Denise Bentrovato

Narrating and Teaching the Nation

V&R

V&R Academic

Eckert. Die Schriftenreihe

Studien des Georg-Eckert-Instituts
zur internationalen Bildungsmedienforschung

Band 138

Herausgegeben von Simone Lässig

Redaktion
Susanne Grindel, Roderich Henrÿ und Wibke Westermeyer

Die Reihe ist referiert.

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The Politics of Education in Pre- and Post-Genocide Rwanda

V&R unipress

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.d-nb.de abrufbar.

ISSN 2198-6320
ISBN 978-3-8471-0516-9
ISBN 978-3-8470-0516-2 (E-Book)
ISBN 978-3-7370-0516-6 (V&R eLibrary)

Weitere Ausgaben und Online-Angebote sind erhältlich unter: www.v-r.de

Printed in Germany.
Titelbild: A class in Northern Rwanda (© Denise Bentrovato, 2015)
Druck und Bindung: CPI buchbuecher.de GmbH, Zum Alten Berg 24, 96158 Birkach

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the people who, in different ways, contributed to the realisation of this study. My greatest thanks go to the hundreds of boys and girls in Rwanda who shared with me, a stranger from far away, their personal views, perceptions, and experiences. Their contribution has been critical as much of this study relies on their insightful, and often tragic, stories. A special thank-you goes to the countless people who helped me in the field. I thank, first of all, my research assistants and friends Maurice, Emile, and Alex. Their unremitting assistance has been fundamental to the successful completion of the research. I also thank the directors and teachers who welcomed me into their schools, and who committed their precious time and energy to allow the realisation of this project. Many thanks also to the staff members of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), and the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) in Rwanda for their invaluable assistance. I am furthermore indebted to Professor Bob de Graaff for his excellent guidance and to the University of Utrecht for its generous financial support. Without them, this project would, quite possibly, never have left the ground and would have remained merely a dream. Thanks also to the editors and peer-reviewers of the *Schriftenreihe* for their comments and suggestions. Last, but not least, a sincere thank you to my family (*mamma*, *papá*, Silvia, and Francesca), and especially to my partner, Jitse, for their unwavering support and encouragement.

Introduction

The twentieth century was an age profoundly marked by mass violence. It was punctuated by colonialism, two global wars, and a multitude of interstate and civil wars, rebellions, coups, revolutions, politicides, and genocides. It also witnessed the rise and fall of totalitarian and dictatorial regimes, which were responsible for unspeakable crimes. The violence touched the lives of millions and its impact continues to fester in many places as an ever-present reminder of a painful past. This "age of extremes", as Eric Hobsbawm famously described it in 1994,[1] has been followed by what Pierre Nora calls an "age of commemoration". Our times, according to Nora, have been significantly marked by

> criticism of official versions of history and recovery of areas of history previously repressed; demands for signs of a past that had been confiscated or suppressed; growing interest in "roots" and genealogical research; all kinds of commemorative events and new museums; renewed sensitivity to the holding and opening of archives for public consultation; and growing attachment to what in the English-speaking world is called "heritage" and in France "*patrimoine*".[2]

Today, numerous countries around the world carry with them the burden of a violent past and share the challenge of having to deal with its legacy. Confronting its own dark history is invariably a delicate undertaking for a nation, an undertaking which has commonly sparked considerable controversy around the "historical truth" and its public representation. The challenges of critically facing history have proven especially daunting in societies recently emerging from internecine conflict, where wounds are still fresh and divisions are deep. In the last two decades, countless attempts have been made in transitional societies to address past abuses as part of post-war processes of social reconstruction and reconciliation. This period has seen an upsurge in strategies designed to deal with dark pasts, such as truth commissions, criminal prosecutions, lustration,

1 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991,* London 1994.
2 P. Nora, "The Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory", in: *Transit – Europäische Revue* 22 (2002), www.iwm.at [last accessed on 02/05/2014].

reparations, institutional reforms, memorialisation practices, and educational programmes.

This book aims to contribute to the ongoing discussions concerning the approaches adopted by transitional societies when dealing with the challenges posed by a difficult and controversial national past. In particular, it explores the role of formal education, a domain that is believed to hold unique promise in such contexts due to its capacity to provide younger generations with the tools and opportunities to make sense of the past and the present and to prepare for the future. The study draws on the case of Rwanda, today an obligatory point of reference when discussing sectarian mass violence.[3] This small country in the heart of Africa is now infamous for having been the dramatic scene of one of the worst crimes ever recorded in human history: in 1994, genocide was committed in the hills of Rwanda, leaving hundreds of thousands dead and many more displaced in the course of only one hundred days. Every April since then, the population has been invited to remember this tragedy in order to ensure that it will never happen again. In Rwanda, calls for the memory of the genocide to be kept alive have been accompanied by official efforts to instruct the public about the nation's "true" history. As part of these efforts, educating the upcoming generations has been a particular priority of the post-genocide government in its attempt to build a "new Rwanda" based on the harsh lessons of the past.

This book seeks to assess the politics of education in post-genocide Rwanda and the resulting impact on the country's new generation. For this purpose, the study first sets the analysis in a historical context by investigating the evolving content of official ideologies in Rwanda and their institutionalisation through schools from the colonial period to the present day. In so doing, it investigates the actors, interests, and discourses that have historically influenced educational policy and practice, and in particular the production and revision of history curricula and textbooks within the wider framework of memory and identity politics. The book then expands its examination of educational discourses and policies to explore their implementation in the classroom and their reception by, and impact on, younger generations in Rwanda, with a view to documenting and evaluating history education as it is both sanctioned and practised today. Accordingly, the study sets out to juxtapose the analysis of the official discourse and existing controversies with the exploration of hundreds of voices recorded in schools, with the aim of investigating and explaining patterns of historical representation and interpretation among young people in post-genocide

3 This publication is based and elaborates on the author's doctoral thesis, the geographical scope of which also covered the cases of neighbouring Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. D. Bentrovato, "Narrating and Teaching the Nation: The Politics of History, Identity and Education in the Great Lakes Region of Africa". Ph.D. thesis, University of Utrecht 2013.

Rwanda and their acceptance or rejection of dominant official narratives and of related beliefs, norms, and values as they are reproduced in school history lessons. Ultimately, the aspiration is to invite further reflection on, and understanding of, Rwanda's post-genocide society and politics through the views manifest in its education system and shared by its educated youth.

This book aims to meaningfully complement and contribute to extant research on Rwanda and, more generally, on the politics of education in contested societies, by providing an analysis of empirical data deriving from original fieldwork in schools – understood here as key agents of socialisation and sites of interaction for young people from a variety of backgrounds – at the same time as building on an extensive review of interdisciplinary scholarly literature.[4] The originality of this work consists in its investigation not only of the lessons that young people in contemporary Rwanda have been taught, but also of the lessons they have effectively learned from history. This book is the first to combine a systematic historical and comparative analysis of curricula and textbooks for history and social studies education in both primary and secondary schools in Rwanda and a large-scale investigation of pupils' understandings of the country's history, grounding the analysis in a thorough examination of its wider context, most notably of prominent political and historiographical debates and broader educational issues.[5]

The significance of this book also stems from its timeliness. Fieldwork, comprising a pupil survey, classroom observations, and stakeholder interviews, was conducted between 2008 and 2012 and again in 2014, at a crucial time of transition in Rwanda, marked by intense historiographical production and educational reform. The research was prompted in 2008 by the announcement that new history curricula and textbooks would shortly be made available to schools, effectively lifting the moratorium on the teaching of Rwandan history that had been established in the immediate aftermath of the genocide. The publication of the study further coincides with a new time of transition, signalled by the revision of Rwanda's school curriculum prior to the start of the next academic year in January 2016.

This book, then, thus emerging from and appearing at a critical juncture,

4 Scholarly publications on the region, as well as the textbooks and student essays on which this study draws, have largely been written in French. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from non-Anglophone sources reported in this study are my own translations.

5 Among other things, this publication, with its particular focus on history teaching and historical consciousness in pre- and post-genocide Rwanda, complements and updates Elisabeth King's *From Classrooms to Conflict in Rwanda* (2014), a longitudinal study of education's role in conflict and peacebuilding in Rwanda, which she largely prepared simultaneously with my own work, relying on an analysis of educational policies and educational media and on dozens of interviews on school experiences, mainly conducted back in 2006.

does not serve the sole purpose of contributing to scholarly discussion in its aim to document and analyse the current state of (history) education in Rwanda within its specific historical and political context. Rather, its aim is ultimately to also serve the needs and interests of Rwanda's younger generations by casting light on emergent challenges and possibilities. The analysis presented in this study highlights the urgent need for reform in the Rwandan education system and hopes to inform future action in this context. It exposes a worrying degree of continuity of several pre-genocide practices in present-day classrooms, despite the government's stated intentions to break with the past. More specifically, it demonstrates the remarkable success of the incumbent leadership in teaching a conveniently selective official history and warns against a continued failure of schools to promote critical thinking and to reflect the heterogeneity and plurality characterising Rwanda's post-genocide society. It moreover takes a stand against any inclination to repress, rather than help constructively address, existing societal divisions and tensions and argues that, unless Rwanda's younger generations are better equipped by schools to make sense of a complex past and a complex present, the country will continue to face an uncertain future.

Organisation of the book

This book is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 sets the central questions within a broader theoretical and conceptual framework, outlining some of the general issues that are commonly raised in scholarly discussions on the politics of history, identity, and education, especially in relation to conflict-ridden and post-war settings. The chapter draws on available research to elucidate the centrality of historical narratives in processes of social construction and in dynamics of conflict and peace and seeks to illuminate the role of education as a powerful means of socialisation through which dominant discourses and related belief and value systems have been transmitted to the younger generations, thus moulding the nation.

Chapter 2 sketches Rwanda's historical background in order to provide the specific context for the case-study. It provides an overview of the history of ancient Rwanda, of colonial rule under German and Belgian administration (1897–1962), of the First and the Second Republics established after independence (1962–1973 and 1973–1994), and of the war and the genocide (1990–1994) and their aftermath up to 2014.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 investigate the politics of history and identity in Rwanda and its implications for the education sector in the colonial, post-colonial, and

post-genocide periods respectively.[6] For each period, the book analyses the official discourse and the extent to which it has been institutionalised in educational policies and practices in an effort to legitimise and consolidate a given socio-political order, and to shape collective identities and memories according to the understandings of the elites in power. In particular, the analysis of history curricula and textbooks that runs across the three chapters aims to illuminate how the portrayal of crucial issues has changed over time.[7] More specifically, content and critical discourse analysis is employed to investigate the extent to which each incumbent elite has enforced specific regimes of knowledge through the country's educational institutions. The book examines the informative and explanatory content of school teachings, that is, how historical events have been described, explained, and justified or criticised in curricula and textbooks. It thereby seeks to ascertain whose stories have been told at each historical juncture and for what purpose and whose stories have consequently been neglected. In addition, the book examines the pedagogical value of didactic material by reviewing the aims and objectives attributed to the subject of history as well as the types of learning activities proposed. It seeks thus to assess whether schooling has encouraged rote learning of an official truth or sought to impart rational knowledge based on the acquisition of disciplinary understandings and cognitive skills. Through an analysis of prescribed contents, aims, and pedagogical approaches of history education, the study also evaluates the civic, political, and social values and attitudes promoted through this subject.

The especially complex post-genocide period, treated in Chapter 5, is given substantial attention. The chapter proposes an exploration of prominent historical controversies and competing meta-narratives, most notably in relation to

6 The analyses and arguments proposed in these chapters build on the work of prominent scholars, including J. Burnet, S. Buckley-Zistel, J.-P. Chrétien, N. Eltringham, A. des Forges, R. Lemarchand, T. Longman and T. Rutagengwa, C. Newbury, M. Mamdani, J. Vansina, and C. Vidal on the politics of history, memory, and identity; and P. Erny, J.-D. Gasanabo, M. Hodgkin, E. King, A. Obura, and J. Walker-Keleher on educational issues.

7 Most related documents were gathered during field research, with the notable exception of current Rwandan curricula which could be directly downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Education. Old curricula and textbooks as well as current non-commercial didactic material were provided by educational officials and history teachers who kindly offered their assistance in locating relevant material. Their analysis has been informed by international scholarship on curriculum and textbook research, including: J. Mikk, *Textbook: Research and Writing*, Frankfurt am Main 2000; J. Nicholls, "Methods in School Textbook Research", in: *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* 3(2) (2003), 1–17; F. Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, Hanover 1999, and F. Pingel, *The European Home: Representations of 20th Century Europe in History Textbooks*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe 2000; R. Stradling, *Teaching 20th-Century European History*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe 2001; and P. Weinbrenner, "Methodologies of Textbook Analysis Used to Date", in: H. Bourdillon (ed.), *History and Social Studies: Methodologies of Textbook Analysis*, Amsterdam 1992.

the issues of identity and conflict. It then reviews recent initiatives that have been undertaken in contemporary Rwanda to deal with the contested past and to reform the education system, especially history teaching. The documentation and assessment of current history education practices are supported by data deriving from field observations of history classes as well as from interviews with prominent historians, curriculum planners, school inspectors, school headmasters, history teachers as well as pupils.

Chapter 6 augments the analysis of narratives and counter-narratives in post-genocide Rwanda by drawing attention to perspectives that have largely remained on the margins of mainstream discussions on post-genocide Rwanda, namely those of young people. The chapter presents the results of an extensive qualitative survey that was conducted in Rwanda by the author over a period of three years among one thousand secondary school pupils and recent graduates. The chapter starts by describing the methodological approaches and analytical instruments employed and by outlining several salient ethical issues that marked the research. It subsequently draws on the results of the survey to investigate how young Rwandans today represent the nation and its historical trajectory and destiny against a backdrop of contested identities and memories. It thereby complements an emergent body of literature recording the voices of "ordinary" Rwandans and the way they explain the past and the present and envision the future.[8]

The final chapter includes a summary of the main findings of the study and advances a number of conclusions and recommendations, urging a thorough rethinking and overhaul of current educational policies and practices in post-genocide Rwanda for the sake of the country's future.

