thomson encountered similar sentiments in her work with one Twa participant who argued in favor of "staying on the sidelines" rather than engaging with local officials on the subjects related to national unity and reconciliation. He argued "It is better to avoid contact than to be forced to reject your ancestry." Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 147.
14. See, for example, Jerome Lewis, "Les Pygmées Batwa du Rwanda: un peuple ignoré du Rwanda" in S. Abega and P Logo (eds.) *La Marginalisation des Pygmies d'Afrique Centrale*, (Langres: Africaine d'Édition, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2006), 79–105. An English translation is available at: <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/43527/1/43527.pdf> (accessed 17 September 2014).
15. Marjaana Kohtamaki, "An ethnoarchaeological study of Twa potters in southern Rwanda," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 45(3) (2010): 299.
16. For example, Vansina notes that Busyete, an executioner who will be discussed in greater detail below, was of Twa heritage because around 1900 CE, executioners were always Twa. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 102. He also notes that Rwandan kings associated with the Nyiginya kingdom often maintained a supplemental company of Twa guards. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 75. For her part, Des Forges comments on the inclusion of Twa musicians and entertainers in the king's retinue. Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 237. Jerome Lewis notes that the Twa community of Rotunde in Kibungo was particularly renowned for their skill as musicians and dancers. Lewis, "Les Pygmées Batwa du Rwanda," 6.
17. Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 104.
18. Felix Ndahinda. *Indigeness in Africa: A Contested Legal Framework for Empowerment of 'Marginalized' Communities* (The Hague: Asser Press, 2011), 230. Read more broadly, however,

Ndahinda's book—specifically, the chapter on Twa marginalization in Rwanda—can be read as a formal effort to undermine Twa claims to indigeneity, even as it advocates for government intervention on behalf of the Twa framed in terms of “affirmative action or, prioritization, based on objective criteria such as comparative needs.” Ndahinda, *Indigenoussness in Africa*, 251.

19. Underrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, “Batwa: A report of the UNPO Mission with APB, Investigating the situation of the Batwa People of Rwanda September 28-December 15, 1994,” 9 March 1995: <http://unpo.org/images/reports/batwa%20report%201994.pdf> (accessed 19 September 2014), 11.
20. Taylor, “Mutton, Mud and Runny Noses,” 216.
21. *Ibid.*, 213. For more on the Hima in pre-colonial Rwanda, see Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 36.
22. Lewis, “*Les Pygmées Batwa du Rwanda*,” 3.
23. Christopher Taylor, “Molders of Mud: Ethnogenesis and Rwanda's Twa,” *Ethnos*, 76(2) (2011), 203.
24. Thomson, “Ethnic Twa and Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Policy,” 315.
25. Dorothy Jackson, “Twa Women, Twa Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa,” (2003), <http://www.iiav.nl/epublications/2003/twawomen.pdf> (accessed 17 September 2014), 6.
26. José Kagabo and Vincent Mudandagizi. “*Complainte des gens de l'argile: Les Twa du Rwanda*,” *Cahiers d'études africaines* 14(53) (1974), 79.
27. UNPO, “Batwa: Final Report,” 11; Kagabo and Mudandagizi, “*Complainte des gens de l'argile*,” 79.
28. UNPO, “Batwa,” 11.
29. Kagabo and Mudandagizi, “*Complainte des gens de l'argile*,” 75–87.
30. Chris Huggins, “Land Rights and the Forest Peoples of Africa: Historical, legal and Anthropological Perspectives,” Forest Peoples Programme (2009), 8.
31. UNPO, “Batwa,” 15.
32. *Ibid.*, 16.
33. This estimate is based on a total of 1,000,000 civilian victims of the genocide. Lewis, “*Les Pygmées Batwa du Rwanda*,” 23.
34. UNPO, “Batwa,” 19.
35. *Ibid.*, 21.

36. African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1994), 423. Luc Reydam's has uncovered convincing evidence that many African Rights reports were informed by data provided by the RPF, and was in other ways influenced by a close relationship with Kagame's post-genocide regime. For these reasons, the organization's reports and its findings should be approached with caution. Luc Reydam's, "NGO justice: African Rights as a pseudo-protector of the Rwandan genocide," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 38(3) (2016), 547–588.
37. UNPO, "Batwa," 24.
38. Lewis, "Les Pygmées Batwa du Rwanda," 14.
39. Adamczyk, "'Today, I am no Mutwa anymore': Facets of national unity discourse in present-day Rwanda," *Social Anthropology* 19(2) (2011), 185.
40. Beswick, "Democracy, identity and the politics of exclusion in post-genocide Rwanda," 503.
41. *Ibid.*, 490.
42. Thomson, "Ethnic Twa and Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Policy," 318.
43. Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, "One Cow Per Poor Family Program—Girinka" <http://www.minagri.gov.rw/index.php?id=28> (accessed 22 September 2014).
44. African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, "Mission to the Republic of Rwanda, 1–5 December 2008," 45: http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0474_randa_2-engelsk.pdf (accessed 22 September 2014).

Conclusion: The Danger of a Single Story

“Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign, but stories can also be used to empower and humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity... I would like to end with this thought: that when we reject the single story, that when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.”

—Chimamanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story”

COMPETING NARRATIVES IN CONVERSATION

The narratives analyzed in the preceding chapters clearly demonstrate that despite the existence of a pervasive official history in post-genocide Rwanda, the Rwandan people still make sense of their nation’s past and present in diverse ways. Competing accounts exist surrounding every major period in Rwanda’s history, from the pre-colonial era to the present. In bringing these competing narratives into conversation, critical tensions become apparent between the RPF’s ambitions for the New Rwanda and the needs of ordinary civilians. These tensions have significant ramifications for Rwanda’s future. Not only is the RPF’s official narrative only genuinely perceived as accurate and appropriate by a minority of Rwandans, but its existence is widely interpreted as a coercive presence in civilians’ everyday lives. As such, the RPF’s official narrative repeats many of the same mistakes made by previous regimes, contributing to the

maintenance of a powerful reservoir of ethnic, political, and social tensions that, if left unchecked, could threaten long-term political stability.

These tensions begin to emerge in Rwandans' narratives of the pre-colonial period. Whereas the RPF has gone to great efforts to present Rwanda's pre-colonial period as idyllic and free from divisive notions of ethnicity and race, Rwandan civilians' have far more varied interpretations of this period. This idyllic image of pre-colonial Rwanda was largely upheld in the narratives offered by survivors and returnees, all of whom claimed Tutsi heritage. They tended to recall pre-colonial Rwanda as a utopian society in which there were no ethnic or racial tensions. This peaceful existence was typically attributed to the monarchy, which in survivors' and returnees' narratives was cited as a unifying force in the lives of the Rwandan people, regardless of clan lineage, social status, or wealth.

However, *génocidaires* recalled Rwanda's pre-colonial period in very different terms, as a period of slavery and oppression for the Hutu majority and that benefited the Tutsi monarchy exclusively. To this end, *génocidaires* tended to represent the monarchy in predominantly negative terms, as a corrupt institution marred by political infighting and superstition, and that thrived on the exploitation of the Hutu people. Furthermore, among *génocidaires* the failure of the RPF and the Tutsi more generally to acknowledge negative elements of Rwanda's pre-colonial past was interpreted as unforgivable and served to reinforce their beliefs that the RPF was not interested in serving the interests of the Hutu majority, only of the Tutsi minority.