8 See the work by, *inter alias*, J. Burnet, B. Ingelaere, L. McLean Hilker, M. Sommers, and S. Thomson.

1. History, identity, and the politics of education: a conceptual framework

Narratives and their analysis are much at the centre of this book. The study starts from the assumption that narratives, here understood as political and social constructs, are, in the words of Anthony P. Kerby, "a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience and ultimately of ourselves".[9] They thus constitute useful analytical tools able to offer crucial insights into individuals and societies and their evolving perceptions and feelings. In particular, an inquiry into the way in which the past is variously framed in relation to the present and the future is of critical significance to an understanding of society, its power structures, and its internal dynamics and tensions. The present chapter sets out to outline the intersection between historical narratives, social construction, and dynamics of conflict and peace, before seeking to illuminate the specific role of education, especially history teaching, as a principal vector of dominant narratives and of societal norms and values, particularly in conflict-ridden societies.

Historical narratives and social construction

Narratives are a ubiquitous feature in human life. Roland Barthes, a key figure in modern literary and cultural theory, once observed that narratives are "simply there, like life itself".[10] Psychologist Mark Freeman speaks of the human "in-

9 A.P. Kerby, *Narrative and the Self*, Bloomington 1991, 3.

10 R. Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives", in: R. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, London 1977, 79. On narratives, see also H.P. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge 2002; M. Bal, *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto/Buffalo/London 1997; P. Cobley, *Narrative*, London/New York 2001; L.O. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument", in: R.H. Canary and H. Kozicki (eds.), *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, Madison 1978; W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *On Narrative*, Chicago/London 1981; H. White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality", in: H. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse*

herent inclination to narrativize".[11] Similarly, James Gee suggests that "[o]ne of the primary ways – probably *the* primary way – human beings make sense of their experience is by casting it in narrative form",[12] that is, by ordering disparate events, real or imagined, into coherent and plausible stories. Through subjective processes of "narrativisation" we make sense of reality;[13] and as Dennis K. Mumby argues, through narratives we also "construct the social reality that constitutes the lived world of social actors".[14]

The way we come to understand the world and how we act in it largely relies upon the connections that narratives craft between the past, the present, and the future. On one hand, narratives reconstruct the past in a search for meaning and purpose in the present; on the other, they anticipate and project the future through what Gee refers to as "simulations" that "help us prepare for action in the world".[15] How the past is framed in people's narratives, in particular, is crucial to our construction of the present and the future. Peter Seixas, editor of *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, posits that "[o]ur understanding of the past, or 'historical consciousness', shapes our sense of the present and the future".[16] It has been widely observed that the way we make sense of the past is both "useful" in the present and influenced by it. While the present is typically explained and understood through recourse to the past, the past is commonly (re-) constructed and narrativised according to present needs and concerns, hence resulting in what Christian Giordano calls "actualised history".[17] In *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton suggests that "our experiences of the present

and Historical Representation, Baltimore 1987; and H. White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact", in: H. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore 1978.

11 M. Freeman, "Why Narrative? Hermeneutics, Historical Understanding, and the Significance of Stories", in: *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 7(1–4) (1997), 175.

12 J.P. Gee, "The Narrativization of Experience in the Oral Style", in: *Journal of Education* 167(1) (1985), 11.

13 E. Foner suggests that "the very selection and ordering of some 'facts' while ignoring others is itself an act of interpretation". E. Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World*, New York 2002, xvii. Similarly, P. Munz describes historical narratives as "reconstructed interpretations". P. Munz, *The Shapes of Time: A New Look at the Philosophy of History*, Middletown 1977, 217. Such processes have been defined, in poststructuralist terms, as "emplotment". M.R. Somers, among others, defines narratives as "constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by causal emplotment". M.R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational Network Approach", in: *Theory and Society* 23(5) (1994), 616.

14 D.K. Mumby, "Introduction", in: D.K. Mumby (ed.), *Narrative and Social Control: Critical Perspectives*, Newbury Park 1993, 4–5.

15 J.P. Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, 2nd ed. New York 2005, 75.

16 P. Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto 2006, i.

17 C. Giordano, "The Past in the Present: Actualised History in the Social Construction of Reality", in: D. Kalb and H. Tak (eds.), *Critical Junctions: Anthropology and History Beyond the Cultural Turn*, New York 2005, 53–71.

largely depend upon our knowledge of the past"; at the same time, "our image of the past commonly serves to legitimate a present social order".[18]

Undoubtedly, narratives, including "histories" telling "what happened" and "what it means", are not innocent constructions. Narratives and related processes of social construction are shaped by power and politics. They have been extensively used as tools to legitimise and consolidate allegedly "natural" sociopolitical orders, including hierarchies, rules, and social norms and values. They have likewise been employed "to challenge power and create social change", as Ronald H. Jacobs points out.[19] Their political salience partly derives from their strong socialising and mobilising function.[20] Narratives have been instrumental in the construction of collective identities and in determining how communities view themselves. Steph Lawler poignantly describes them as "interpretive devices through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and to others".[21] Through narrative processes entailing what Seyla Benhabib calls an "inevitable dialectic of identity/difference",[22] boundaries between the Self and the Other have been variously imagined and defined according to given frames of reference, such as nation, region, ethnicity, class, and gender. In societies around the world, these "labels", which have been central to identity politics, and which, according to Mary Kaldor and Robin Luckham, have often determined "the right to political power and personal security",[23] have been forged and re-forged based on the telling and re-telling of narratives asserting the community's shared past and destiny. In an article on "Narrative Tools of His-

18 P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge 1989, 2–3.

19 R.N. Jacobs, "The Narrative Integration of Personal and Collective Identity in Social Movements", in: M.C. Green, J.J. Strange, and T.C. Brock (eds.), *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, Mahway 2002, 212.

20 Quoting the German philosopher of history Jörn Rüsen, Christian Laville speaks of two "decisive functions of historical consciousness" in the present, namely "practical orientation and identity-building". C. Laville, "Historical Consciousness and Historical Education: What to Expect from the First for the Second", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 176.

21 S. Lawler, "Narrative in Social Research", in: T. May (ed.), *Qualitative Research in Action*, London 2002, 242.

22 S. Benhabib (ed.), *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, Princeton 1996, 3. The author explains that, "[s]ince every search for identity includes differentiating oneself from what one is not, identity politics is always and necessarily a politics of the creation of difference". Gerd Baumann similarly speaks of processes of "selfing and othering". G. Baumann, "Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach", in: G. Baumann and A. Gingrich (eds.), *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach*, New York/Oxford 2004, 19. See also B. Benwell and E. Stokoe, *Discourse and Identity*, Edinburgh 2006; and M.R. Somers and G.D. Gibson, "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity", in: C. Calhoun (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Cambridge 1994, 37–99.

23 M. Kaldor and R. Luckham, "Global Transformations and New Conflicts", in: *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* 32(2) (2001), 56.

tory and Identity", James V. Wertsch underscores the critical role of history in identity-formation. He describes narratives about the past "as a kind of 'cultural tool' in 'mediated action' that creates and re-creates identity".[24] In particular, the collective consciousness of "imagined communities", as Benedict Anderson famously articulated in his seminal work on nationalism,[25] has been founded on the consolidation of such narratives into collective memories.[26] Seixas, among others, affirms that "[a] common past, preserved through institutions, traditions, and symbols, is a crucial instrument – perhaps *the* crucial instrument – in the construction of collective identities in the present".[27] In constructing their memories and identities, communities have often resorted to what Eric Hobsbawm refers to as "invented traditions", including:

> a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.[28]

Jan Assmann, a leading theorist in the field of collective memory studies, further underscores the significant mythical content of collective narratives. He suggests that "myth is the most important medium for 'imagination' of community".[29] These emotionally powerful stories, which typically blur the space between past and present, have been pivotal in community-building processes. On countless occasions, they have served to instil a sense of attachment and loyalty to a

24 J.V. Wertsch, "Narrative Tools of History and Identity", in: *Culture and Psychology* 3 (1997), 5.

25 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1991. For a discussion on the "primordial" or "imagined" significance of national identity, compare B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; E. Gellner, *Nationalism*, Nora 1990, and E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, New York 1983; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge 1990); and A.D. Smith, *National Identity (Ethnonationalism in Comparative Perspective)*, Reno 1993.

26 On collective memory and identity construction, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; A. Barahona de Brito et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, Oxford 2001; D.S.A. Bell, "Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity", in: *British Journal of Sociology* 54(1) (2003), 63–81; Connerton, *How Societies*; Gellner, *Nations*; J.R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton 1994; M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago 1992; L.P. Hinchman and S.K. Hinchman, *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, Albany 1997; P. Nora and L.D. Kritzman (eds.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, New York 1996; and P. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago 2004.

27 P. Seixas, "Introduction", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 5.

28 E.J. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", in: E.J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983, 9.

29 J. Assmann, "Frühe Formen Politischer Mythomotorik. Fundierende, Kontrarepräsentistische und Revolutionäre Mythen", in: J. Assmann and D. Harth (eds.), *Revolution und Mythos*, Frankfurt am Main 1992, 42.

"natural" and "primordial" community and to authenticate its ancestral rights to a homeland, to prove its moral virtues and genius, and to celebrate its victories and heroes and to mourn its losses. They have encompassed mythologised stories of shared greatness and heroism and of victimhood and suffering – or, in Vamik Volkan's words, of "chosen glories" and "chosen traumas".[30] In his seminal work on the role of historical narratives in processes of national identity formation, Duncan Bell speaks of "a nationalist myth as a story that simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation's past and its place in the world, its historical eschatology: a story that elucidates its contemporary meaning through (re)constructing its past".[31] For his part, Pierre Nora describes a nation's "grand narrative" as "a saga, a powerful recitative with a touch of epic, with its highs and lows, its great moments and its ordeals, its inexhaustible repertoire of personalities, scenes, lines, intrigues, dates, good and bad people". He describes it as "sacred history because it was just like the religious catechism […]; holy because it was that of the *patrie* which might mean giving one's life". He defines it as "a legend – but one that acted as a driving force for social integration, cohesion, and promotion".[32] Seixas underlines the potency of such historical narratives and their critical implications for the present and the future. In his view, "[b]elief in a shared past opens the possibility for commitments to collective missions in the future"; "[i]ts telling potentially invokes debts of the current generation to its collective forbears". He concludes that "[i]n this way the narrative provides a larger justificatory context for collective actions to be taken in response to current challenges".[33] In this sense, Nigel Eltringham argues, "historical narratives always involve moralisation regarding the future".[34]

Owing to the profound implications of their frequently normative and moral content, narratives as well as the objects, symbols, and rituals used to transmit and enact specific images, meanings, lessons, and warnings, have long been at the centre of political contestation. Struggles for recognition and hegemony of one's own narratives in the public realm have often been fierce among opposing camps vying to control state power and to impose their views and visions on society. Bell uses the term "national mythscapes" to refer to "the temporally and

30 V. Volkan describes "chosen trauma" as "the shared mental representation of a massive trauma that the group's ancestors suffered at the hand of an enemy". V.D. Volkan, "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity", in: *Group Analysis* 34 (2001), 79. See also V.D. Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*, New York 1997.

31 Bell, "Mythscapes", 75.

32 P. Nora, "General Introduction", in: P. Nora (ed.), *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Volume 1: The State*, London 2001, xiv.

33 Seixas, "Introduction", 5.

34 H. White, "The Value", 21–25, cited in N. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda*, London 2004, 159.

spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people's memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested, and subverted incessantly". "The mythscape", he further explains, "is the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are (re)written; it is the perpetually mutating repository for the representation of the past for the purposes of the present".[35]

In the context of a struggle for power and of a quest for legitimacy, the exercise of control over "the truth", and over the past and its narrativisation in particular, has been a primary concern of political entrepreneurs, among them nationalistic, ethnic, and religious leaders. Mindful of George Orwell's dictum according to which, "[w]ho controls the past, controls the future", political elites, supported willingly or unwillingly by cultural elites such as historians,[36] have commonly taken great care in crafting, propagating, and nurturing single public narratives and absolutist histories with the suspect pretension of objectively recounting the past "as it really was".[37] Those who have come to dominate and control the state have typically imposed their specific interpretation of reality, a "grand narrative" that suits their present interests and ideologies,[38] and through which they have promoted preferred orders, identities, worldviews, and belief and value systems. Wertsch points out that "modern states have sponsored the most ambitious effort at creating collective memory ever witnessed", arguing that, in such endeavours, "states not only attempt to provide their citizens with official accounts of the past, but they also seek to control the particular ways such accounts are used, as well as access to alternative versions".[39] Counter-narratives are frequently ignored or utterly silenced and outlawed until a radical shift in power relations occurs. As Walter Benjamin famously observed, "history is written by the victors"; and, as victors have subsequently become losers, history has been expediently re-written. New "founding myths" and "collective traumas" have emerged, and new roles and meanings have been assigned, thereby turning heroes into villains and triumphs into tragedies.

35 Bell, "Mythscapes", 66.

36 For an interpretation of the historian's propagandistic role in society, see H. Zinn, *The Politics of History*. 2nd ed., Urbana 1990. See also E. Foner, *Who Owns the Past. Rethinking the Past in a Changing World*, New York 2002; and E. Hobsbawm, *On History*, New York 1997. As Hobsbawm once warned, historians have been "primary producers of the raw material that is turned into propaganda and mythology" and into "some version of the opium of the people". 275.

37 Mitchell, *On Narrative*, 2.

38 For discussions on the history of the use of the term "ideology", see T. Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, London 1991; and J. Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology*, Athens 1979.

39 Wertsch, "Specific Narratives and Schematic Narrative Templates", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 50.

History, identity conflict, and reconciliation

Evidence from around the world has shown the power of narratives and myths that are rooted in memories both of common heroic struggles, and traumatic defeats or historical wrongs, especially when these are linked to perceived or actual dangers in the present. Speaking of "chosen traumas", Volkan suggests that "within virtually every large group there exists a shared mental representation of a traumatic past event during which the large group suffered loss and/or experienced helplessness, shame and humiliation in a conflict with another large group".[40] These "collective memories of suffering", Elizabeth A. Cole observes, "have become a major part of group identity and group politics".[41] Their cohesive power has been poignantly expressed by the French writer Ernest Renan. According to Renan, "suffering in common unifies more than joy does"; "[w]here national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties and require a common effort".[42]

Such narratives have aimed to unite imagined communities while at the same time often fuelling conflict and violence against designated "others". In an article titled "History on the Line", history and cultural studies professor Elazar Barkan observes that on countless occasions "[t]he recounting of history has been exploited to provoke conflict, incite war, and inflame genocides".[43] Numerous studies have exposed such "uses and abuses of history".[44] They have illustrated a variety of cases in which the past has been summoned by those with political aspirations to bolster collective identities, to incite grievances and vengefulness, and to justify violence against demonised "out-groups". This "militant" recourse to the past, as French historian Marc Ferro describes it,[45] has entailed constructing an image of historical struggle between monolithic cate-

40 Volkan, "Transgenerational Transmissions", 87. In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, P. Ricoeur notices that, often, "[w]hat we celebrate under the title of founding events are, essentially, acts of violence legitimated after the fact by a precarious state of right". "What was glory for some", he continues, "was humiliation for others", 79.

41 E. Cole, "Transitional Justice and the Reform of History Education", in: *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1 (2007), 118.

42 E. Renan, "What is a Nation" (1882), cited in H. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London/New York 1990, 19.

43 E. Barkan, "History on the Line. Engaging History: Managing Conflict and Reconciliation", in: *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005), 229. See also E. Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations. Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, Baltimore 2001.

44 See, for instance, the classic work by 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, New York 2010, originally published in 1873, and M. MacMillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History*, Toronto 2008. See also P. Friedman and P. Kenney, *Partisan Histories: The Past in Contemporary Global Politics*, New York 2005.

45 M. Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History, or How the Past is Taught to Children*. 2nd ed., London/New York 2003. See also M. Ferro, *L'Histoire sous Surveillance*, Paris 1985.

gories: between "us" and "them", the victimised and the victimisers. In "The Balm of Recognition," the Jewish writer and academic Eva Hoffman warns against "the marshalling of victimological, defensive memory for the purpose of aggression".[46] Similarly, in his theorisation of collective violence and memory, Volkan argues that "[a]dopting a chosen trauma can enhance ethnic pride, reinforce a sense of victimisation, and even spur a group to avenge its ancestors' hurts". Ultimately, he suggests, "[t]he memory of the chosen trauma is used to justify ethnic aggression".[47] Alexander Karn draws attention to the pervasive use of historical myths in conflict. He observes that, "[w]hether we look at the conflict in Israel-Palestine, the longstanding feud between China and Japan or the civil wars and genocides that continue to plague sub-Saharan Africa, it is clear that partisans in these contests seek to weaponize the past in order to legitimate their campaigns and support their claims to moral superiority".[48] David Betz suggests that, in these violent settings, wars are typically coupled with confrontations in "the virtual, informational realm in which belligerents contend with words and images to manufacture strategic narratives which are more compelling than those of the other side".[49]

While the past has been regularly summoned to fuel conflict, it has also been increasingly invoked as a prominent aspect in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.[50] Sarah W. Freedman et al. affirm that "[a] country's history is often a central concern after violent, identity-based conflicts, regardless of where they occur". They point out that, in such contexts, "all sides tend to blame cross-group hatred and ensuing conflicts, at least in part, on past injustice".[51] Confrontations take the form of memory and history wars among those involved, each side claiming to hold the sole truth about "what happened". Incidents of mass violence have been particularly contentious. According to René Lemarchand, "[f]ew events in history are more subject to controversy than the mass killings commonly designated as genocide".[52] Against this backdrop, attention

46 E. Hoffman, "The Balm of Recognition", in: N. Owen (ed.), *Human Rights, Human Wrongs*, Oxford 1999, 281.

47 Volkan, *Bloodlines*, 78.

48 A.M. Karn, "Depolarizing the Past: The Role of Historical Commissions in Conflict Mediation and Reconciliation", in: *Journal of International Affairs* 60(1) (Fall/Winter 2006), 31.

49 D. Betz, "The Virtual Dimension of Contemporary Insurgency and Counterinsurgency", in: *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19(4) (2008), 510.

50 Barkan, "History", 229.

51 S.W. Freedman et al., "Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience", in: *Comparative Education Review* 52(4) (2008), 663.

52 R. Lemarchand, "Rwanda. The State of Research", in: J. Semelin (ed.), *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence* (2007), 2, www.massviolence.org/IMG/article_PDF/Rwanda-The-State-of-Research.pdf [last accessed on 12/06/2011].

has been turned to what Ferro calls a "therapeutic" function of history.[53] This entails attempts to confront uneasy pasts, and, more specifically, to reconcile selective and partisan memories and interpretations of traumatic events through the construction of shared and more nuanced narratives that both reflect and promote the rapprochement of former enemies. The therapeutic function of critical history has been reiterated by Paul Ricœur. In his words, "there is a privilege that cannot be refused to history: it consists not only in expanding collective memory beyond any actual memory but in correcting, criticizing, even refuting the memory of a determined community, when it folds back upon itself and encloses itself within its own sufferings to the point of rendering itself blind and deaf to the suffering of other communities". Ricœur concludes that "[i]t is along this path of critical history that memory encounters a sense of justice".[54]

The "therapeutic" turn towards the past is demonstrated by what John Torpey, editor of *Politics and the Past*, refers to as a recent "preoccupation with past crimes and atrocities". He speaks of a notable "upsurge of concern with memory, history, and 'coming to terms with the past'".[55] Confronting a grievous past is nowadays judged to be crucial to breaking cycles of violence, impunity, and vengeance. Conversely, forgetting the past is widely believed to be dangerous to sustainable peace. South Africa's former President Nelson Mandela once warned us that "nations that do not deal with their past are haunted by it for generations".[56] His countryman Jeremy Sarkin similarly asserts the imperative obligation to eschew collective amnesia based on the argument that "an unresolved past inevitably returns to haunt a society in transition".[57] The expression of such concerns has been coupled with a rapidly growing development of transitional justice, "a field of activity and inquiry focused on how societies address legacies of past human rights abuses".[58] In an article on "The Role of

53 Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History*, and Ferro, *L'Histoire sous Surveillance*. See also M. Angenot, *L'Idéologie du Ressentiment*, Montréal 1996; A. Grosser, *Le Crime et la Mémoire*, Paris 1996; P. Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoires*, Paris 1997; and T. Todorov, *Les Abus de la Mémoire*, Paris 1995.

54 Ricœur, *Memory*, 500. See also D. Newbury, "Engaging with the Past to Engage with the Future", in: *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 173–174(431) (2004), 430–431.

55 J. Torpey (ed.), *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices*, Lanham 2003, 1.

56 N. Mandela, "After such Crimes, What Forgiveness?", in: *Civilization* (June/July 1999), 78.

57 J. Sarkin, *Carrots and Sticks: The TRC and the South African Amnesty Process*, Antwerp 2004, 51–52.

58 L. Bosire, Overpromised, *Undelivered: Transitional Justice in Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: International Centre for Transitional Justice (Occasional paper series) July 2006, 4. On transitional justice, see *inter alias*, A. Barahona de Brito, C. Gonzalez-Enriquez, and P. Aguilar, *The Politics of Memory. Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, Oxford 2001; J. Elster, *Closing the Books. Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge 2004; P.B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*, New York 2001; N.J.

Historical Commissions in Conflict Mediation and Reconciliation" issued in 2006, Karn lamented a "relegation of history to the margins of mediation practice".[59] His colleague Barkan similarly contended that conflict resolution efforts only "seldom actively address history either as a methodology or as a subject matter that can contribute to reconciliation".[60] That being said, in an article titled "Reckoning with Past Wrongs" David Crocker suggests that "history is a dominant part" within the field of transitional justice.[61] One of the main aims of transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions and criminal tribunals is to establish accurate and authoritative accounts of the violent past. This objective has been pursued with an eye to confronting and countering historical denial, misrepresentation and falsification, and to promoting historical justice and reconciliation.[62] In this sense, political transitions represent, in Ruti Teitel's words, "vivid instances of conscious historical production".[63]

Kritz, *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes*, Washington 1995; M. Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*, Boston 1998, and M. Minow, *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred. Memory, Law and Repair*, Princeton 2002; M. Osiel, *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory and the Law*, New Brunswick 1997; R.G. Teitel, *Transitional Justice*, New York 2000; and N. Wouters (ed.), *Transitional Justice and Memory in Europe (1945–2013)*, Cambridge/Antwerp/Portland 2014.

59 Karn, "Depolarizing the Past", 32.

60 Barkan, "History", 229.

61 D.A. Crocker, "Reckoning with Past Wrongs: A Normative Framework", in: *Ethics & International Affairs* 13(1), 43–64.

62 To such popular transitional justice mechanisms as TRCs and tribunals one must add the more neglected historical commissions. Among the most prominent examples are the commissions that were set up in Europe to investigate issues surrounding WWII, the Holocaust, and the Stalinist era. Some of them engaged historians from opposite sides of the conflict to jointly write "negotiated" or "parallel" histories as a way to address historical controversies. Such initiatives are based on the belief that the responsibility of historians, certainly in divided societies, is to "construct an intelligent and critical narrative that separates the rational from popular myths of nationalist histories" (Barkan, "History", 231) and "that allows for contending voices, that reveals the aspirations of all actors, the hitherto repressed and the hitherto privileged". C.S. Maier, "Doing History, Doing Justice: The Narrative of the Historian and of the Truth Commission", in: R.I. Rotberg and D. Thompson (eds.), *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, Princeton/Oxford 2000, 274. In his work, Maier pleads for the production of a "contrapuntal history", whereby "the particular histories of national groups [are] woven together linearly alongside each other so that the careful listener can follow them distinctly but simultaneously, hearing the whole together with the parts". Ibid., 275.

63 Teitel, *Transitional Justice*, 70. Teitel underscores the significance of the role of history in transitional justice processes by contending that "historical justice", defined as "collective history making regarding the repressive past" (69), is generally at the base of other forms of justice, including retributive, compensatory, and restorative justice. For a discussion of historical production through criminal justice, see, among others, L. Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment. Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust*, New Haven/London 2001.

The turn to the past that characterises political transitions is generally accompanied by a turn to the future and by a desire to demonstrate discontinuity with the past. Yael Zerubavel suggests that, "[w]hen a society undergoes rapid developments that shatter its social and political order, its need to restructure the past is as great as its desire to set its future agenda".[64] Society thereby often exhibits what Gillis refers to as "an ideologically driven desire to break with the past, to construct as great a distance as possible between the new age and the old".[65] This distancing oneself from a discreditable record has at times involved a complete or partial rewriting of history. Such practices have entailed a deliberate attempt to cover up certain facts and to impose a single official historical narrative that relies on selective amnesia regarding stories that do not fit the new national biography expediently written by the people in power. In such scenarios politics is guilty of hijacking the "work of remembering", thus countering any prospect for processes of truth-seeking and historical reconstruction to engage society in a *travail de mémoire* through which plural and conflicting interpretations may be genuinely acknowledged and assessed.

Learning the "right stories": the politics of education and the "usable past"

If it is true that (historical) narratives have been constructed, for better or for worse, as a response to present political interests and social needs, their actual impact on society largely depends on the level of dissemination among, and appropriation by, the population and especially by the younger generations. Extant scholarship provides ample evidence of how dominant views and their rhetorical-discursive and representational content have been commonly transmitted from one generation to the next through processes of socialisation that have allowed such views to filter into popular consciousness and cultural heritage. Historically, national education systems have proven to be among the most powerful socializing institutions.[66] Far from being "neutral" bodies, national education systems constitute "cultural products" embedded in a specific sociopolitical context and susceptible to politically motivated change. They have been the object of intense politicisation on account of their power to influence the

64 Y. Zerubavel, "The Historic, the Legendary, and the Incredible: Invented Tradition and Collective Memory in Israel", in: Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations*, 105–106.

65 Gillis, "Introduction", in: Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations*, 8.

66 In his classic work on *The Archeology of Knowledge*, French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault argued that "[e]very educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourses with the knowledge and power it carries with it". M. Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, London 1972, 227.

social, civic, and moral orientation of the nation's younger generations, and have typically functioned as an integral part of sophisticated political apparatuses geared towards legitimising and preserving the status quo. According to Elizabeth Cole and Karen Murphy, it is through formal education that "students first come into contact with official structures of their society, its basic narratives and its values".[67]

Curricula and textbooks, as elements at the heart of any education system, have been obvious targets for political manipulation. Politicisation has been prevalent especially in the so-called "national subjects", namely history, geography, civics, social studies, religion, language, literature, arts, and music. Experts on the politics of textbooks have observed that state-controlled curricula and textbooks for these subjects have traditionally exercised an ideological and propagandistic function; they have been widely employed as potent vectors of hegemonic beliefs, values, and practices.[68] These "cultural artefacts"[69] have functioned as the main vehicles for what powerful groups have considered to be legitimate knowledge and "the truth". Howard Mehlinger associates textbooks with "the modern version of village storytellers, since they are responsible for conveying to youth what adults believe they should know about their own culture".[70] Similarly, Christian Laville explains that citizens have been moulded and imbued with "a sense of inclusion and respect for established order" through textbooks presenting what Peter Lee refers to as the "'right' stories"[71] and teaching pupils "what they should know and even, by extension, what they should think and feel".[72]

School history, as a primary locus of the politics of history and identity, has received prominent scholarly attention. A pioneering publication on the politics

67 E.A. Cole and K. Murphy, *History Education Reform, Transitional Justice, and the Transformation of Identities*. Research Brief, New York: International Center for Transitional Justice 2009, 3; also published in P. Arthur (ed.), *Identities in Transition. Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies*, New York: ICTJ 2010, 334–368.