Such opinions may also have been prevalent among Hutu civilians who had no direct criminal complicity in the genocide. Jeanne's narrative indicates that Hutu civilians who were educated under Kayibanda and Habyarimana, or whose elderly family members passed on negative memories of the pre-colonial period, may have similarly internalized a narrative that highlighted the oppressive nature of the monarchy and the subjugation of the Hutu masses, while eschewing the RPF's claims of an idyllic pre-colonial past. This was certainly the intention of much of the historical writings published under the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, and is also reflected in many studies conducted by foreign historians and related scholars, including those who have worked closely with oral sources in the region.¹ For example, Vansina has highlighted a series of anti-Tutsi uprisings initiated by Hutu civilians in the late twentieth century that emerged in large part from

the institutionalization of a humiliating differentiation made between Tutsi and Hutu in the exploitation of the population both within armies and especially within the *corvée* labor imposed on farmers but not on herders. The struggles at court, the multiplication of local authorities, the increase in local turmoil, and the court's increasing interference in local arenas went hand-in-hand with the ever-increasing exploitation of the population.²

Similar contention emerges regarding Rwanda's colonial period. The RPF official narrative holds European colonists, particularly the Belgians, responsible for bringing Rwanda's idyllic pre-colonial period to a sudden end by undermining the monarchy and introducing racist ideology and ethnic divisions. This set, according to official accounts, the foundation for Rwanda's "bad history," leading to several periods of escalating anti-Tutsi violence. This official assessment was largely upheld in the narratives of survivors and returnees. Returnees in particular were adamant that colonialism was a negative force in Rwanda that divided the population along ethnic lines with devastating consequences for the nation, despite Musinga and Rudahigwa's best efforts to keep the population united. Survivors, however, while largely supportive of this official position, also acknowledged that social and political inequalities already existed among Rwandans that disadvantaged peasant Hutu and Twa. As such, they claimed the Belgian colonizers merely exploited these pre-existing inequalities to their advantage, and made them specifically ethnic and racial in nature. This subtle but important variation on the RPF's official narrative may have its origins in the socio-economic variations that existed among Tutsi in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, whereby not all Tutsi were powerful and wealthy court notables. As noted by Catharine Newbury, there was a small cohort of non-political Tutsi peasants, particularly in the colonial period, who shared some of the Hutu majority's grievances with the monarchy, prompting them to support RADER and other non-monarchist political parties in the lead-up to Rwandan independence.³

Conversely, *génocidaires* had little negative to say about the Belgian colonists, perhaps because the colonial administration preferred, at least initially, to rule the colony through Rwanda's existing Tutsi political elites, making them more visible targets for Hutu dissatisfaction with colonial policies and practices. The *génocidaires*' lack of negative commentary about the Belgians may similarly have been informed by the colonial administration's decision to switch allegiances as Rwandan independence became a reality, promoting education and democratic reforms

that favored the Hutu majority at the expense of the previously privileged Tutsi elites. This is particularly true of the Catholic Church, whose mission schools provided both education and a network through which Hutu évolués and community leaders could exchange and disseminate ideas for political and social reforms to the Hutu masses, with the support of White Fathers eager to promote “social justice” in Rwanda.⁴ For these reasons, it is perhaps understandable that génocidaires did not recall the colonial period with the same animosity as some of their Tutsi compatriots, as it facilitated not only Rwandan independence but also the nation’s first Hutu-dominated political leadership.

Under the circumstances, it is unsurprising that participants’ life histories revealed additional points of tension surrounding Rwanda’s independence and life under Kayibanda. The RPF official history casts Rwandan independence as a low point in the nation’s history as pseudo-democratic political processes led to the empowerment of a Hutu-dominated regime best known for corruption, regional favoritism, and anti-Tutsi violence. Returnees—many of whom were former monarchists or descendants of monarchists who had been forced into exile surrounding Kayibanda’s rise to power—largely upheld this official version of events in their narratives. However, other cohorts within Rwanda recalled this period in varying ways. Among memorial staff and genocide survivors, the physical violence in the months leading up to Rwandan independence was acknowledged, but described in terms that clearly linked it to provocative acts of political agitation by Tutsi monarchists, rather than more general anti-Tutsi sentiments internalized by the broader Hutu population. Likewise, memorial staff and genocide survivors condemned the undemocratic nature of the elections that resulted in Kayibanda becoming president of the new republic, and similarly condemned his leadership for its corruption and oppression of the Tutsi, in particular limiting their access to education and employment in the government and military. However, in instances where memorial staff and survivors endured physical violence or massacres that were specifically directed against them as Tutsi, they attributed these attacks to the *inyenzi* incursions that threatened Rwanda’s security. Beyond these occasional and often regionally specific attacks and the low-level structural inequalities, many memorial staff and genocide survivors recalled that it was possible for Tutsi, particularly those in rural communities, to enjoy a relatively good quality of life commensurate with that of their Hutu compatriots.

The génocidaires I interviewed similarly complicated the RPF’s official narrative surrounding life in Rwanda under Kayibanda. In their narra-

tives, the First Hutu Republic was remembered as a happy time: the Hutu had been liberated from the oppressive Tutsi monarchy and Kayibanda endeavored to lead the nation in a manner that unified the Rwandan people and promoted good relations among neighbors regardless of ethnicity. They acknowledged that ethnic quotas limited the opportunities that were available to the Tutsi in military and government, but argued that this was necessary to undo the centuries of discrimination and oppression that had prevented the Hutu majority from advancing. And regarding the allegations of corruption that were frequently levied against the Kayibanda regime, *génocidaires* were frequently of the opinion that these allegations, while founded in truth, were being blown out of proportion by the RPF in order to undermine the potential for new Hutu political leadership to emerge going forward.

These narratives are further complicated by the accounts of historians who studied Rwanda during the Kayibanda regime, most of which present the nation as entering into a period of decline. For example, Claudine Vidal recalled life in Rwanda under Kayibanda in demonstrably negative terms:

Slowly the country turned into an island. The government feared its whole environment: it was horrified by the Congolese rebellions, reserved toward Tanzania, hostile to the Tutsi regime in Burundi, and dependent on Ugandan roads for its imports. The inhabitants were inward-looking and bore the country's slow shrinkage in silence. There were several forms of censorship: from a triumphant Catholic church and from the government which was afraid both of possible communist-inspired social movements and of the traditional manifestations which could be a reminder of the Tutsi imprint which it considered with something like phobia. To the generalized lack of trust, rumor, secrecy, lack of breaking space: on top of material deprivation—the country was one of the poorest in the world and lacked almost everything—was added something like mental paralysis.⁵

Such accounts suggest that the everyday lives of the Rwanda people under Kayibanda were perhaps both less negative than suggested by the RPF official narrative, at least in terms of ethnic tensions, and less positive than suggested by *génocidaires*, characterized by limited civil liberties, poverty, and an increasingly insular government.

Similarly conflicting narratives were apparent among Rwandans' recollections of life under the Habyarimana regime. The RPF official history does not distinguish in any meaningful way between the Kayibanda and

Habyarimana regimes, reproaching both governments for their corruption and tendency to rely on anti-Tutsi rhetoric and policies to unify and distract the Hutu majority from the real problems plaguing the nation under their leadership. This tendency was upheld in returnees' recollections of Rwanda during this period. Having spent this period living in exile, they had few personal experiences to draw upon that might allow them to complicate negative accounts of Kayibanda and Habyarimana that circulated outside Rwanda. Prunier argues that such perspectives are understandable, if inaccurate:

Given the horror in which it ended, there is now a tendency to project back upon the whole of the Habyarimana regime our knowledge of its ultimate evil. This impulse is understandable since the mind tends to look for coherence and meaning in history, even at the price of anachronism. But history is as much the study of discontinuities ('why do things not always stay the same?') as a reflection on the coherence of things.⁶

However, there were substantial differences between Kayibanda and Habyarimana's leadership, as recollected by many of the memorial staff and genocide survivors I interviewed. In many instances, Habyarimana was described as a positive change in political leadership and who was supported by everyone in their communities. It seems many Rwandans anticipated that Habyarimana, as self-made man, would be eager to distance himself from Kayibanda and his regime's corrupt and oppressive tactics, including his strategic oppression of the Tutsi. And in the early years of Habyarimana's leadership, they were not disappointed. While Habyarimana did not eliminate the quota system, and perhaps even applied it more strictly than Kayibanda had, the general sense among the memorial staff and genocide survivors with whom I worked was that life under Habyarimana was generally good and ethnic tensions were minimal. Ethnicity was taught in the schools, and in ways that often highlighted the negative attributes of the Tutsi monarchy, but this rarely, if ever, translated into violence.

The génocidaires I interviewed typically shared these predominantly positive memories of Habyarimana's early years. Most génocidaires recalled peaceful lives with minimal ethnic tensions among neighbors, and ample opportunities for advancement for any Rwandans who were willing to work hard for the improvement of the nation. And echoing their support for the Kayibanda regime, they responded to questions regarding the corruption and regional favoritism that allegedly prospered under

Habyarimana by reiterating their previous argument that such allegations, while founded in truth, were blown out of proportion by the RPF in order to undermine the potential of Hutu political leadership.

Once again, historians' accounts of the early years of the Habyarimana regime further complicate our understanding of this period in Rwanda's past. The Second Hutu Republic is often portrayed as authoritarian, but more accommodating and its ethnocentrism relatively latent compared to the Kayibanda regime.⁷ However, Desrosiers argues that Habyarimana's coup was quickly met with dissent among the political elites who orchestrated the coup and Rwandan intelligentsia who hoped to gain from the sudden shift in power relations. She also highlights widespread dissatisfaction among ordinary Rwandans who quickly grew frustrated with further reductions to their civil liberties and forced participation in Habyarimana's public works programs. Such dissent continued throughout Habyarimana's presidency, but Desrosiers notes "by the early—not late, as often claimed—1980s, the recurrent political crises the regime had faced in its early days had given way to deeper political and social resentment across society."⁸ As a result, Desrosiers concludes that despite his authoritarianism, it is unlikely that Habyarimana ruled over a strong, stable, and supportive nation, as so many sources claim.⁹

With the start of the civil war, however, all of the Rwandans with whom I spoke acknowledged a sudden and dramatic shift in the nation's overall political climate, though whether this shift was positive or negative was another point of contention. The RPF official history frames their 1990 invasion of Rwanda as the start of a "war of liberation" necessary to free the Rwandan people from Habyarimana's oppressive and corrupt leadership. Returnees similarly had a tendency to recall the invasion as a sudden point of hope in their lives, introducing for the first time since their forced exile the possibility of returning to their homeland as Rwandan citizens with equal rights. Among those returnees who fought alongside the RPA advance in the north, there was the sense that the invasion was met with little civilian resistance, and was perhaps even welcomed by the Rwandan people. The RPA troops attempted to present themselves as disciplined and amiable toward the Hutu they encountered, as part of a broader effort to win the Hutu masses' support for the RPF's intended takeover of the Rwandan government. As Hutu Power extremists among the Habyarimana regime began to spread anti-Tutsi rhetoric through the Rwandan media and recruit civilians to the Interahamwe and other extremist institutions, however, the nature of the war changed. In

response to the RPF's growing levels of civilian and international support and their potential gains through the Arusha Accords, the Hutu extremists began engaging in sporadic anti-Tutsi violence intended to terrify and demoralize the RPA troops and their civilian supporters.

For those Rwandans who were living in the country in 1990 when the RPA invaded, the conflict is remembered in vastly different terms. Far from a war of liberation, memorial staff, genocide survivors, and génocidaires alike recalled the start of the civil war with terror, as a conflict initiated by the RPF at the expense of the Rwandan people. Among memorial staff and genocide survivors, I encountered the pervasive sense that Rwanda's Tutsi had been knowingly sacrificed by the RPF in their efforts to negotiate Tutsi refugees' right to return to Rwanda. The RPA invasion was quickly followed by what appeared to be spontaneous ethnic segregation in public settings, arbitrary arrests of prominent Tutsi who were suspected of secretly supporting the inkotanyi, and the murder or disappearance of many important Rwandan Tutsi political elites. For ordinary Tutsi civilians, everyday life became very difficult and was fraught with political tensions and the possibility of anti-Tutsi violence.

Génocidaire participants recalled this period in similar terms in that they held the RPF primarily responsible for triggering the civil war and plunging Rwanda into ethnic conflict. Unlike the RPF official narrative and the supporting accounts of returnees that maintain the RPA worked hard to win the popular support of the Hutu majority, the génocidaires I interviewed argued that the RPA invasion was accompanied by widespread atrocities against Hutu civilians in the north that were intended to force Hutu civilians to flee the region, eliminating the possibility of widespread civilian resistance. These atrocities, in turn, were manipulated by Hutu extremist political elites, who drew links between the RPA atrocities being perpetrated in the north and the everyday oppression endured by the Hutu under Tutsi hegemony during the pre-colonial and colonial periods, and encouraged the Hutu masses to organize and resist the RPA advance at all costs. As recalled by génocidaire participants, however, this resistance was specifically directed against the RPF as a foreign invader and threat to the security of the Hutu majority, as well as its supporters within the nation. At this point, people were primarily concerned with defending their homes and communities, rather than supporting to a broader program of anti-Tutsi violence.

Most historical accounts uphold an overall image of the civil war period as having had a dramatically negative impact on Rwandans' everyday lives. For example, in 1995, Catharine Newbury argued that the RPF invasion

and subsequent civil war had important repercussions within Rwanda, prompting Hutu extremist political elites to call for a rapid expansion of Rwanda's security forces, while simultaneously using the media to brand all Rwandan Tutsi as a threat to national security as potential *inkotanyi*.¹⁰ This occurred alongside Habyarimana's efforts to placate Western donors by initiating a gradual process of political liberalization and power-sharing with the RPF, which fomented political divisions within the MRND between political moderates and a growing cohort of Hutu Power extremists who eventually formed the CDR. Anti-Tutsi violence began immediately, with Newbury estimating that from the start of the invasion until 1993, as many as 2000 Tutsi civilians were murdered across the country in attacks that were orchestrated by security services affiliated with the Office of the President. Newbury is careful to stress that the RPF is not ultimately accountable for these murders and the other suffering endured by Rwandan Tutsi during this period, but she notes that the invasion "provided a pretext, a context, and a means for engaging in such abuses," a conclusion that is widely supported by other historians.¹¹ Likewise, Newbury recognizes the civil war was only one of several factors that served to destabilize the nation, also highlighting the importance of "devastating economic conditions, anxieties over the consequences of implementing the Arusha Accords, class polarization, intense power struggles linked with democratization initiatives—all of this in a country where leaders could (and did) manipulate ethnic rivalries and fears which had strong historical resonance."¹² To this fairly comprehensive list, Lemarchand has highlighted the 21 October 1993 assassination of Burundian President Melchior Ndadaye at the hands of Burundi's Tutsi-dominated military. He argues the surrounding political violence prompted an estimated 200,000 Burundian Hutu to seek refuge in Rwanda, allegedly bringing with them stories of the Tutsi-perpetrated atrocities they had escaped that were then used by the Hutu extremist political elites to turn Rwanda's Hutu majority against their Tutsi compatriots.¹³

In terms of the everyday quality of life endured by the Hutu majority during the civil war period, most historians acknowledge significant regional differences. Regarding Hutu who lived in the northern communities occupied by the RPA, there is fairly widespread agreement that the RPA did perpetrate atrocities against Hutu civilians. Most notably, a 1993 report by the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda Since October 1, 1990, found evidence of human rights violations on both sides of the conflict, but drew

special attention to RPA attacks on civilian targets, including hospitals, schools, and displaced persons' camps.¹⁴ It also condemned the RPA's widespread use of kidnappings and forced exile to prevent civilians from returning to their homes. However, there is ample evidence that the RAF also perpetrated significant atrocities against the civilian population in the north. For example, Alison Des Forges—one of the investigators with the International Commission of Investigation—argued that the Habyarimana regime faked an RPF attack on Kigali on 4 October 1990, against which the RAF proved victorious, to justify the arrest of an estimated 13,000 alleged RPF infiltrators across the country, several of whom were tortured and subsequently disappeared. With the support of French soldiers, meanwhile, the RAF successfully forced the RPF to retreat toward Uganda a few days after the original invasion, committing massacres of an estimated 500 to 1000 Rwandan civilians in Mutara region along the way.¹⁵

Civilians' experiences of atrocities in the south, however, were largely attributed to Hutu Power extremists affiliated with the Habyarimana regime, and primarily targeted Tutsi and members of the political opposition. Prunier notes that the Habyarimana regime orchestrated a series of massacres in the Bugesera region in March 1992, following the alleged discovery of a *Parti Libéral* (PL) leaflet that called on the Tutsi minority to massacre their Hutu compatriots. The leaflet's origins were eventually traced back to Hutu extremists within the Habyarimana regime, but not before an estimated 300 Tutsi civilians were massacred.¹⁶ Such evidence suggests that the atrocities endured by Rwandans during the civil war were not solely the fault of undisciplined RPA troops, but also part of a larger plan by Hutu extremists affiliated with the Habyarimana regime to divide the population along ethnic lines and eliminate political opposition.

Despite the violence and political instability of what preceded it, most Rwandans understand the genocide as distinctly different not only from the civil war, but also from previous periods of conflict in the nation's past. This tendency represents a marked divergence from the RPF official narrative, which maintains the existence of a longer genocidal continuum initiated during the colonial period. An important exception to this statement emerges in Bugesera district, where several memorial staff and genocide survivors claimed the genocide began in 1992 as a test case for the nationwide genocide to come. Across Rwanda more generally, however, the violence that began following Habyarimana's assassination on 6 April 1994 was entirely unexpected and at complete odds with every other form of violence participants had previously experienced, regardless

of ethnicity. Memorial staff and genocide survivors expressed shock at the extent to which Tutsi women, children, and the elderly were targeted during the genocide, when in previous periods of political upheaval they had been permitted to seek refuge in churches and other safe spaces until the violence had blown over. There was also a pervasive sense of shock at the extent to which ordinary Hutu civilians—often lifelong neighbors, colleagues, and friends—had become complicit in the violence, participating in torture, massacres, and looting. With regards to the genocidal violence itself, survivors also expressed shock at the graphic and brutal manner in which Tutsi were often killed and the extensive use of rape and other forms of sexual violence, which they interpreted as a means of punishing the Tutsi for being overly proud and ensuring that they suffered psychologically, as well as physically, if they survived.