68 M.W. Apple and L.K. Christian-Smith (eds.), *The Politics of the Textbook*, New York 1991; M.W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, Boston 1979, M.W. Apple, *Education and Power*, Boston 1982, and M.W. Apple, *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. 2nd ed., London 2000; S.J. Foster and K.A. Crawford (eds.), *What Shall We Tell the Children? International Perspectives on School History Textbooks*, Greenwich 2006; W. Marsden, *The School Textbook: Geography, History, and Social Studies*, London 2001; and J. Nicholls, *School History Textbooks Across Cultures: International Debates and Perspectives*, Oxford 2006.

69 S.J. Foster and K.A. Crawford, "Introduction: The Critical Importance of History Textbook Research", in: Foster and Crawford (eds.), *What Shall We Tell the Children?*, 1.

70 H.D. Mehlinger, "International Textbook Revision: Examples from the United States", in: *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 4 (1985), 287.

71 P. Lee, "Understanding History", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 155.

72 Laville, "Historical Consciousness", 166.

of history teaching is Ferro's work on *The Use and Abuse of History, or How the Past is Taught to Children.* Ferro draws on fifteen case-studies from across the globe to illustrate the ideological underpinning of school histories and their inevitably selective, partisan, and frequently purposively distortive representations of the past.[73] Ferro's arguments find echo in Stuart Foster and Keith Crawford's more recent publication *What Shall We Tell the Children?* In their book, Foster and Crawford draw attention to the "ideological and cultural potency" of history textbooks. They demonstrate how, in telling stories about a nation's history and that of other countries, these texts often "seek to imbue in the young a shared set of values, a national ethos, and an incontrovertible sense of political orthodoxy".[74] The authors argue that, by presenting and enforcing an authoritative and uncontested story line – an "official" version of events – history textbooks have been instrumental in influencing and controlling how young people have perceived and understood the nation and its past, and how they have viewed various groups both within and outside the country. School history lessons have thus served the purpose of inculcating and nurturing what Wertsch refers to as a "collective memory grounded in 'state-approved civic truth'".[75] This has been transmitted through a pedagogy that is "based on telling a story"[76] and that is "focused upon the acquisition of key facts and the commemoration of significant events of national importance".[77] Textbooks have thereby typically conveyed a "usable past", the main purpose being, in Laura Hein and Mark Selden's words, to "transmit ideas of citizenship and both the idealised past and the promised future of the community".[78] Textbooks have traditionally taught a proud and patriotic history which seeks to craft and consolidate a common national identity by celebrating and exalting the nation, its traditions and heritage and its heroes and triumphs, while also glorifying and legitimising the state and its authority.[79]

73 M. Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History.* This work was first published in 1981 in French and was translated into English in 1984. Case-studies include South Africa, India, Iran, Trinidad, the USA, USSR/Russia, Poland, China, and Japan.

74 Foster and Crawford, "Introduction", 1.

75 J. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, Cambridge 2002, 71.

76 Laville, "Historical Consciousness", 173.

77 T. Taylor, "Disputed Territory: The Politics of Historical Consciousness in Australia", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 219. Linda Levstik speaks in terms of an "information exhibition stance", in which "history is acquired as information to be displayed". L.S. Levstik, "Crossing the Empty Spaces: New Zealand Adolescents' Conceptions of Perspective-Taking and Historical Significance", in: O.L. Davis, E.A. Yeager, and S.J. Foster (eds.), *Historical Empathy and Perspective Taking in the Social Studies*, New York 2001, 71.

78 L. Hein and M. Selden (eds.), *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States.* Armonk (Asia and the Pacific Series) 2000, 3.

79 M. Carretero, *Constructing Patriotism: Teaching History and Memories in Global Worlds*, Charlotte 2011; M. Carretero, M. Asensio and M. Rodríguez-Moneo (eds.), *History Education*

Education, conflict, and transitional justice: reforming schooling after violence

Vincent Greany observes that the "highly idealised views of one nation or group of people" which have been transmitted through textbooks have frequently been accompanied by "incorrect and inappropriate images about others".[80] In some cases, "the others" and their cultural heritage have simply been erased or underrepresented in the dominant national narrative. In so doing, schooling has been turned into an instrument of cultural alienation vis-à-vis marginalised groups.[81] In other cases, these groups have been misrepresented, denigrated, and demonised; they have been the object of bias, prejudice, and negative stereotypes. Evidence suggests that such textbook representations have negatively impacted social relations. They have nurtured feelings of arrogance and moral superiority, as well as contempt, distrust, fear, and even hatred towards "the other". History teaching, especially if based on the adoption of a single text that dictates a state-approved version of the national story, appears, as a field, to be particularly susceptible to allegations of bias and prejudice.[82] Sarah Graham-Brown remarks that the monopoly of one group over political power commonly results in "the construction of a version of history […] which heightens the role

and the Construction of National Identities, Charlotte 2012; and E. Vickers and A. Jones (eds.), *History Education and National Identity in East Asia*, London 2005. Alan Smith points out that feelings of nationalism and patriotism have also been encouraged through the "hidden curriculum". He mentions "the daily routine of singing the national anthem, raising the national flag, display of leaders' portraits or celebration of national days". A. Smith, *The Influence of Education on Conflict and Peace Building. Background Paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011, The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, Paris: UNESCO 2010, 2, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001913/191341e.pdf [last accessed on 24/09/2014]. The concept of a "hidden curriculum" refers to the conveyed societal values and beliefs which are not formally and explicitly part of the official curriculum. M. Haralambos, *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, London 1981.

80 V. Greany, "Textbooks, Respect for Diversity, and Social Cohesion", in: E. Roberts-Schweitzer, V. Greaney, and K. Duer (eds.), *Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for Using Textbooks*, Washington: The World Bank 2006, 1–2.

81 See, for instance, S. Ahonen, "Politics of Identity through History Curriculum: Narratives of the Past for Social Exclusion – or Inclusion?", in: *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 33 (2001), 179–194; R. Nasser, "Exclusion and the Making of Jordanian National Identity: An Analysis of School Textbooks", in: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10(2) (2004), 221–249; and R. Nasser and I. Nasser, "Textbooks as a Vehicle for Segregation and Domination: State Efforts to Shape Palestinian Israelis' Identities as Citizens", in: *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 40 (2008), 627–650.

82 See, for instance, Apple and Christian-Smith (eds.), *The Politics of the Textbook*; E.H. Dance, "Bias in History Teaching and Textbooks", in: O. Schüddekopf et al., *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe 1967; L.T. Maes, *Les Préjuges et leur Influence sur l'Enseignement de l'Histoire*, Bruxelles 1974; and M. Reinhard, *L'Enseignement de l'Histoire et ses Problemes.* 2e ed., Paris 1967.

of that group at the expense of others".[83] Similarly, Greany affirms that "[t]extbooks sometimes deliberately and systematically exclude counter-narratives, especially those of minorities or a defeated people".[84] Linda Levstick highlights the contentious nature of the content of national histories and their likely impact on popular perceptions and attitudes. She concludes that

> *when, how* and *if* groups and individuals are included in the nation's historical narrative is fraught with controversy […] individuals and groups left out of historical narratives may perceive themselves and be perceived by others as second-class citizens, cut off from the rights and privileges enjoyed by more favored citizens.[85]

Groups designated as "the other", who have often been marginalised in school histories, have also frequently experienced marginalisation from schooling altogether. Education systems have been used to perpetuate not only the views and values of dominant groups, but also their privileged position in society. In countless cases, unequal and discriminatory policies and practices have been overtly or covertly adopted with the intention of restricting access to power and resources. Such practices have thereby severely compromised the future of those excluded from, or marginalised within, the system. In a report on *Education, Conflict, and International Development*, Alan Smith and Tony Vaux observe that inequalities in the education system have been advanced at the level of both "inputs" and "outputs".[86] The former relates to inequalities in access and resource allocation and in teacher recruitment, training, and deployment. The latter refers to inequalities in education performance and qualifications, for instance through the establishment of a multi-tiered and segregated identity-based education. In addition, access to education has been frequently discouraged through targeted and systematic violence against certain groups.

The flourishing research field of "education and conflict" has amply illustrated the role of politicised education systems as sources of societal tensions, and more specifically as sources of "grievances, stereotypes, xenophobia and other antagonisms".[87] The growing recognition of the potential and actual negative role of education in conflict has been coupled with mounting efforts to draw attention to the imperative need to understand such dynamics and relations, to reform and "transform" education systems by applying a "conflict sensitivity" perspective as well as to use schools as tools that can contribute to

83 S. Graham-Brown, "The Role of the Curriculum", in: *Education Rights and Minorities*, London: Minority Rights Group 1994.
84 Greany, "Textbooks", 13.
85 Levstik, "Crossing the Empty Spaces", 71–72.
86 A. Smith and T. Vaux, *Education, Conflict, and International Development*, London 2003, 26.
87 Smith, "The Influence", 1.

social cohesion.[88] Countries emerging from armed conflict have been subject to particular attention. Here, educational reconstruction and reform has increasingly been seen as a process with the potential to make a valuable contribution to dealing with the legacies of war and mass violence alongside such mechanisms as trials, truth commissions, and memorialisation practices.[89] The expanding body of literature on the role of education in reconciliation and transitional justice processes demonstrates a growing consensus on the need to connect these two sectors.[90] Julia Paulson draws attention to the fact that, partly as a result of an increased engagement by transitional justice mechanisms with young people, recent truth commissions have started to include the education sector in their investigations into institutional responsibility for the conflict and in their recommendations for institutional reform.[91] In recognition of the importance of

88 On education, conflict and peace, and post-war educational reconstruction, see, among others, P. Buckland, *Reshaping the Future: Education and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Washington: The World Bank 2004; K. Bush and D. Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, Florence: Innocenti Research Centre/UNICEF 2000; L. Davies, *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos*, New York 2004; K.E. Dupuy, *Education for Peace: Building Peace and Transforming Armed Conflict through Education Systems*, Save the Children Norway/PRIO 2008; S. Nicolai (ed.), *Opportunities for Change. Education Innovation and Reform During and After Conflict*, Paris: UNESCO 2009; J. Paulson, *(Re) Creating Education in Postconflict Contexts: Transitional Justice, Education, and Human Development*, New York: International Center for Transitional Justice 2009; J. Paulson (ed.), *Education, Conflict and Development*, Oxford 2011, and J. Paulson (ed.), *Education and Reconciliation: Exploring Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations*, London 2011; K. Seitz, *Education and Conflict: The Role of Education in the Creation, Prevention and Resolution of Societal Crises – Consequences for Development Cooperation*, Eschborn: GTZ 2004; A. Smith, "Education in the Twenty-First Century: Conflict, Reconstruction and Reconciliation", in: *Compare* 35(4) (2005), 373–391; S. Tawil and A. Harley (eds.), *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, Geneva: UNESCO/IBE 2004; and J. Wedge, *Rewrite the Future — When Peace Begins. Education's Role in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*, London: Save the Children 2008.

89 Minow, *Between Vengeance*, 23, and Minow, *Breaking the Cycles*, 3.

90 See, for instance, the initiative launched by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and Harvard Law School: www.unicef-irc.org/knowledge_pages/resource_pages/ children_and_transitional_justice/index.html [last accessed on 06/06/2014], and the more recent research project by the ICTJ and UNICEF on transitional justice, education and peacebuilding: www.ictj.org/our-work/research/education-peacebuilding [last accessed on 02/08/2015]. Educational issues have also been integrated into peace negotiations and peace agreements. See the groundbreaking article by K.E. Dupuy, "Education in Peace Agreements, 1989–2005", in: *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 26(2) (Winter 2008), 150–151.

91 Paulson, *(Re)Creating Education*, 14–15. A specific focus on children was an important feature of some of the most recent truth commissions, namely in Guatemala (1999), Peru (2003), Sierra Leone (2004), Timor Leste (2005), and Liberia (2009). This focus was embedded in their proceedings through children's participation in statement-taking and hearings; it was visible in their report's findings through an analysis of children's roles in the conflict as both victims and perpetrators, in their recommendations through a stipulation

involving the younger generations in their work, several truth commissions and international tribunals have not only addressed, but also actively involved the education sector. They have done so through outreach programmes designed to disseminate their findings among young people in order to help them understand the history of the conflict experienced in their country. School outreach activities have included the distribution of informational material in educational institutions as well as the organisation of awareness-raising workshops, children's radio programmes, quiz competitions, school clubs, and court visits.[92] Such activities have, however, been accompanied by minimal efforts to systematically produce didactic material based on the investigative work and to formally integrate such material into school curricula.[93] According to Paulson, "[t]his demonstrates the difficult and political nature of teaching about the violent past, particularly within the officially sanctioned national curriculum".[94]

Overall, processes of curriculum and textbook revision have indeed proved particularly challenging in the aftermath of war. A UNESCO report on *Curriculum Change and Social Cohesion in Conflict-Affected Societies* contends that "[c]urricular renewal is the crux of the process of reform of school education".[95]

for reparations to benefit children, as well as in their public outreach efforts, specifically targeting children. A specific focus on children has also been an increasing feature of international courts' proceedings and outreach programmes. See Innocenti Research Center, UNICEF, *Expert Discussion on Children and Transitional Justice: Background Paper*, Florence: Innocenti Research Centre/UNICEF 2008, www.unicef-irc.org/files/documents/d-3741-Background-document.pdf [last accessed on 06/06/2014].