However, there was consistent acknowledgment among memorial staff and genocide survivors of the difficult circumstances faced by many Hutu civilians during the genocide, and the extent to which Hutu civilians had also acted as rescuers and engaged in resistance, often at great personal risk. All of the survivors I interviewed cited at least one and often as many as four or five instances in which Hutu, often previously known to them, acted directly to save their lives by providing them with sanctuary, saving them from dehydration or starvation, offering medical treatment, or intervening with potential attackers to negotiate their survival, for example. Related to this, many memorial staff and genocide survivors acknowledged that many Hutu endured tremendous losses during the genocide, including the murder or disappearance of Tutsi family and friends, as well as the murder or disappearance of Hutu family and friends who were targeted as RPF spies, mistaken for Tutsi, or punished for attempting to prevent anti-Tutsi violence. Still others, they acknowledged, endured the murder or disappearance of Hutu family and friends related to the RPA advance during the genocide, wherein RPA troops, whether acting independently or under orders, engaged in retaliation killings of alleged Hutu Power extremists often based on little more than circumstantial evidence. Still others suffered the loss of family and friends during the mass flight of Hutu civilians to refugee camps along the border with the DRC, where epidemics and lack of adequate humanitarian aid cause many deaths. For these reasons, many genocide survivors maintained that public space needed to be created for Hutu to speak about their suffering surrounding the genocide, alongside that of the Tutsi.

For their part, génocidaire participants rarely regarded the violence in 1994 as genocide, but rather as the climax of the civil war initiated by the

RPF in 1990. They resisted the genocide label not because they did not acknowledge that many Tutsi were directly and intentionally massacred in 1994, but because they understood their participation in the violence in very different terms to the RPF official narrative. Whereas the RPF official narrative, and indeed the very use of the label *génocidaires* in relation to those who have been accused of criminal activities related to the “1994 genocide of the Tutsi” implies that those individuals who participated in the genocide did so because of a particular intent to annihilate the Tutsi, most of the *génocidaires* I interviewed claimed their participation was the outcome of political manipulation by Hutu extremist political elites. With few exceptions, they rejected the idea that they had internalized a particular hatred of the Tutsi, but instead admitted being drawn into the violence out of a desire to protect their homes and communities from the RPF, which, if successful in its efforts to wrest control of Rwanda, they believed would re-enslave the Hutu majority.

To this end, *génocidaires* often explained their participation in the murder of their Tutsi compatriots as the outcome of gradual genocidal priming and the ability to share responsibility for the atrocities they were enacting. Following months of increasing anti-Tutsi rhetoric, combined with condemnation of Hutu political moderates, when the genocide finally began popular participation in the genocide was encouraged by Hutu Power political elites through public torture and executions of Tutsi community leaders, as well as Hutu moderates who attempted to stall the anti-Tutsi violence. Hutu civilians were encouraged to follow suit and join the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi in defending their communities, and received tangible rewards—both social and economic—for doing so. As the violence escalated, many *génocidaires* were coerced through peer pressure and a desire to advance their social status to take on increasingly active roles. Even so, most *génocidaires* preferred to participate in group attacks to prevent spiritual contamination and to avoid taking direct criminal responsibility for committing murder and related mass atrocities. Such patterns suggest that genocidal intent was rare among *génocidaires*, particularly among those who were from rural communities or who lacked strong political beliefs in the pre-genocide period.

Similarly, *génocidaire* participants’ narratives uphold the sentiments of memorial staff and genocide survivors by exemplifying the various ways that Hutu civilians suffered surrounding the genocide, and their desire to have this suffering formally acknowledged alongside that of their Tutsi compatriots. Several of the *génocidaires* I interviewed had lost members of their families during the genocide, having married Tutsi women or having

Tutsi among their extended family who subsequently became victims of genocidal violence. Others endured the loss of Hutu family and friends who were killed for resisting the genocide or were victims of retaliation killings, having been allegedly mistaken for Hutu Power extremists by the RPA in the immediate aftermath of the genocide. Still others had family and friends who disappeared while fleeing the RPA advance, either as internally displaced peoples in Rwanda or as refugees in the DRC.

For their part, historians in particular have sought to highlight the complexities of the violence that occurred during the genocide, in addition to the ways that it should be set apart from previous periods of ethnic and political violence. For example, several historians have emphasized the gradual shift from the concentrated targeting of political moderates in the hours and days following Habyarimana's assassination to the large-scale attempted annihilation of the Tutsi, as well as their Hutu and Twa supporters, as the genocide escalated in the days and weeks that followed.¹⁷ Such efforts do not diminish the severity of the genocide or the suffering endured by Rwanda's Tutsi minority population, but rather seek to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how the genocide took shape in Rwanda with the overarching goal of preventing future ethnic and political bloodshed in the nation and the Great Lakes region of Africa, more broadly.

Among reputable historians, there is no question that the violence that occurred between April and July 1994 constitutes genocide, particularly once the Arusha-based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) decided to include genocide-related crimes among the list of charges it would prosecute.¹⁸ In keeping with the terms of the United Nations "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," which entered into force in 1951 to create the first legal prohibition against genocide, there is ample evidence that select Hutu Power extremists among the Habyarimana regime planned to annihilate the Tutsi—perceived as a distinct ethnic group by the time the genocide began—by subjecting them to murder, serious bodily or mental harm, and otherwise inflicting conditions of life upon them that were intended to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part.¹⁹ For many observers, the fact that select Hutu Power extremists aggressively targeted Tutsi women, children, and the elderly for torture and murder, in addition to Tutsi men who might be perceived as potential combatants, immediately casts the violence as something entirely different from any violent conflict that had preceded it in Rwanda's history. Furthermore, there is

ample evidence that select Hutu Power extremist political elites acted with genocidal intent—meaning that the physical criminal acts they incited were connected using legally rigorous evidence with a premeditated mental plan to eliminate the Tutsi—resulting in several successful prosecutions by the ICTR on genocide-related charges, in addition to war crimes and crimes against humanity.²⁰ Under the circumstances, the tendency for low-level génocidaires to have participated in the genocide without necessarily exhibiting genocidal intent in no way undermines historians' ability to recognize the conflict as genocide.

Given the diversity in perspectives on different periods in Rwanda's past and the resulting tensions that emerge along ethnic and political lines, it is unsurprising that such tensions have trickled over into Rwandans' narratives of their present-day lives. To this end, the RPF faces the unenviable task of trying to unite a population that has been deeply affected by genocide, as well as other episodes of political violence that have divided the population throughout Rwanda's past, from more subtle everyday forms of structural oppression associated with the monarchy to overt conflict such as the civil war. From the perspective of many government officials and memorial staff, the RPF's official narrative is a key element of an important campaign to encourage Rwandans to eschew old, divisive labels of ethnicity and embrace their shared national heritage. They were hopeful that such efforts would ultimately ensure long-term national stability and prevent further genocides against the nation's Tutsi minority population.

However, most of the Rwandans I interviewed, regardless of ethnic or political affiliations, expressed pervasive concerns that the RPF's official narrative was in fact exacerbating tensions among Rwandans by causing widespread civilian dissatisfaction. Among returnees, many of whom had been inspired to return to Rwanda to help build a better nation, I encountered lingering fears for Rwanda's future that centered on the growing realization that the rural peasant majority, including Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa alike, was not responding positively to the RPF's authoritarian style of leadership. They suspected that the RPF's efforts to sensitize the population to the necessity of reduced civil liberties, the dangers of preserving old labels of ethnic heritage, an understanding of the genocide that shamed the Hutu majority for its alleged anti-Tutsi hatred, while commemorating only Tutsi victims, and its use of authoritarian tactics, such as harassment, illegal detention, and forced exile or disappearances to enforce public compliance with its policies were alienating the rural majority.

To this end, several of the returnee officials with whom I met expressed frustration with the rural majority, attributing their lack of support for RPF policies to ignorance—an inability to comprehend that the RPF policies were actually serving the rural majority's best interests—or the ongoing prevalence of the genocide ideology they claimed had been made popular under Kayibanda and Habyarimana. More commonly, however, returnee participants merely expressed concern, and the hope that Rwanda's political climate would gradually improve as the nation moved beyond its genocidal past. And while they rallied behind Kagame as a leader, believing that his authoritarian style of leadership was all that was keeping the nation from renewed bloodshed, several admitted to maintaining personal and professional ties in neighboring countries and beyond that would allow them a quick escape should Rwanda's political climate suddenly take a dark turn.

Survivors expressed similar concerns. While they unanimously expressed gratitude to the RPF for having ultimately stopped the genocide, survivors acknowledged substantial challenges in the post-genocide period that they believed were preventing the nation from successfully reconciling and achieving social repair, and furthermore were exacerbating ethnic and political tensions in their communities. They identified several key RPF policies that were introduced with the stated purpose of eliminating ethnic divisions and promoting national unity and reconciliation as being at the root of these tensions, including the RPF's official history, the state-funded genocide memorials, the gacaca courts, and various initiatives aimed at helping genocide survivors pursue education and economic stability. In each instance, survivors argued that these institutions and policies, implemented by a predominantly Tutsi government that first and foremost sought to legitimize its claim to power in a predominantly Hutu country, left them vulnerable to future attacks. Survivors acknowledged that the Hutu majority were vulnerable to government persecution and oppression in the post-genocide period, as every effort they might make to assert their political interests would be met by the RPF with allegations that they were promoting genocide ideology, minimizing the genocide, or instigating ethnic divisionism. And because survivors were often, and sometimes mistakenly, assumed to be supportive of the RPF, this created a division between survivors and their Hutu compatriots, one that many survivors feared might someday express itself as a new genocide. To this end, several of the survivors I interviewed admitted to having nightmares about future genocidal violence, in addition to their past experiences, and

to keeping weapons around their homes to ensure that should genocide begin again, they would not be caught unaware without the ability to defend themselves. One woman even admitted to sleeping with a machete so she could defend herself against what she felt was the inevitable renewal of genocidal violence in her rural community. For many survivors, support for Kagame thus emerged from the hope that his authoritarian style of leadership and the fear it induced in many would-be Hutu extremist political elites, while fomenting ethnic and political tensions, was the only thing that kept the nation from descending into genocide.

The *génocidaires* I interviewed shared many of these frustrations, particularly related to the RPF's official history, the state-funded genocide memorials, and the *gacaca* courts, arguing that these transitional justice mechanisms were being used by the RPF to oppress Rwanda's Hutu majority. However, they expressed other unique concerns as well related to their ongoing mental and physical well-being. Several *génocidaires* expressed fears that the angry spirits of their victims were haunting them in the post-genocide period. Most commonly, they reported suffering from nightmares and visions, in which the people they killed during the genocide confronted them or sought revenge, for example. Others suffered from mental and physical illnesses that they believed were the result of having been contaminated by "bad death," specifically having come in contact with blood spilled in violence. As a result, most of the *génocidaires* I interviewed claimed to suffer from trauma and emotional distress as a result of the violence in which they had participated, for which they received no treatment. For these reasons, several *génocidaires* expressed resentment toward RPF for silencing Hutu suffering surrounding the genocide and failing to provide *génocidaires* with adequate support to address what they claimed were high levels of mental and physical illness and emotional distress among prisoners.

Among historians and other scholars, there has been a concentrated effort to acknowledge the myriad ways that the genocide and its aftermath has affected the Rwandan people, regardless of political, regional, or ethnic affiliations. To this end, there is little debate among historians that the RPF was ultimately responsible for bringing the genocide to an end. In the absence of a carefully planned and sustained prevention and intervention effort on the part of the international community, as well as the presence of a French "peacekeeping mission" that in hindsight was arguably more notable for extending the genocide in northwestern Rwanda and providing Hutu Power extremists with an escape route to the DRC, it was the RPF's military victory over the interim government that ulti-

mately brought the genocide to an end. However, historians have often simultaneously sought to acknowledge the atrocities perpetrated by the RPA in the process of securing their military victory, as well as subsequent atrocities perpetrated by the RPA against Hutu civilian populations in Rwanda and the DRC in the immediate post-genocide period, as a means of offering a more balanced and accurate accounting of the genocide and to better explain the conflict's impact in the region.²¹

Likewise, many historians and related practitioners have spoken out against the RPF's efforts to consolidate power in Rwanda, and the increasing restrictions on Rwandans' civil liberties that have surrounded Kagame's rise to power. Filip Reyntjens has perhaps been most consistently outspoken in this regard. In addition to a host of articles that critique the Kagame regime for its lack of genuine democratic reforms and its human rights abuses against perceived political opponents, his recent book documents the rise of authoritarianism in the post-genocide period, with particular emphasis on the RPF's efforts to purge its inner circle of critics, create the impression of widespread public support through fraudulent elections, muzzle civil society organizations, and pursue an ambitious development agenda that for a number of years helped to silence international criticisms of the regime's negative human rights record, for example.²²

As a result of their efforts to complicate modern understandings of the genocide, several leading historians and related practitioners have encountered difficulties in continuing their research in the post-genocide period. Most notably, Alison Des Forges, René Lemarchand, and Filip Reyntjens—long-term historians of Rwanda—have been declared *persona non grata* in the post-genocide period for their efforts to encourage international investigation of RPA atrocities alongside those of key Hutu extremist political elites responsible for organizing and inciting the genocide.²³ Other social scientists have in recent years discontinued their fieldwork in Rwanda, finding it impossible to conduct ethical research that does not place them, and the research assistants and participants with whom they work, at heightened risk of government surveillance and persecution.²⁴ Still others have found it increasingly difficult to navigate the post-genocide bureaucratic structures in place for issuing ethics approval and research permits, effectively stalling their research projects.²⁵ Among those who continue to study post-genocide Rwanda—particularly those subjects deemed politically sensitive, such as transitional justice or national unity and reconciliation—many acknowledge, at least in private “corridor talks” among other Rwanda experts, self-censoring their findings in response to both real and

imagined government pressure.²⁶ While Rwanda is not unique among transitional societies in its resulting status as a highly politicized research setting, it nonetheless remains that many long-term experts on Rwanda have substantive concerns about the quality of research that can be conducted on topics deemed by the government to be politically sensitive.²⁷

REGAINING PARADISE: CAN COMPETING NARRATIVES FACILITATE GENUINE SOCIAL REPAIR?

This chapter begins with a quote from a 2009 TED Talk by Chimamanda Adichie, in which she warns of the dangers of having a single story, whether about people, places, or events. Among the many examples Adichie cites, she describes her first encounter with an American roommate who, having internalized a single story about Africans characterized by “a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity,” expressed surprise at the fact Adichie spoke excellent English, considered Mariah Carey to be part of her “tribal music,” and knew how to use a stove. Adichie recalls “[i]n this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.” But what if, Adichie proposes, her roommate had known about the many stories of resilience, innovation, and success common to Nigeria? She suggests it would have been difficult for her roommate to regard her in such simplistic terms, noting “[t]he consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.” For these reasons, Adichie is a strong advocate for creating space for engaging with multiple stories of people and places. She concludes with the statement:

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign, but stories can also be used to empower and humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity... I would like to end with this thought: that when we reject the single story, that when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.²⁸

Though intended for a literary audience, Adichie’s talk contains numerous insights that can be applied to the politics of history in Rwanda. These insights are perhaps best explored through a discussion of the ongo-

ing controversy that surrounds the 2014 BBC documentary *Rwanda's Untold Story*.²⁹ When the documentary was initially announced, there was a tangible sense of excitement among many experts on Rwanda that the BBC was finally voicing an alternative to the typically glowing reports on Rwanda that tended to circulate in the UK media, and through former Prime Minister Tony Blair's commitment to mentoring Kagame and the post-genocide development of a nation in which he once failed to intervene to prevent genocide.³⁰ There was the hope that *Rwanda's Untold Story* would push back against the RPF's single story of Rwanda, both by adding complexity to how the RPF typically presented the nation's history surrounding the genocide, and by exploring the darker aspects of the Kagame regime, particularly its negative human rights record and stranglehold on Rwandans' civil liberties.