92 See the websites of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) www.icty.org, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) www.ictr.org, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) www.scsl.org, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) www.icc-cpi.int.

93 In Peru, the TRC-based curriculum resource *Recordándonos* was developed by an NGO/university collaboration. See J. Paulson, "Executive Summary. Truth Commissions and National Curriculum: The Case of the Recordándonos Resource in Peru", Children and Transitional Justice Conference, 27–29 April 2009, co–convened by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School, www.unicef-irc.org/knowledge_pages/resource_pages/tj_conference/ex_summary_paulson.pdf [last accessed on 01/01/2010]. In Sierra Leone, a child-friendly version for primary schools and a senior secondary school version of the TRC report were developed respectively by UNICEF and by a coalition of local NGOs, the so-called TRC Working Group. See J. Paulson, *Conflict, Education and Truth Commissions: The Case of Sierra Leone*, Oxford 2006; and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, www.trcsierraleone.org. In Guatemala, the TRC report resulted in the curricular material *Social-Historical Context of Guatemala and Educational Reality.* See E. Oglesby, "Historical Memory and the Limits of Peace Education: Examining Guatemala's Memory of Silence and the Politics of Curriculum Design", in: E.A. Cole (ed.), *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*, Washington 2007, 175–202, and E. Oglesby, "Educating Citizens in Postwar Guatemala: Historical Memory, Genocide, and the Culture of Peace", in: *Radical History Review* 97 (2007), 77–98.

94 Paulson, *(Re)Creating Education*, 24–25.

95 S. Tawil, A. Harley, and L. Porteous, *Curriculum Change and Social Cohesion in Conflict-*

In a later publication on *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, the organisation entreated that any such reform be undertaken with a concern "to avoid reproducing contents that at worst have contributed to conflict and, at best, have done nothing to prevent it".[96] With this concern in mind, post-war societies have often opted to integrate notions of peace education and human rights into the school curriculum. A UNICEF report on peace education viewed this option as a way to promote

> the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.[97]

While valuing such curricular initiatives, international practice has pointed to the critical importance of undertaking a more structural reform encompassing the withdrawal of inaccurate, objectionable, and offensive content as well as the development of broadly acceptable and inclusive curricula and textbooks. This approach was widely adopted in Europe in the wake of the Second World War, following the realisation of the role played by textbooks in shaping and perpetuating images of the enemy. Various initiatives were launched across the continent to jointly analyse and revise textbooks in order to include "a more or less harmonious version of the shared history".[98]

Affected Societies, Geneva: UNESCO/IBE 2003, 8. Research suggests that the subject matter taught in schools is largely determined by the context of the transition, and, more specifically, by the peace terms. As Gail Weldon argues, "depth, direction and pace of curriculum change in post-conflict societies are mediated by the terms that settled the conflict". G. Weldon, "Memory, Identity and the Politics of Curriculum Construction in Transition Societies: Rwanda and South Africa", in: *Perspectives in Education* 27(2) (2009), 177.

96 Tawil and Harley, *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 25.

97 S. Fountain, *Peace Education in UNICEF*. Working Paper, New York: UNICEF 1999, 1, www.unicef.org/education/files/PeaceEducation.pdf [last accessed on 07/06/2014]. See also G. Salomon and B. Nevo (eds.), *Peace Education. The Concept, Principles and Practices Around the World*, Mahwah/London 2002; and M. Sinclair, *Learning to Live Together: Building Skills, Values and Attitudes for the Twenty-First Century*, Geneva: IBE/UNESCO 2004. Practices around the world differ. Some countries have introduced peace education as a discrete area with its own timetable; others have subsumed it into existing subjects or have integrated peace education notions through the "hidden curriculum" and extra-curricular activities.

98 F. Pingel, "Can Truth be Negotiated? History Textbooks Revision as a Means to Reconciliation", in: *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617(1) (2008), 182. Among these initiatives are the French-German, the German-Czech, the German-Polish, and the German-Israeli Textbook Commissions. The examination of the German case, generally considered to be a success story in its reconciliatory effect towards neighbouring countries and former enemies, has often been compared to the less successful case of Japan. See, *inter alias*, I. Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, New York 1994. Japan, while recently involved in the Japan-Korea and the Korea-China-Japan Textbook Commissions, refused to face its responsibility for serious crimes

The challenges of reaching consensus on what to teach children have been particularly daunting in societies recently emerging from intra-state conflict and mass violence. Here, history education reform, a field that has been largely neglected in the discourse and practice of post-war transitional justice and social reconstruction,[99] has proven extremely complex in such disparate places as Bosnia-Herzegovina,[100] Northern Ireland,[101] Israel-Palestine,[102] Lebanon,[103] Cambodia,[104] South Africa,[105] and Rwanda. Cole and Murphy explain that "[i]n

committed during WWII in Asia. See the collection of essays on historical revisionism in politics, historiography, education, and the media in East Asia by S. Richter (ed.), *Contested Views of a Common Past: Revisions of History in Contemporary East Asia*, Frankfurt/New York 2008. The primary organisations that facilitated such initiatives especially in Europe were UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), and the European Association of History Educators (Euroclio). See Council of Europe, *Lessons in History: The Council of Europe and the Teaching of History*, Strasbourg 1999, and Council of Europe, *Against Bias and Prejudice: The Council of Europe's Work on History Teaching and History Textbooks*, Strasbourg 1995; UNESCO, "Getting the Spin Right on History", in: *The UNESCO Courier*, Paris 2001, www.unesco.org/courier/2001_11/uk/education.htm [last accesed on 27/01/2010]; W. Höpken, *Textbooks and Conflicts. Experiences from the Work of the Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research.* World Bank Workshop, March 24–26, Washington 2003. See also the recent groundbreaking work by K.V. Korostelina and S. Lässig (eds.), *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbook Projects*, London/New York 2013.

99 E.A. Cole and J. Barsalou, *Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies Emerging from Violent Conflict.* Special Report, Washington: United States Institute for Peace 2006, 2; and Cole, "Transitional Justice", 115.

100 A. Dimou (ed.), "*Transition" and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, Göttingen 2009.

101 K.C. Barton and A. McCully, "History Teaching and the Perpetuation of Memories: The Northern Ireland Experience", in: E. Cairns and M.D. Roe (eds.), *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, New York 2003, 107–124; and M.E. Smith, *Reckoning with the Past: Teaching History in Northern Ireland*, Lanham 2005.

102 E. Podeh, "History and Memory in the Israeli Education System: The Portrayal of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in History Textbooks, 1948–2000", in: *History and Memory* 12 (2000), 65–100; and A. Rohde, "Bridging Conflicts through History Education? A Case Study from Israel/Palestine", in: S. Alayan, A. Rohde, and S. Dhouib (eds.), *The Politics of Education Reform in the Middle East: Self and Other in Textbooks and Curricula*, New York 2012, 237–260. See also Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), "The Texts of 'the Others': An Israeli-Palestinian Textbook Project on the History of the Middle East Conflict", Braunschweig: Georg Eckert Institute 2007, www.gei.de/index.php?id=schulbuchprojek_israel_palestina&L=1 [last accessed 15/06/2014].

103 M. Daher, "On the Impossibility of Teaching History in Lebanon: Notes on a Textbook Controversy", in: Alayan et al. (eds.), *The Politics*, 97–111.

104 K. Dy, "'A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)'. Review of Genocide Education Project". Documentation Center of Cambodia, 22 April 2007, www.genocidewatch.org/images/Cambodia_22_Apr_07_A_History_of_Democratic_Kampuchea_1975-1979.pdf [last accessed on 17/06/2014].

105 G. Weldon, *A Comparative Study of the Construction of Memory and Identity in the Curriculum of Post-Conflict Societies: Rwanda and South Africa*, Saarbrücken 2010, and Weldon, "Memory, Identity and the Politics of Curriculum Construction".

countries where the wounds of identity-based conflict are fresh, there are questions about whether, how and at what age children should learn about parts of the nation's past – usually the recent past – that are difficult and expose deeply opposing views".[106] In such contexts, where "versions of 'official history' are often integral to the roots of the conflict",[107] history textbooks have regularly been objects of contention. Bitter disputes surrounding the "right" version and the appropriate representation of historical events have been common, despite experts' increasing calls for a critical and democratic approach to history teaching, one which favours children's exploration of multiple sources and perspectives.[108] Inevitably, post-war societies have been faced with the lack of a widely accepted view on their country's recent violent history and with a fear of unearthing uncomfortable memories that could further destabilise relations. Revisiting the history of a conflict can indeed be painful and distressing; it has the potential to re-open wounds and to rekindle antagonisms between former enemies. Dealing with the painful national past may consequently compromise what Robert Fullinwider refers to as a necessary "usable past" for young people, "a past in which they can find values and projects to take as their legacies".[109] Against this backdrop, many divided and post-war societies have chosen to exclude sensitive and controversial topics from the school curriculum. Cole notes that, in the aftermath of conflict and violence, "[h]istory education tends to emphasize a positive narrative focused on a relatively distant past, since the most controversial events – certainly those connected to transitional justice process – tend to belong to the recent past".[110] In doing so, schools have failed to respond to the necessity to adequately explain the conflict and its legacy to the new generation. The risks involved in leaving the young generation unequipped to handle the violent past have been saliently illustrated by Eva Hoffman. In her words,

106 Cole and Murphy, *History Education Reform*, 1.

107 Tawil and Harley, *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 12.

108 Cole and Barsalou, *Unite or Divide?*, 10. See also E. Cole, "Introduction: Reconciliation and History Education", in: Cole (ed.), *Teaching the Violent Past*, 1–2; Cole, "Transitional Justice"; and H.M. Weinstein, S.W. Freedman, and H. Hughson, "School Voices: Challenges Facing Education Systems After Identity-Based Conflicts", in: *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice (ECSJ)* 2(1) (2007), 42.

109 R.K. Fullinwider, "Patriotic History", in: R.K. Fullinwider (ed.), *Public Education in a Multicultural Society: Policy, Theory, Critique*, Cambridge/New York 1996, 222.

110 Cole, "Transitional Justice", 128. At the same time, politicians have often opted for a curriculum that denies identity-based diversity while focusing on unity. K. Bush and D. Saltarelli observe that, "[u]nder conditions of inter-ethnic tension, national elites often force teachers to follow curricula or use textbooks that either neutralise diversity and difference or worse, present it as a threat to be feared and eliminated". Bush and Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education*, 13.

> [this] is the generation that inherits the experience of violence as still living memory; and which moulds and converts this remembrance into some form of collective memory or historical knowledge. It is in this crucial interval that the past can be frozen into fixed mythology, or comprehended in its historical complexity; and in which the cycles of revenge can be perpetuated or interrupted. The moment of transmission is important to dwell on, because it is a moment of real danger; but also of genuine hope and possibility.[111]

The serious and profound implications of beliefs related to history and identity urge continued reflection on the way in which young people are instructed and educated about themselves and about the world in which they live. These ramifications compel continued reflection on the way the younger generations eventually come to understand "who they are", and "what happened" and "what it means". It is on this premise that this book has been written.

Having outlined some of the general discourses upon which it touches, this study now turns its attention to the specific case of Rwanda and to the lessons that can be drawn from its experience with post-war educational reconstruction and reform against the backdrop of a long-standing politicisation of history, identity, and education.

111 Hoffman, "The Balm", 291. See also E. Naidu and C. Adonis, *History on Their Own Terms: The Relevance of the Past for a New Generation,* Cape Town: Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2007.

2. Historical background

Rwanda, often referred to as the "land of a thousand hills", is a small, landlocked, and densely populated country in Central Africa. It shares borders with Burundi in the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west, Uganda in the north, and Tanzania in the east. Rwanda's latest population and housing census, published in 2012, estimated its predominantly young and rural population to amount to over ten million people.[112] The culturally and linguistically homogeneous people of Rwanda, known as the Banyarwanda, are composed of three groups: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. These identity groups, which have not been recorded in national censuses since 1994, have been historically described as respectively constituting 84 %, 15 %, and 1 % of the population. Their history, as this chapter will reveal, has been the object of intense debate, contention, and polemics among local stakeholders as well as among foreign observers.

The first three sections of this introductory chapter will present a brief chronology of Rwanda's political history by drawing on broadly accepted scholarly theories. Its aim is to provide the reader with an overall picture of the country's main historical developments in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras.

The pre-colonial period

Rwanda's ancient history is a matter of great contention.[113] Controversy has long surrounded the origins and the meanings of the designations Hutu, Tutsi, and

112 Republic of Rwanda, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda – Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Rwanda Population and Housing Census 2012*, Kigali, August 2012, www.statistics.gov.rw/survey-period/fourth-population-and-housing-census-2012 [last accessed on 03/06/2014].

113 On pre-colonial Rwanda, see J.-P. Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History.* Translated by S. Straus, New York 2003, originally published in French as *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Deux Mille Ans d'Histoire*, Paris 2000; M. d'Hertefelt, A. A.

Twa in the pre-colonial era.[114] This fundamental lack of consensus is manifest in the variety of terms employed in the vast extant literature to refer to these categories. Among them are such terms as race, ethnic group, social class, caste, and tribe.

According to archaeological studies, human settlement in present-day Rwanda dates back thousands of years. Rwanda's first reputed inhabitants were the hunter-gatherer Twa, a forest-dwelling pygmy people. Various hypotheses have been offered concerning the migrations that later supplanted these groups. Colonial theories, notably the "Hamitic theory" developed by European historians and ethnologists in the early twentieth century and which long dominated interpretations of Rwanda's ancient history, held that the area's settlement by the Twa had been followed first by the arrival of Bantu Hutu agriculturalists from West Africa and later by the migration of a distinct race of Nilotic Tutsi pastoralists from the northeast. The latter event was associated with a foreign conquest which had supposedly resulted in the subsequent political, economic, and cultural domination of the Tutsi over the earlier settlers. Current academic thinking, however, largely discredits these suppositions. The latest archaeological and anthropological findings underline the complex and continuous nature of pre-colonial migrations; they point to a concomitant process of cultural integration of migrant groups,[115] to the gradual development of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as social and political constructs rather than primordial identities as well as to the recent origins of Tutsi dominance and "ethnic" conflict in Rwandan society.

The exact origins of the crystallisation of these identities and the progression of their relationships are still contested. The theory espoused by the current Rwandan government, for instance, maintains that Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were fluid socio-economic groups of little salience which were transformed into antagonistic ethnic identities under colonial rule.[116] A contrasting theory, which is

Trouwborst and J.H. Scherer, *Les Anciens Royaumes de la Zone Interlacustre Méridionale: Rwanda, Burundi, Buha*, Tervuren 1962; A. Kagame, *Un Abrégé de l'Ethno-Histoire du Rwanda*, Butare 1972; B. Muzungu, *Histoire du Rwanda Pré-Colonial*, Paris 2003; C. Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression. Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda (1860–1960)*, New York 1988; J. Vansina, *L'Evolution du Royaume du Rwanda des Origines à 1900*, Brussels 2000, and J. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom*, Madison 2004.

114 On the issue of ethnicity, see J.-L. Amselle and E. M'bokolo (eds.), *Au Cœur de l'Ethnie. Ethnie, Tribalisme et Etat en Afrique*, Paris 1985; and J.-P. Chrétien and G. Prunier (eds.), *Les Ethnies Ont une Histoire*, Paris 2003.

115 Reportedly, assimilationist practices were not unilateral. Practices and conventions such as the institution of the semi-divine king, of the powerful Queen Mother and of the royal drums as well as many rituals seem all to be of Hutu origins.

116 Social status was mostly ascribed at birth. Opportunities however also existed for both groups to change affiliation depending on the level of wealth accrued or lost.

widely accepted by scholars today, instead holds that these identities already had great social and political significance prior to the arrival of the first European explorers in Rwanda. In addition to such contested identities, clans and familial lineage are commonly recognised as constitutingtwo significant factors of societal identification and solidarity in ancient Rwanda: whereas clan membership was based on a belief in the descent from a common mythical ancestor, lineage membership was based on blood ties to an extended family directly linked to a common predecessor.

As far as Rwanda's political history is concerned, the available literature traces the country's origins to one of the kingdoms established centuries ago in Central Africa. According to the country's abundant corpus of oral tradition, the Kingdom of Rwanda, depicted by some as "the greatest and the most complex" in the region,[117] was founded by the Tutsi Nyiginya dynasty in the thirteenth century and gradually expanded over the next few hundred years through military conquest and alliances. The apex of Rwanda's territorial expansion was reached in the nineteenth century during the reign of King Kigeri IV Rwabugiri, a monarch known for having established a highly centralised "state", which encompassed most of the territory of present-day Rwanda. A few small kingdoms and chiefdoms, including autonomous Hutu principalities, however, continued to exist in the northwest and southwest of contemporary Rwanda up until the early twentieth century. In addition to consolidating the power of the central monarchy, Rwabugiri is recognised in much scholarly literature as the instigator of a more rigid system of social stratification between Hutu and Tutsi. During his reign, the old practice of pastoral clientelism or vassalage, known as *ubuhake*, reportedly became a prominent form of social hegemony practised by the cattle-rich Tutsi. This practice entailed a formal relationship between a client and a more powerful individual, whereby the former committed himself to providing a variety of services to his patron in return for access to cattle and land as well as for protection.

The colonial period

Rwanda was one of the last African countries to be colonised by European powers. After it successfully resisted being penetrated by Arab slave-traders, the kingdom was assigned to Germany at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, during which the "scramble for Africa" was formalised amongst the European powers. In the 1890s, the territory was integrated into German East Africa, together with Burundi and Tanganyika (modern-day Tanzania). It was only in

117 C. Wrigley, *Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty*, Cambridge 1996, i.

1899, however, that King Musinga, who had replaced Rwabugiri's heir, Rutalindwa, following the 1896 Rucunshu coup, signed a treaty under which he accepted a German protectorate over the kingdom. During World War I, Rwanda was occupied by Belgian troops stationed in Belgian Congo and, together with neighbouring Burundi, it was formally conferred to Belgian custody in 1923 under the mandate of the League of Nations. In the wake of World War II, the combined entity of Ruanda-Urundi became a UN Trust Territory under Belgium's administrative authority.[118]

In governing the colony, the Belgians, supported by the Catholic hierarchy in Rwanda,[119] followed in the footsteps of their German predecessors by adopting a policy of indirect rule which relied on the Rwandan central court and which subscribed to an intensified practice of "divide and rule".[120] Between 1926 and 1936, the new rulers launched a series of sweeping administrative reforms which deeply affected Rwandan society. In 1933, the colonial administration introduced ethnic identity cards and distributed them on the basis of an arbitrary racial census, which rigidly classified the local population into Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa according to physical measurements (e. g. height, and nose and skull sizes) and possession of cattle. In particular, the documents differentiated between supposedly shorter, broad-featured, and darker Hutu agriculturalists and supposedly taller, thinner, and lighter-skinned Tutsi pastoralists with finer features – a division with racist undertones that would later become part of the texture of ethnic strife in the country.

The classification of the population into different "ethnic" groups was accompanied by reforms aimed at strengthening the Tutsi aristocracy, which replaced Hutu chiefs with Tutsi chiefs based on the premise that the Tutsi belonged to an allegedly superior race of natural rulers, the so-called Hamites. In addition to the implementation of discriminatory policies towards Hutu chiefs, the colonial period saw the increasing imposition of forced labour (*uburetwa*) and *corvées* on a predominantly Hutu peasantry under the supervision of newly appointed local chiefs, some of whom were reportedly responsible for despotism and abuse.[121] These practices are widely believed to have caused the crystallisation of social identities and the further polarisation of Rwandan society along

118 Rwanda and Burundi were governed as a single territory known as Ruanda-Urundi until they both gained independence in 1962. On Rwanda's colonial history, see M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Princeton 2001; R. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, New York 1970; and F. Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit au Rwanda. Droit Public et Evolution Politique, 1916–1973*, Tervuren 1985.

119 I. Linden, *Christianisme et Pouvoirs au Rwanda (1900–1990)*, Paris 1999.

120 While the colonisers relied on the traditional hierarchy, they did not refrain from removing unruly local authorities from power. In 1931, King Musinga was dethroned and replaced by his young son Rudahigwa.

121 Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*; Newbury, *The Cohesion*; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir.*

an artificial "ethnic" divide that was gradually internalised by the colonial subjects. Catharine Newbury argues that "[c]olonialism in Rwanda fostered not just the emergence of new forms of competition and new ideologies, but also the creation of new forms of oppression and exploitation, as well as the intensification of older ones". Newbury thereby underscores the role that a Tutsi oligarchy played in the deepening of societal divisions. Her analysis suggests that "[t]he group awareness that emerged among the victims of these processes (most of whom were Hutu) came as a response to the ways in which Tuutsi used the state apparatus to forward their own interests".[122]

It was in an increasingly tense atmosphere that Rwanda embarked upon a process of decolonisation and that its first political parties were founded in the 1950s. Among those first parties was the *Mouvement Social Muhutu* (MSM), later renamed MDR-Parmehutu (*Mouvement Démocratique Républicain-Parti de l'Emancipation du Peuple Hutu*). This party was a champion of Hutu ethnonationalism: it vowed to liberate the autochthonous Hutu from a double colonisation – by the Belgians and by the Tutsi – and to oversee the instauration of democratic majority rule. Its leader, Grégoire Kayibanda, was among a group of Hutu intellectuals who had bitterly denounced the dominant position of the "Tutsi race" in Rwandan society in the famous Hutu Manifesto published in 1957.[123] Parmehutu's main opponent was UNAR (*Union Nationale Rwandaise*), a party composed mainly of monarchist Tutsi who called for Rwanda's immediate independence under a constitutional monarchy. Other notable parties included the Hutu-dominated APROSOMA (*Association pour la Promotion Sociale des Masses*) and the progressive Tutsi-led RADER (*Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais*).

A power struggle between Hutu- and Tutsi-dominated parties created an atmosphere in which unprecedented communal violence flared. Rwanda experienced the first in a sequence of incidents of mass violence in 1959, following an attack against a Hutu sub-chief by a group of young Tutsi political activists, which sparked a cycle of retaliatory actions. The violence rapidly spread across the country as organised groups of Hutu, bent on revenge, committed pillage, arson, and murder, driving Tutsi chiefs from their positions of power. Thousands died as a result of the violence, while tens of thousands fled abroad. Among the many Tutsi exiles was King Ndahindurwa, successor to King Rudahigwa, who had mysteriously died in Burundi's capital Bujumbura earlier that year. The uprising, which came to be known as the "1959 revolution" or "social

122 Newbury, *The Cohesion*, 207. "Tuutsi" is an archaic spelling of "Tutsi". Throughout this study, the contemporary Kinyarwanda spelling has been used, which omits double vowels.

123 F. Nkundabagenzi, *Le Rwanda Politique (1958–1960)*, Brussels 1961, 20–29. The publication of this document came in reaction to a disclaimer by the Supreme Council of Ruanda which had denied the existence of ethnic inequalities.

revolution", set the scene for the Coup of Gitarama of 1961, initiating a political transition to Hutu majority rule. Reportedly, this "legal coup", which led to the Tutsi chiefs and the monarchy being deposed, had been encouraged and supported by the colonial authorities, who had converted to the Hutu cause once confronted with the increasingly anti-colonial overtones of an emancipated Tutsi elite.[124] Following the uprising, a temporary government was formed, of which Kayibanda was appointed Prime Minister. Subsequently, the colonial authorities organised the country's first-ever communal elections, which were overwhelmingly won by Kayibanda's Parmehutu party. In their wake, a referendum held in 1961 officially abolished the deposed monarchy and the country was subsequently proclaimed a republic, headed by the Hutu Dominique Mbonyumutwa as its provisional president. On 1 July 1962, Rwanda gained independence under the leadership of its first elected president, Kayibanda.

The post-colonial period

The First and Second Republics (1962–1990)

The period following independence in Rwanda was marked by spiralling conflict and violence. Since the Tutsi mass exodus in the years from 1959 to 1961, a series of unsuccessful incursions into Rwanda were carried out by groups of refugees, known as the *Inyenzi* rebels (literally: cockroaches), who were based in neighbouring countries. The state retaliated by orchestrating reprisal attacks against Tutsi within Rwanda, most notably in 1963–1964 and 1966–1967, when thousands were killed and thousands more were driven into exile. Under Kayibanda, Tutsi were also victims of systematic discrimination and marginalisation, a practice institutionalised through official quotas that favoured the Hutu majority in the allocation of educational and employment opportunities. The First Republic was likewise marked by growing authoritarianism, nepotism, and corruption on the part of the president and his entourage, which was mainly composed of Hutu from southern Rwanda. Within a few years of his rise to power, Kayibanda's regime had created a one-party state and eliminated all political opposition.

In 1973, a new wave of state-sponsored violence was orchestrated against the Tutsi community and was used as a way to galvanise a polarised Hutu majority around a perceived common menace.[125] Such strategies, however, ultimately

124 G. Logiest, *Mission au Rwanda*, Brussels 1988.

125 The violence against Tutsi in Rwanda in 1973 took place in the wake of persecutions of Hutu in Tutsi-ruled Burundi in 1972. See J.-P. Chrétien and J.-F. Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972: Au*

failed to resolve existing divisions and to prevent the fall of the First Republic: on 5 July, Kayibanda's regime was overthrown in a military coup led by the northern Hutu Major General Juvenal Habyarimana. His party, the *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND), soon came to dominate Rwanda's Second Republic, creating a new one-party state while resuming regionalist practices, which now favoured Hutu individuals from north-western Rwanda. Tensions in Rwanda rose again in the late 1980s, after a period of relative political stability and economic growth: the economy was in decline and criticism of state corruption, nepotism, and authoritarianism was growing, placing Habyarimana's regime under increasing pressure. In July 1990, mounting public discontent forced the president to announce political reforms and a transition to multiparty democracy. A few months later, the country was attacked by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel army predominantly composed of Uganda-based Tutsi refugees who had been forced into exile in successive waves since 1959.[126]

The war and the genocide (1990–1994)[127]

Civil war broke out on 1 October 1990 following the RPF's invasion. The Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) quickly managed to push the RPF back into

Bord des Génocides, Paris 2007; and R. Lemarchand, "Burundi 1972: Genocide Denied, Revised, and Remembered", in R. Lemarchand (ed.), *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial and Memory*, Philadelphia 2011, 37–50, and R. Lemarchand, "The Burundi Killings of 1972", in: J. Semelin (ed.), *The Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence* (27/06/2008), www.massviolence.org/The-Burundi-Killings-of-1972 [last accessed on 19/08/2011].