When the documentary finally aired, it was quickly met with widespread disappointment and in some instances, outright condemnation. While many of the Rwandans interviewed in the film were definitely representing a lesser-heard story of Rwanda surrounding the genocide, the documentary privileged the narratives of the nation's critics—in particular members of Rwanda's political opposition in exile—who provided at times misleading accounts of events surrounding the genocide that from the perspective of the Rwandan government and its supporters amounted to genocide denial. Of particular importance, the documentary gave substantial airtime to Lieutenant General Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa—formerly a Rwandan diplomat and Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Army who co-founded and now leads the Rwanda National Congress (RNC), a political opposition party formed in exile by Nyamwasa, along with three other exiled Rwandan political dissidents, and which challenges Kagame's legitimacy. The RNC has called upon the international community to withdraw their support for Kagame and the RPF on the grounds that they wrestled control of the nation under false pretenses, having shot down Habyarimana's plane to trigger the genocide, and then installed an anti-democratic dictatorial regime that governs the nation, and particularly the Hutu majority, through fear of illegal detention, torture, and assassination.³¹

Survivor protests were subsequently reported in Kigali and London that condemned the BBC for attempting “to revise the history of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi” and disrespecting the memory of the deceased victims of the genocide.³² Ibuka—a Rwandan community-based organization that represents survivors' interests in the post-genocide period—issued a formal complaint to the BBC for “having silenced the

voices of survivors and amplified those that seek to minimise and legitimise one of the fastest and most systematic genocides of the 20th century.”³³ Simultaneously, a cohort of 38 academics and related experts issued an open protest letter to the BBC that accused the documentary filmmakers of being “recklessly irresponsible,” and having “fuelled genocide denial,” committing a grave offense against genocide survivors and emboldening the génocidaires and their supporters.³⁴

The Rwandan government subsequently suspended all BBC broadcasts in Rwanda and established an Independent Committee of Inquiry through the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA) to investigate into the events that surrounded the making of the documentary and “determine whether the BBC violated Rwanda’s law on genocide denial, revisionism, inciting hatred and divisionism, as well as ascertaining whether the documentary met the BBC’s own set and cherished values of ensuring, in all its broadcasts, impartiality, accuracy, fairness, decency and informing its varied audiences truthfully.”³⁵ RURA ultimately found the BBC had “abused press freedom and free speech, violated its own editorial guidelines, transgressed journalistic standards, and violated Rwandan law, with particular reference to genocide denial and revisionism, inciting hatred, and divisionism among Rwandans.”³⁶ Following the Committee’s recommendations, the Rwandan government placed an indefinite ban on BBC broadcasts in Rwanda.³⁷

Filip Reyntjens, one of several experts interviewed for *Rwanda’s Untold Story*, has spoken out in defense of the documentary and BBC’s journalistic standards, while acknowledging the myriad shortcomings of the documentary. In his initial response to the authors of the “protest letter,” he makes the important point that only three signatories have long-term academic experience working in Rwanda, a glaring silence given the letter was widely circulated to collect signatures before being made public.³⁸ He then goes on to address four claims made by the documentary that the signatories to the protest letter called untenable, none of which contest the documentary’s claims regarding the RPF’s negative human rights record or refusal to pursue genuine democratic reforms in the post-genocide period. He agrees that the documentary misrepresented certain known facts about the genocide, specifically by implying that the génocidaires numbered no more than 10% of the population when the actual number of civilian perpetrators is known to have been higher. Likewise, he critiques the documentary for citing the not-yet-peer-reviewed claims of Christian Davenport and Allan Stam which allege—inaccurately in all likelihood—that because there were only 200,000 Tutsi in Rwanda prior to the genocide, if the RPF’s claims that one million people were killed

during the genocide are accurate, then the vast majority of the genocide's victims were Hutu.³⁹

However, Reyntjens maintains that other controversial claims voiced in *Rwanda's Untold Story* are actually well supported in the literature on Rwanda. He notes that there is substantial evidence in support of the allegations that the RPF was responsible for shooting down Habyarimana's plane, triggering the genocide, allegations that most recently have been upheld by sociologist André Guichaoua who previously served as the leading expert witness for the prosecution at the ICTR.⁴⁰ Likewise, Reyntjens draws upon the memoir of Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), to support the documentary's allegation that Kagame knowingly sacrificing Rwandan Tutsi in order to win a military victory over Théoneste Bagosora's interim government.⁴¹ Reyntjens concludes that while there are many inaccuracies in the documentary that Rwanda's political opposition in exile will undoubtedly use to legitimize their political ambitions, the BBC is well within its rights given UK laws related to freedom of speech and freedom of the press to facilitate debate toward establishing a "shared truth about the tragedy that has unfolded in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region during the last quarter of a century."⁴²

Under the circumstances, it is difficult to determine the extent to which *Rwanda's Untold Story*, with its stated purpose of facilitating dialogue regarding "increasing questions about the role of Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front forces in the dark days of 1994 and in the 20 years since" has facilitated social repair or exacerbated ethnic and political tensions in Rwanda.⁴³ Given the platform—a reputable international media outlet—and its decision to privilege the narratives of Rwanda's critics over the RPF's official history, it is entirely possible that the documentary has served to further exacerbate tensions, if not among Rwandans, then certainly between the RPF and the nation's political opposition in exile. To this end, most of the responses to the documentary have emerged from these two vastly polarized communities, both of which have political agendas that can be served by either condemning, in the case of the RPF and its supporters, or celebrating, in the case of Rwanda's political opposition in exile, the documentary. The Rwandan people, with the exception of representatives from a handful of state-controlled survivors' organizations, have largely been silent—at least in domestic and international media.⁴⁴

This silence may be influenced by several factors. It is entirely possible that Rwandan civilians have largely stayed out of the fray because the documentary has not been widely available to them in Rwanda, the BBC

having been banned in the country shortly after the documentary aired. However, the documentary has been discussed at length by Rwandan media—most notably *The New Times*—which has published scathing criticisms of the BBC for having given “genocide deniers” such a powerful platform for their cause.⁴⁵ Under the circumstances, many Rwandans are likely well aware of the documentary and the controversy it has generated, as well as the RPF’s subsequent decision to ban the BBC. Such actions would have undoubtedly communicated a powerful message to the Rwandan people: that the “correct response” to the documentary is to condemn it as an example of the genocide denial that allegedly proliferates beyond Rwanda’s borders as a result of the dangerous political advocacy of Rwanda’s enemies. However, the fact that mostly returnees and genocide survivors have been leading the response to the documentary without evidence of broader support among the Rwandan people suggests that many Rwandans have preferred to react by staying on the sidelines or performing withdrawn muteness, two strategies identified by Thomson as key forms of resistance regularly exercised by peasant Rwandans in response to RPF policies with which they disagree.⁴⁶

Arguably, the controversy that has surrounded *Rwanda’s Untold Story* suggests that there is little space within Rwanda at present for the proliferation of multiple stories related to the genocide, and Rwandan history more broadly. Certainly, this is the position maintained by the RPF—that Rwanda’s recent genocidal past makes its future uncertain, requiring authoritarian leadership, limited democratic reforms, and reduced limited civil liberties until Rwandans come to view each other according to their shared national heritage, rather than ethnicity. However, there is a politically convenient arrogance to this position, one that treats peasant Rwandans as incapable of reason and empathy across ethnic divides, and requiring a strong hand in order to avoid future bloodshed. Among the peasant Rwandans I interviewed, most lived in densely populated and tightly knit communities. For this reason, they demonstrated a striking degree of awareness of their neighbors’ actions surrounding the genocide, as well as throughout other periods of Rwanda’s past, even if the subjects could not be discussed openly. Furthermore, one sentiment that was expressed by all of participants, regardless of ethnicity or political affiliation, was the desire to avoid future bloodshed. Given this common goal, and the widespread awareness of the different ways that Rwandans from different regions, clan lineages, and ethnic groups, for example, had been disadvantaged at different points in Rwanda’s past, there may be fertile ground for peaceful public discussion of competing narratives surrounding

the genocide, so long as it can be carried out independent of the larger political agendas of the RPF and Rwanda's political opposition in exile.