126 This movement was born in 1979 under the name of Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU). Its aim was to find a solution to the plight of Rwandan refugees. In the early 1980s, their predicament worsened when the Ugandan regime of President Milton Obote expelled thousands of Rwandan refugees and their descendents, while, at the same time, the Rwandan government refused to allow them to return home. In 1987, RANU became the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

127 Among the countless existing publications on the war and the genocide, many of which will be referred to in this study, see the classic work by A. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, New York: Human Rights Watch 1999, and G. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, New York 1995. Beside scholarly work, a mounting body of eyewitness literature has emerged, including: Y. Mukagasana, *La Mort Ne Veut Pas De Moi*, Paris 1997, and Y. Mukagasana, *Les Blessures du Silence. Témoignages du Génocide au Rwanda*, Paris 2001; as well as M. Niwese, *Le Peuple Rwandais un Pied dans la Tombe: Récit d'un Réfugié Etudiant*, Paris 2001; and M.B. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire*, Madison 2004. A number of films have also been produced about the genocide, most notably *100 Days* by Nick Hughes (2001), *Hotel Rwanda* by Terry George (2004), *Sometimes in April* by Raoul Peck (2004), *Shooting Dogs* by Michael Caton-Jones (2005), *Un Dimanche à Kigali* by Robert Favreau (2006), *Opération Turquoise* by Alain Tasma (2007), and *Shake Hands with the Devil* by Roger Spottiswoode (2007). For a

Uganda with the support of France, Belgium, and Zaire (now the DR Congo). The fighting, however, continued for three years despite a series of ceasefires being signed by the warring parties. Meanwhile, domestic pressure forced President Habyarimana to legalise multiparty politics and to form a coalition government with the opposition.[128] During the war, thousands were harassed, arrested, and assassinated as the regime felt increasingly threatened by growing opposition to its rule. At the same time, inflammatory rhetoric from extremist elements within the state apparatus was igniting ethnic tensions in a bid to undermine negotiations with the RPF. In August 1993, peace accords were signed in Arusha, Tanzania, but were rejected by what was known at the time as "Hutu Power", a political faction mainly composed of hard-liners from the MRND and of members of a new radical party: the *Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (CDR). Among other things, the agreement called for the establishment of a transitional government and a unified army, a process that was to be supervised by the 2,500-strong United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

The peace process collapsed in April 1994 with the onset of a genocide which brought the two opposing factions back to war. The violence was sparked by the mysterious shooting down of the plane carrying President Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira as it prepared to land at Kigali on 6 April. Blamed on Tutsi insurgents, the assassinations unleashed, within a few hours, the systematic killing of Tutsi and of hundreds of "moderate Hutu" affiliated to opposition parties. Among the first victims of the carnage were Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and other members of the coalition cabinet established in 1992. At the forefront of the killing mobs were units of the FAR, the Presidential Guard, and the notorious *Interahamwe* militias (literally: "those who fight together"). They were directed by an extremist interim government that had taken control of the state apparatus after the death of the president. These militant forces were supported by countless ordinary citizens, mobilised by local officials and state-sponsored hate media to participate in the mass killings in the name of self-defence.[129] Civilians were, for example, called upon to

critical analysis, see A. Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda: Dismembering and Remembering Traumatic History*, Lanham 2010.

128 J. Bertrand, *Rwanda, Le Piège de l'Histoire. L'Opposition Démocratique Avant le Génocide (1990–1994)*, Paris 2000.

129 On the role of the media, see Chrétien et al., *Rwanda: les Médias du Génocide*, Paris 1995; and A. Thompson (ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, London 2007. Besides the media, other powerful institutions, such as the churches, were implicated in the violence and its incitement. See J.D. Bizimana, *L' Eglise et le Génocide au Rwanda: Les Pères Blancs et le Négationnisme*, Paris 2001; T. Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900–1994*, Milton Keynes 2005; T. Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, New York 2010; and F. Rutembesa et al., *Rwanda. L'Eglise Catholique à l'Epreuve du Génocide*, Greenfield Park 2000.

man the numerous roadblocks that had been erected across the country with the aim of preventing the Tutsi "enemies" from escaping persecution.[130] In only one hundred days, the Rwandan population was decimated in full view of an inert international community which had withdrawn from Rwanda following the death of ten Belgian peacekeepers.[131] Between 500,000 and one million people died, mostly from machete blows. Millions more were displaced inside and outside the country.

The genocide came to an end with the military victory of the RPF. After capturing the capital Kigali on 4 July, the RPF took control of the northern towns of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, bastions of forces loyal to "Hutu-Power". As the RPF advanced and conquered Rwanda, two million Hutu, comprising both *génocidaires* and innocent civilians, fled across the borders in fear of retribution. The vast majority poured into neighbouring DR Congo, where they settled in militarised refugee camps. Accusations of complicity with the perpetrators during this period of mass displacement have been levelled against the French-led interim peacekeeping mission and its military campaign code-named "Opération Turquoise". According to critics, after lending considerable support to Habyarimana's army, French troops enabled armed genocide perpetrators to flee the country by creating a safe-zone in south-western Rwanda. Eastern Congo subsequently became a major battleground for both violent inter-state and intra-state conflict.[132]

130 On the local dynamics of the violence, see J.-P. Kimonyo, *Rwanda: Un Génocide Populaire*, Paris 2008; and O. McDoom, *Rwanda's Ordinary Killers: Interpreting Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide.* Crisis States Programme Working Paper 77, London 2005. Numerous studies have investigated the causes of people's mass participation in the genocide. Scholars have pointed to the role of virulent ethno-national ideology (e. g. J.-P. Chrétien, *Le Défi*; A. Des Forges, *Leave None*; M. Mamdani, *When Victims*), socio-economic inequalities and poverty (P. Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, West Hartford 1998), and overpopulation and land pressure (C. André and J.-P. Platteau, "Land Relations under Unbearable Stress: Rwanda Caught in the Malthusian Trap", in: *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 34 [1998], 1–47; and M. Verpoorten, *Leave None to Claim the Land. A Malthusian Catastrophe in Rwanda?* IOB Working Paper, Antwerp 2011).

131 On 21 April 1994, UNAMIR's personnel in Rwanda was reduced to a derisory 270. Not until 22 June did the UNSC officially acknowledge the massacres as genocide. On the role of the international community, see M. Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*, Ithaca 2002; R. Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, Toronto 2003; D. Kroslak, *The Role of France in the Rwandan Genocide*, London 2007; A.J. Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda*, Washington 2001; L. Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*, London 2000 and L. Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: the Rwandan Genocide*, London 2004; and S. Power, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, New York 2002.

132 On the regional dynamics of the violence, see R. Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*, Philadelphia 2009; G. Prunier, *From Genocide to Continental War: The "Congolese" Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa*, London 2009, and G. Prunier,

The post-genocide period and the Third Republic (1994–2014)

In July 1994, the RPF set up an interim coalition known as the Government of National Unity. The coalition was formally headed by a Hutu president and a Hutu prime minister, although real control was reportedly retained by the RPF. In 2000, President Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu who was later arrested and sentenced for compromising state security, resigned due to a political conflict. He was replaced by the powerful Defence Minister and Vice President Paul Kagame, a Tutsi military man who had been at the forefront of the rebellion that had ousted the genocidal regime. In 2003, the first post-genocide elections were overwhelmingly won by Kagame and the RPF, whose victory was reiterated in parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

Under the new leadership, a process of reconstruction, peacebuilding, and reconciliation was launched, with the substantial support of a contrite international community, to respond to the daunting task of rebuilding and reuniting a country that had been ravaged by war and genocide.[133] One of the greatest challenges faced by post-genocide Rwanda has been the massive repatriation of Hutu refugees from the DR Congo. As suspect *génocidaires* returned home, the government organised mass arrests and prosecutions in an attempt to pursue justice and eventually reconciliation.[134] As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the question of whether the Rwandan government has been successful in helping Hutu and Tutsi to live together again is a matter of contention. The overall record of Kagame and the RPF in Rwanda has indeed been the object of much controversy. On the one hand, the country's political leadership has been credited by some with guaranteeing peace, stability, rapid economic growth, and improved social indicators. On the other, it has been increasingly accused of authoritarianism and of being responsible for human rights abuses, including war crimes, both in Rwanda and in neighbouring DR Congo.[135]

Having sketched Rwanda's historical context, this study will now turn its attention to the antecedents and the legacy of post-genocide governance, spe-

Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe, New York 2008; F. Reyntjens, *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996–2006*, New York 2009; and C.P. Sherrer, *Genocide and Crisis in Central Africa: Conflict Roots, Mass Violence, and Regional War*, Westport/London 2001.

133 See references in Chapter 5, including P. Clark and Z.D. Kaufman (eds.), *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*, New York 2009; E. Stover and H.M. Weinstein (eds.), *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, Cambridge/New York 2004; and S. Straus and L. Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence*, Madison 2011.

134 In only three years, over 100,000 genocide suspects were imprisoned.

135 See, among others, R. Lemarchand, "Genocide in the Great Lakes: Which Genocide? Whose Genocide?", in: *African Studies Review* 41(1) (1998), 3–16.

cifically in relation to the politics of memory and identity, and its implications for the education sector. The next chapter focuses on the colonial period, drawing on extant literature on Rwanda to illustrate the interface between ideology, historiography, and schooling under colonial rule.

3. Colonial Rwanda

The "Hamitic theory" and the writing of a mythical ethno-history

The colonial period in Rwanda was marked by ideological constructions that radically transformed Rwandan traditional society. At the centre of the colonial view of Rwandan society was the notorious Hamitic hypothesis, described by the Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani as "an ideological perversion" which soon became the "grand colonial discourse".[136] This theory was based on biblical and medieval myths surrounding the curse of Ham by his father, Noah, the interpretation of which has significantly evolved over time as have the reasons behind its evocation. In the sixteenth century, the interpretation of this myth, according to which the "Negro was the accursed descendent of Ham", had served to legitimise the Atlantic slave trade.[137] Two centuries later, this same myth was reinterpreted to account for the unexpected discovery of civilisation on the "Dark Continent", most notably in Egypt. Europeans, spearheaded by the colonial official John Hanning Speke, claimed that the so-called Hamites were a superior and civilising Caucasian race which was responsible for all progress in Africa. In 1955, the Senegalese scholar Cheick Anta Diop summarised the historical evolution of the Hamitic hypothesis, arguing that: "according to the needs of the cause, Ham is cursed, blackened, and made into the ancestor of the Negroes […] On the other hand, he is whitened whenever one seeks the origins of civilisation".[138]

The highly centralised Rwandan Kingdom, with which the first Europeans came into contact at the end of the nineteenth century, was deemed to be a prime example of Hamitic civilisation. Based on the observation of essentialist phys-

136 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 35, 16. See also J.-P. Chrétien and M. Kabanda, *Rwanda. Racisme et Génocide. L'Idéologie Hamitique*, Paris 2013; and E.R. Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Function in Time Perspective", in: *Journal of African History* 10(4) (1969), 521–532.

137 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 80–81.

138 Ibid., 85.

ical, socio-economic, and moral ideal types, the European visitors associated the Tutsi with the allegedly superior foreign Hamitic race; the Hutu were viewed as subjugated masses of racially inferior Negroid Bantu; the Twa as a "tribe of dwarfs".[139] The Tutsi were considered to be "more intelligent, more active, more capable of understanding the idea of progress and even more likely to be accepted by the population". For this reason the argument was that "[t]he government must work mainly with them".[140]

These theories found substantial support in pseudo-scientific scholarship. Colonial authorities relied on missionary knowledge of Rwanda with the intention of informing and "scientifically" justifying "race policies" and a system of indirect rule. A number of studies were prepared by "expert" White Fathers for this purpose. Their findings were presented to the Belgian authorities in the form of a consolidated document drawn up in 1916 by the head of the Catholic Church in Rwanda, Monsignor Léon Classe.[141] Historiography, in particular, played a conspicuous role in the scientific anchoring of the colonial ideology. Among the prominent missionary-historians who lent credence to the Hamitic hypothesis in Rwanda were Albert Pagès with his *Un Royaume Hamite au Centre de l'Afrique* (1933) (*A Hamitic Kingdom at the Centre of Africa*) and Luis de Lacger with *Ruanda* (1939). European missionaries were not only the founders of Rwandan historiography and the first ethnologists of Rwanda;[142] as the authors of an "*ethno-histoire*",[143] they were also "the first ideologues of colonisation".[144]

Mamdani illustrates the close relationship between the racial ideology and guiding dogma of the colonial state on the one hand (referred to by Jean-Pierre

139 Claudine Vidal reports that Count von Götzen had written about a "tribe of dwarfs" (the Twa) and a multitude of '"Bantu Negroes,' the Hutu, in a 'servile dependence' on the Watussi, 'foreign caste"'. Von Götzen described Rwanda as a "country ruled and 'exploited to the bone by the Watussi"'. C. Vidal, *Sociologie des Passions: Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire*, Paris 1991, 23. See also Ministère des Colonies, *Rapport sur l'Administration Belge du Ruanda-Urundi* (1925), 34, qtd. in J.-P. Harroy, *Le Rwanda, de la Féodalité á la Démocratie (1955–1962)*, Brussels 1984, 26; and Harroy's testimony, *Rwanda: Souvenirs d'un Compagnon de la Marche du Rwanda vers la Démocratie et l'Indépendance*, Brussels 1984. For a list of statements on colonial beliefs on Rwanda's traditional society, see also Eltringham, *Accounting*, 16–17.

140 L. Classe, "Pour Moderniser le Ruanda", in : *L'Essor Colonial et Maritime* 9 (1930), 489, qtd. in L. de Lacger, *Ruanda*, Kabgayi 1959, 523–524. Vidal points out that European accounts made erroneous generalisations about the entire country based on the unrepresentative political and socio-economic situation of the central kingdom. Noble Tutsi, namely Tutsi individuals belonging to the royal lineages associated with the court, merely represented a tiny fraction of the entire Tutsi population. Vidal, *Sociologie*, 23–24.

141 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 88.

142 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 45; and Mamdani, *When Victims*, 87.

143 Chrétien, *Le Défi de l'Ethnisme: Rwanda et Burundi 1990–1996*, Paris 1997, 69.

144 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 87.