To this end, there is an important exception to my above statement that there have been few spontaneous formal responses to *Rwanda's Untold Story* that have not come from either the Rwandan government or Rwanda's political opposition in exile that bears discussion. On 5 October 2014, a letter of support was issued by a series of community-based organizations in the UK, admittedly in collaboration with two political opposition groups, the RNC and the FDU-Inkingi. This letter, addressed to BBC's Director General, Tony Hall, expressed gratitude to the BBC for producing *Rwanda's Untold Story*, which they claim

has ignited an important and useful debate and conversation among Rwandans in UK [sic] and abroad. The debate generated among Rwandans without any animosity demonstrates the positive interest it has generated and the documentary has undoubtedly earned its place in Rwanda [sic] history as an important tool that will facilitate open and inclusive debate that will shape future Rwanda whose foundation will be built on values of freedom, justice and democracy.⁴⁷

At first glance, it may be tempting to dismiss this letter as another propaganda effort orchestrated by the RNC or other members of Rwanda's political opposition in exile. However, closer analysis of the letter's signatories surprising diversity across ethnic and political divides, reflecting the common interests of not only Rwanda's political opposition in exile, but also of UK-based human rights activists, survivors of the genocide and RPA-perpetrated atrocities against Hutu in the region, and recent asylum seekers. This is not to say these individuals do not have a political agenda in drafting their letter of support: if the life history narratives analyzed in the preceding chapters demonstrate nothing else, it is that most, if not all, Rwandans have come to see their nation's history as highly politicized, and in speaking about its pasts, they are themselves asserting their political agency in response to the various official histories that have dominated Rwanda over the years. Furthermore, in addition to active members of the political opposition in exile, Justin Bahunga and Alphonse Niyibizi, two of the signatories to this letter, have a documented history of alleged RPF persecution. Jonathan Musonera and René Mugenzi, the former a defected RDF captain, have a history of publically condemning Kagame and the RPF for their negative human rights record, and were warned by the British Police in 2011 that "the Rwandan Government poses an imminent threat"

to their lives.⁴⁸ Given the current political climate in Rwanda, it is entirely plausible that Jeanne Uwineza, Ambrose Nzeyimana, and Noble Marara, with their efforts to organize and advocate on behalf of Rwandan victims of massacres in the DRC, Rwandan refugees based in the UK, and victims of human rights violations within and beyond Rwanda, respectively, have personal experiences of persecution by the RPF that render them highly politicized as well.

However, in this rare instance from within the UK where Rwandan diasporic communities arguably enjoy greater civil liberties and protection from Rwandan government persecution, it seems that fruitful dialogue has been initiated regarding the politics of history in Rwanda in the post-genocide period in a manner that transcends ethnicity, if not political lines.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, further research is needed into the politics that surround discussions of Rwandan history among modern diasporic Rwandan communities, and the extent to which such discussions do indeed facilitate genuine social repair among Rwandans, rather than merely further entrench existing ethnic and political tensions.⁵⁰ However, the life history narratives analyzed in the preceding chapters clearly demonstrate that the RPF's current official history is failing to represent the everyday lived experiences of the majority of Rwandans, creating controversy over every period in Rwanda's past, starting with its pre-colonial era. Furthermore, these life history narratives demonstrate that these points of controversy do not always emerge along clear-cut ethnic lines, but often according to specific individuals' deeply held political beliefs. This indicates that it may be possible for Rwandans to find common ground on their nation's history surrounding the genocide across ethnic lines, though, as Kirstin Doughty reminds us, we must be cautious not to romanticize the process of identifying and exploring points of tension and common ground that emerge. She notes that while it might be tempting to imagine there are in some post-conflict contexts "where a kinder, gentler reconciliation can occur, absent power relations of age, gender, class, or other forms of silencing," it is important to acknowledge that "the work of building and rebuilding social networks among 'intimate enemies'... is contentious, suffused with hostility and instrumentality."⁵¹

For these reasons, Rwandan civilians may have more in common than might be expected given the recent genocide, in that the majority believe the RPF is failing to achieve meaningful social repair in the post-genocide period, being primarily concerned with legitimizing its predominantly Tutsi returnee leadership. However, unless public space is created for dis-

cussion of the ways in which the RPF official narrative fails to address the nuances of ordinary Rwandans' lived experiences, Rwandans' often shared frustrations in the post-genocide period will remain largely unspoken, allowing for the maintenance of a powerful reservoir of ethnic and political tensions that will continue to threaten the long-term political stability of the nation.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Joseph Rwabukumba and Vincent Mudandagizi, "*Les formes historiques de la dépendance personnelle dans l'État Rwandais*," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 14(12): 12–15; and Sentama *et al.*, "*Les manifestes des Bahutu*." See also Newbury, "*Ubureetwa and thangata*," 97–111; and Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 73–116.
2. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 192. See also Susan Thomson's discussion of ubureetwa and ubuhake, and their impact on the court's relationship with Rwandan citizens. Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 62.
3. Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 213. Similarly, Nigel Eltringham has argued that there have been as many as six different values associated with the term "Tutsi" throughout Rwanda's history, including "a description of status (wealth in cattle); membership of certain 'high' lineages; the possession of authority derived from the mwami; 'social recognition' as a 'Tutsi' owing to wealth or in order to extend central control (by co-opting the lineage heads); those who owned cattle; and simply 'non-Hutu.' With the expansion and centralization of the kingdom, it appears the first four were conflated into an 'elite Tutsi' identity." Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 14.
4. Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 181.
5. Claudine Vidal, "*Situations ethniques au Rwanda*," in J.L. Amselle and E. M'Bokolo (eds.) *Au coeur de l'ethnie* (Paris: *La Découverte*, 1985), 171. Translated and cited in Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 59–60.
6. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 74.
7. Desrosiers, "Rethinking political rhetoric and authority during Rwanda's First and Second Republics," 201. See also André

Guichaoua, *Rwanda: de la guerre au génocide* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).

Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 74–92.

8. Desrosiers, “Rethinking political rhetoric and authority during Rwanda’s First and Second Republics,” 208.
9. Desrosiers extends this conclusion to the Kayibanda regime as well, though her findings with regards to the First Hutu Republic are more consistent with other historical accounts.
10. Catharine Newbury, “Background to Genocide: Rwanda,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 23(2) (1995), 14.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Newbury, “Background to Genocide,” 16.
13. René Lemarchand, “The rationality of genocide,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 23(2) (1995), 10. See also Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 198–206.
14. *Federation internationale des droits de l’homme*, Africa Watch, *Union interafricaine des droits de l’homme et des peuples*, and *Centre international des droits de la personne et du développement démocratique*, “International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda Since October 1, 1990,” March 1993, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/Rwanda93-Report.pdf> (accessed 1 August 2015).
15. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 54.
16. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 137.
17. For example, Des Forges highlights the interim government’s initial strategy of murdering political moderates who threatened their claim to power in the hours and days following Habyarimana’s assassination, with particular attention paid to the search for and eventual murder of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, among other known Hutu moderates. Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 265–269. More recently, see André Guichaoua’s analysis of the interim government’s actions in the days immediately following Habyarimana’s death in 1994. Guichaoua argues that the Hutu Power extremists only pursued genocide after a poorly conceived Pacification Tour from 10 to 12 April had failed, and they became convinced that they could only succeed if they successfully exterminated those they deemed “internal enemies.” Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide*, 214–240.

18. For more information, see International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, "Resolution 955," 8 November 1994, http://www.unicttr.org/sites/unicttr.org/files/legal-library/941108_res955_en.pdf (accessed 2 August 2015).
19. United Nations, "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," 12 January 1951, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf> (accessed 1 August 2015).
20. For more information on the outcomes of the ICTR's efforts to prosecute high-level perpetrators of the genocide, see ICTR, "The Cases," 31 December 2015, <http://unicttr.unmict.org/en/cases> (accessed 4 April 2016).
21. See, for example, Des Forges, *Leave none to tell the story*, 701–735; and Lemarchand, "Genocide in the Great Lakes," 3–16.
22. Filip Reyntjens, *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
23. Gérard Prunier, "Rwanda's ghosts refuse to be buried," *BBC News*, 8 April 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7981964.stm> (accessed 6 August 2015); Reyntjens, *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, xv; and Patrycja Stys, "Revisiting Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 50(4) (2012), 712.
24. See, for example, Thomson, "Reeducation for Reconciliation," 331–339; and "Getting Close to Rwandans Since the Genocide," 19–34.
25. Jessee, "Conducting fieldwork in Rwanda," 266–274; and Jessee, "Rwanda's subtle forms of intimidation."
26. Social scientists, beginning with the anthropologist Paul Rabinow, often cite "corridor talks" as an essential means of informally exchanging fieldwork experiences—discussions that Rabinow argued should become discourse in order to promote more formal knowledge exchange. Paul Rabinow, "Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology," in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 253. Valerie Yow has since applied this concept explicitly to the practice of oral history, defining them as "the remarks you made about your reactions to your research while you were standing with a colleague in the corridor. You were about to go into the room where you would discuss the really important research matters." Yow, "Do I like them too much?," 55.

27. Danielle de Lame, Howard French, Villia Jefremovas, René Lemarchand, Timothy Longman, Jens Meierhenrich, Catharine Newbury, David Newbury, Gérard Prunier, Filip Reyntjens, and Susan Thomson, "Truly hostile environment," *Times Higher Education*, 19 December 2013, <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/comment/letters/truly-hostile-environment/2009939.article> (accessed 10 August 2015).
28. Chimamanda Adichie, "The danger of a single story," TED Talk, July 2009, http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en (accessed 1 August 2015).
29. BBC Two, *Rwanda's Untold Story*, 3 October 2014, <https://vimeo.com/107867605> (accessed 1 August 2015).
30. Blair's extensive involvement in Rwanda, via his organization Africa Governance Innovation whose budget matches that of the British High Commission in Rwanda, was recently critiqued by the UK Foreign Office for undermining British foreign policy. Dominic Kennedy, "Blair charity 'eclipses Britain in Rwanda,'" *The Times*, 6 March 2015, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article4373916.ece> (accessed 15 August 2015).
31. Nyamwasa, Kayumba, Theogene Rudasingwa, Patrick Karegeya, and Gerald Gahima, "Rwanda Briefing," *Rwanda National Congress*, August 2010 http://www.grandslacs.info/sites/default/files/Rwanda_Briefing_August2010_nyamwasa-et-al-1.pdf (accessed 10 August 2015).
32. Jean de Dieu Mirindi, Charles Habonimana, Innocent Bayingana, and Longin Gatanazi, "Rwanda's young people demand apology from BBC for genocide denial film," *Kwibuka: Remember, Unite, Renew* 22 October 2014, <http://www.kwibuka.rw/rwandas-young-people-demand-bbc-apology-genocide-denial-film> (accessed 2 August 2015). See also Ian Burrell, "Protests over BBC's 'revisionist approach' to Rwandan genocide," *The Independent*, 10 October 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/protests-over-bbcs-revisionist-approach-to-rwandan-genocide-9788402.html> (accessed 2 August 2015); and
33. Jean Pierre Dusingizemungu, Yvonne Kabanyana, Jean de Dieu Mirindi, and Charles Habonimana, "IBUKA: Letter to the BBC regarding 'Rwanda: The untold Story,'" October 2014, <http://>

- avegaagahozo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Ibuka-Letter-to-the-BBC-regarding-Rwanda-The-Untold-Story.pdf (accessed 2 August 2015).
34. Linda Melvern, Roméo Dallaire, Gregory Stanton, Mehdi Ba, Ken Barham, Margaret Brearley, Gerald Caplan, Frank Chalk, Phil Clark, Boubacar Boris Diop, Jean-Francois Dupaquier, Hélène Dumas, Margee Ensign, Tim Gallimore, Peter Greaves, Fred Grünfeld, Helen Hintjens, Georgina Holmes, Richard Johnson, Eric Joyce, Karel Kovanda, Françoise Lemagnen, Stephen Lewis, Alan McClue, Roland Moerland, George Monbiot, Jacques Morel, Barbara Mulvaney, Jude Murison, Peter Rayment, Josias Semujanga, Jonathan Salt, Keith Somerville, Patrick de Saint-Exupéry, James Smith, Rafiki Ubaldo, Andrew Wallis, and Lillian Wong, "BBC genocide film: Protest letter by 38 international researchers and historians," 15 October 2014, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-10-15/181969/> (accessed 2 August 2015).
 35. Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority Committee of Inquiry, "Inquiry Committee on the BBC documentary *Rwanda's Untold Story*," 28 February 2015, <http://rwandabbcinquiry.rw/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/RwandaBBCInquiry.pdf> (accessed 2 August 2015), 4.
 36. *Ibid.*, 5.
 37. Dugald Baird, "Rwanda bans BBC broadcasts over genocide documentary," 24 October 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/oct/24/rwanda-bans-bbc-broadcasts-genocide-documentary> (accessed 2 August 2015).
 38. Filip Reyntjens, "*Rwanda's untold story*: A reply to '38 scholars, scientists, researchers, journalists and historians'" *African Arguments*, 21 October 2014, <http://africanarguments.org/2014/10/21/rwandas-untold-story-a-reply-to-38-scholars-scientists-researchers-journalists-and-historians-by-filip-reyntjens/> (accessed 3 August 2015). Reyntjens later published a more academic account of the roots of the conflict between the government of Rwanda and the BBC surrounding *Rwanda's Untold Story*. See also, Filip Reyntjens, "Briefing: The struggle over Truth – Rwanda and the BBC," *African Affairs* (2015) <http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/content/early/2015/08/18/afraf.adv042.full.pdf+html?sid=c88326a6-171e-4e2f-bfb5-bc1ea3ccea5b> (accessed 12 August 2015).

39. See also Christian Stam and Allan Davenport, "GenoDynamics: Rwandan Political Violence in Time and Space," <http://genodynamics.weebly.com/> (accessed 3 August 2015).
40. Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide*, 144–145.
41. Reyntjens, *Rwanda's untold story*. See also Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 476.
42. Reyntjens, *Rwanda's untold story*.
43. BBC Two, *Rwanda's untold story*.
44. As noted by Longman and Reyntjens, several prominent survivors' organizations have been taken over by pro-RPF leadership following complaints that their previous leadership had been infiltrated by individuals who were hostile to the state. For more information, see Longman, "Limitations to political reform," 27–31; and Reyntjens, *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 57–63.
45. See, for example, Richard Johnson, "The BBC and the West need to clean up their act on Rwanda," *The New Times*, 16 December 2014, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-12-16/184095/> (accessed 5 April 2016); Jean-Marie Kabarega, "Having failed militarily, enemies of Rwanda have resorted to lies," *The New Times*, 1 February 2015, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-02-01/185523/> (accessed 5 April 2016); and Awel Uwihanganye, "Why Rwanda can ignore the BBC documentary but Africa should not," *The New Times*, 24 December 2014, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-12-24/184340/> (accessed 5 April 2016).
46. Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power*, 9.
47. Jonathan Musonera, René Mugenzi, Jeanne Uwineza, Ambrose Nzeyimana, Noble Marara, Justin Bahunga, and Alphonse Niyibizi, "Re: BBC Documentary 'Rwanda: The Untold Story,'" 5 October 2014, <http://rwandansrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Rwandan-Community-letter-to-BBC-BBC-Documentary-Rwanda-The-Untold-Story.pdf> (accessed 5 August 2015).
48. Kron and Gittleman, "British police warn Rwandan dissidents of threat." See also United Kingdom Metropolitan Police Service, "Threats to life warning notice," 12 May 2011, <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/warning-letter.pdf> (accessed 15 August 2015).

49. The RPF has a reputation for orchestrating politically motivated assassinations beyond its borders, though little tangible evidence has allowed investigators to establish a direct link between the Kagame regime and the agents responsible for carrying out these attacks. That said, both the Canadian and UK governments have uncovered sufficient evidence in recent years to issue statements warning their Rwandan diasporic populations against RPF-orchestrated attacks and other subversive activities intended to undermine Rwanda's political opposition in exile. For more information, see Human Rights Watch, "Rwanda: Repression across borders: Attacks and threats against Rwandan opponents and critics abroad," 28 January 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/28/rwanda-repression-across-borders> (accessed 5 August 2015); Kron and Gettleman, "British police warn Rwandan dissidents of threat"; and Stuart Bell, "Rwandan intelligence agents harassing opponents in Canada, border service says," 13 August 2015, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/rwandan-intelligence-agents-harassing-opponents-in-canada-border-service-says> (accessed 15 August 2015).
50. Some valuable, though challenging, work along these lines has already been conducted by Sarah Freedman, Harvey Weinstein, Karen Murphy, and Timothy Longman, in collaboration with the Faculties of Social Sciences and Education at the National University of Rwanda and Rwanda's National Curriculum Development Centre. For more information, see Sarah Freedman, Harvey Weinstein, Karen Murphy, and Timothy Longman, "Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience," *Comparative Education Review* 52(4) (2008): 663-690; and Sarah Freedman, Harvey Weinstein, and Timothy Longman, "The Teaching of History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach," Human Rights Centre, University of California, Berkeley, 2006, https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/HRC/Rwanda_resource_book_for_teachers_version_10._rwandan_history_book.pdf (accessed 15 December 2016).
51. Kristin Doughty, "Law and the Architecture of Social Repair: Gacaca Days in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21(2) (2015): 432.

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