Chrétien as "Hamitism"), and a complicit colonial historiography on the other. He underscores the effectiveness with which "power had mapped the parameters within which scholars had pursued knowledge of Rwanda". According to Mamdani, "[i]f power *classified* the population of Rwanda into three 'races' – Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa – then scholars accepted race as a transhistorical reality and wrote the history of Rwanda as a history of the coming together of three races".[145] Similarly, Claudine Vidal argues that, in the absence of any substantial differences within the Rwandan population, history had been used by the colonial power to promote a "historical elaboration of ethnicity" and a construction of Tutsi and Hutu as "pseudo-historical personalities".[146]

The complicit role of colonial history-writing in consolidating racial ideologies into historical truths played out in two main ways in Rwanda. Colonial scholarship first of all "essentialised" and "racialised" Rwanda's traditional society by constructing its ancient history around what Liisa Malkki calls "myths of foundation and precedence".[147] Colonial historiography, defined by Chrétien as a "pseudo-historical fiction",[148] constructed a race-centred history of Rwanda which recounted a tale of successive migrations. This history portrayed the pygmy Twa as the country's first inhabitants and the Hutu as agriculturalist Bantu who had later joined the Twa. The Tutsi were depicted as pastoralist Hamites who had migrated to Rwanda more recently, thereby supplanting those who were considered to be the country's autochthonous populations. Furthermore, colonial historiography antagonised these reinvented categories by reducing Rwanda's ancient history to a "secular racial duel" between Hamites and Bantus.[149] At the centre of this antagonist view of Rwandan history was a theory that described the coming together of the three "races" in terms of

145 Chrétien further states that, "[i]f power assumed that migration was central to the spread of civilization, particularly of statecraft, in Africa, then scholarship became preoccupied with the *search for origins*". Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 42–43.

146 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 21. See also C.K. Mulinda, "La Généalogie de l'Idée du Peuplement du Rwanda: Considérations sur l'Autochtonie ou l'Allochtonie des Rwandais", in: F. Rutembesa et al. (eds.), *Peuplement du Rwanda: Enjeux et Perspectives.* Butare (*Cahiers du Centre de Gestion de Conflits* 5) 2002, 49–72; F. Rutembesa, "Le Discours sur le Peuplement comme Instrument de Manipulation Identaire", in: Rutembesa et al. (eds.), *Peuplement du Rwanda*, 73–102, and F. Rutembesa, "Les récits du peuplement du Rwanda et la manipulation identitaire", in: *Le Génocide de 1994. Idéologie et Mémoire. Etudes Rwandaises* 9, Butare 2005, 7–37; J. Semujanga, "Formes et Usages des Préjugés dans le Discours Social du Rwanda", in: F. Rutembesa, J. Semujanga, and A. Shyaka (eds.), *Rwanda: Identité et Citoyenneté*, Butare 2003, 13–32; and A. Twagilimana, *The Debris of Ham: Ethnicity, Regionalism, and the 1994 Rwandan Genocide*, Lanham 2003.

147 L.H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, Chicago 1995, 59.

148 Chrétien, *Le Défi,* 358.

149 Chrétien, *Rwanda,* 86.

conquest, secular subjugation, and assimilation of the autochthonous people, portrayed as "*serviteurs*", by the supposedly noble and superior Tutsi, who were presented as "*seigneurs*".[150] Rwanda's highly sophisticated kingdom was seen as a Tutsi creation and as proof of the alleged civilising superiority of a naturally aristocratic race. According to this version of history, "everything would have been the work of the royal dynasty and of princes".[151] Vidal suggests that, in this way, the colonial historiography of ancient Rwanda had greatly supported the ideology of the Tutsi-dominated court.[152]

Scholars such as Vidal and Jan Vansina argue that the "elitist" and court-centred representation of the ancient history of Rwanda had been the result of a close collaboration between European historiographers and Rwandan historiographers and historiologists linked to the royal court.[153] According to Vansina and David Newbury, Rwanda's ruling elites, both before and during colonisation, had been keenly manipulating history with the aim of legitimating their position of power.[154] In his pioneering monograph on the early history of Rwanda, Vansina underscores "how exceptional the role of history has been in the ideology of Nyiginya royalty". In his view, the kingdom's extraordinarily vast corpus of oral sources demonstrated "the formal character and the thoroughness of the hold of the Nyiginya court over the production of history".[155] During the colonial era, local oral traditions were manipulated by court ideologues and, in light of the Hamitic discourse on which the consolidation of their privileged position was founded, reinterpreted within a system of indirect rule.[156]

A particularly crucial role in the construction and popularisation of this aristocratic and largely mythical history was played by the first and most in-

150 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 23–24.
151 Ibid., 34–35.
152 Ibid., 55.
153 Vansina, *Antecedents*, 5; and Vidal, *Sociologie*, 56.
154 Vansina suggests that the royal court had employed "historical remembrance" as the "ultimate legitimation" of its position of power since 1780. Royal myths, for instance, held that the Tutsi monarchy and aristocracy had sacred origins. Vansina, *Antecedents*, 5, 90–95; and D. Newbury, *The Land Beyond the Mist: Essays on Identity and Authority in Precolonial Congo and Rwanda*, Athens, Ohio, 2009.
155 Vansina, *Antecedents*, 3–5.
156 Reportedly, the thesis of Tutsi superiority was reinforced, for instance, by manipulating foundational myths related to Gihanga, the legendary founder of the Rwandan Kingdom. According to the legend, Gihanga had three sons: Gatutsi, Gahutu, and Gatwa. One day, Gihanga entrusted each of his sons with a jar of milk to guard overnight. The following day, Gihanga found that only Gatutsi had respected his orders. As a reward, Gatutsi was conferred cows while his two brothers were condemned to work for him. During the colonial era, the founder Gihanga came to be associated with the "Hamitic" Tutsi. Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 14. See also Lemarchand, *Ethnicity as Myth: The View from Central Africa*, Copenhagen 1999, 8.

fluential of Rwandan historians: Abbé Alexis Kagame.[157] The exceptional influence of this intellectual figure, whose dynastic history came to be widely understood as the history of Rwanda as a whole, derived from his unique position of proximity both to the royal court and to the colonisers. Kagame was a descendent of a notable lineage of ritualists (the *abiru*); he was also a disciple of the White Fathers. His background allowed him to act as an intermediary figure between these two worlds and to build a reputation as the leading specialist in dynastic traditions and as the only custodian of the memory of the ancient kingdom.[158] Prominent contemporary scholars have strongly criticised the late Kagame for his partisanship and political engagement.[159] He has been accused of propagating the official ideology of the Tutsi royal court, on which the historiography of Rwanda eventually came to be based. Kagame's work was predominantly aimed at illustrating, defending, and exalting the royal court and the Tutsi aristocracy. It reconstructed an idealised history of the kingdom which reproduced European clichés and stereotypes that were favourable to the Tutsi elites. Kagame's endorsement of the "Hamitic myth" and of the thesis of Tutsi superiority clearly emerges in his first historical synthesis, *Inganji Karinga* (The Victorious Drum) (1943). This publication appropriates the image of the Hamitic Tutsi coming from Abyssinia between the tenth and eleventh centuries with their long-horned cattle and their advanced civilisation and subjugating the Hutu to their authority.[160] His later work *Code des Institutions Politiques du Rwanda Précolonial* (1952) is another prime example of the tendency of Ka-

157 On Kagame's background, see Bishop Frédéric Rubwejanga, "Alexis Kagame, l'homme", in: *Education Science et Culture* 20 (June 1988), Special Issue on *Alexis Kagame: l'Homme et Son Œuvre. Actes du Colloque International à Kigali, du 26 novembre au 2 décembre 1987*; and Vidal, *Sociologie*, 45–61, and C. Vidal, "Alexis Kagame entre Mémoire et Histoire", in: *History in Africa* 15 (1988), 493–504.

158 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 54. See also pages 43 and 50. His expertise was soon recognised and his work amply cited by White Fathers such as L. Delmas (in his *Genealogie de la Noblesse (les Batutsi) du Ruanda*, Kabgayi 1950) and A. Pagès (in *Au Ruanda, sur le Bords du Lac Kivu (Congo Belge), Un Royaume Hamite au Centre de l'Afrique*, Brussels: Institut Royal Colonial Belge 1933). See also the appreciation of Kagame's work by M. D'Hertefelt and A. Coupez in *La Royauté Sacrée de l'Ancien Rwanda. Texte, Traduction et Commentaire de Son Ritual*, Brussels: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale 1964.

159 See comments on his work by Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 20, 68–69; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 58; Vidal, *Sociologie*, 44–60; Vansina, *Antecedents*, 7–8, and Vansina, *L'Evolution*, 14–15. Critics have also referred to Kagame's manipulatation of sources, particularly in relation to chronology. Vansina, *Antecedents*, 4–12; Vidal, *Sociologie*, 43–50; as well as D. Newbury, *The Land*, 19.

160 The same influence is discernible in Kagame's book *Les Organisations Socio-Familiales de l'Ancien Rwanda*, Brussels 1954. Here, the author adopts the term "race" to distinguish the three groups out of which the Rwandan population is composed, as well as the term "Hamites" to refer to the Tutsi. 7–36. See also P. Kagame, *Un Abrégé de l'Ethno-Histoire du Rwanda*, Butare 1972, 22–23.

game's oeuvre to reflect and defend the views and aspirations of the Tutsi elites. In this publication, he reveals himself to be an ardent nationalist and monarchist as he vows for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy founded on traditional institutions. Despite the work coming under widespread criticism, a decade after the genocide Vansina suggested that Kagame's legacy "is still rooted in the general historical consciousness of Rwandans and [that] it still dominates the perception of Rwanda's history". The continued influence of Kagame's writings was demonstrated, according to Vansina, by the fact that "his *Abregés* [his second historical synthesis after *Inganji Karinga*] were and still are textbooks used in many schools".[161] Ultimately, as summarised by Alison des Forges,

> In a great and unsung collaborative enterprise over a period of decades, Europeans and Rwandan intellectuals created a history of Rwanda that fitted European assumptions and accorded with Tutsi interests. The Europeans provided a theoretical, teleological framework and the Rwandans provided the supporting data to describe the progress of Rwanda to the height of its power at the end of the nineteenth century. These mutually supportive historians created a mythic history to buttress a colonial order.[162]

In Vidal's view, it was eventually in this particular version of Rwandan history that "Tutsi and Hutu imagined to discover the truth of their ethnic passions".[163]

Colonial schools as a breeding ground of racial Hamitic ideology

Mamdani observes that, while "[t]he Hamitic hypothesis was not articulated with reference to Rwanda only", it was primarily in Rwanda that it "retained a political potency decades later".[164] Here, according to Mamdani, the Hamitic theory had evolved from an "intellectual construct" into an "institutional construct". During colonisation, this racial discourse had guided policy-making and had been translated into a set of institutions and reforms "that the ideology inspired, […] and which in turn reproduced it".[165]

There is evidence to support the important role played by schools in reproducing the colonial racial ideology and the system of indirect rule. The interface between colonial ideology and schooling is demonstrated by the centrality of the Catholic Church in the fields of historiography and education during the colonial era. The White Fathers, who acted as "both the brains and the hands of the colonial state" in the formulation and institutionalisation of "Ha-

161 Vansina, *Antecedents*, 4.
162 Des Forges, *Leave None*, 45.
163 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 44.
164 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 35, 87.
165 Ibid., 87.

mitism",[166] were also the founders of the first Western-style schools in Rwanda. They were "the leading authorities in the field of educational and cultural policy".[167] Mamdani argues that "the creation of a school system that could act as a womb of racial ideology was a priority" at the time.[168] As will be illustrated in the next two sections, the colonial education system, through divisive historical teachings and discriminative policies, served both to crystallise identities that had been constructed as "existential ethnic groups" and to actualize the fabricated myth of Tutsi superiority.

Teaching about the greatness of the Hamitic Tutsi ancestors

School curricula and textbooks produced in colonial Rwanda, notably for the subject of history, have been the object of limited scholarly attention. However scarce, extant literature on the topic offers interesting insights into the role of school teachings in Rwandan society at the time, allowing us to compare and contrast educational developments in this area and to assess their impact and implications.

Before independence in 1962, the study of Rwanda's history was not an integral part of the school curriculum.[169] As was common practice in colonised countries, schools prioritised the study of the history of the *métropole* and of Western Europe. In colonial Rwanda, this history was taught by relying on Belgian schoolbooks which were "adapted to the mentality and capacities of the indigenous people", whose thinking processes were considered to be "slower and more painful".[170] According to Jean-Damascène Gasanabo, the first curriculum to integrate the study of national history was not proposed until 1961 by the *Secretariat National de l'Enseignement Catholique* (SNEC). Topics mentioned in the curriculum included the consecutive settlement of the three "*ethnies*", the succession of Rwandan kings, Rwabugiri's conquests, the Ru-

166 Ibid., 99.

167 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 25. See also P. Erny, *L'Ecole Coloniale au Rwanda, 1900–1962*, Paris 2002.

168 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 89. See also, Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology*, 84.

169 Gasanabo reports that, during the colonial period, notions of Rwandan history were conveyed through the course *Causerie* and through the Kinyarwanda and French courses. J-D. Gasanabo, *Mémoires et Histoire Scolaire: Le Cas du Rwanda du 1962 à 1994.* Ph.D. thesis, University of Geneva 2004, 76. During the pre-colonial period, the younger generations were introduced to their historical heritage by the larger community, mainly during private talks or through official, private or popular literature. P. Erny, *De l'Education Traditionnelle à l'Enseignement Moderne au Rwanda, 1900–1975.* Ph.D. thesis, University of Lille III 1981.

170 Quotes respectively by Frère Gérulphe, "Note Historique du Groupe Scolaire, 1929–1954", in: *Servir* 1 (1955), 27–28, and by de Lacger, *Ruanda*, 590. Obura reports that these schoolbooks had remained in place well after Rwanda's independence. A. Obura, *Never Again: Educational Reconstruction in Rwanda*, Paris: UNESCO/IIEP 2003, 101.

cunshu war, German and Belgian colonisation, and evangelisation. Reportedly, however, the teaching of Rwandan history in schools was continuously hampered by the lack of relevant schoolbooks.[171]

Although the study of Rwandan history was neglected under colonial rule, evidence brought by some of the most prominent experts on Rwanda suggests that the country's educational institutions were instrumental in popularising the racial and elitist history that had been produced by colonial ideologues. Des Forges, for instance, speaks of a "distorted" national history that "was shaped in Rwanda and packaged in Europe, and then delivered back into the school-rooms of Rwanda by European or European-educated teachers".[172] In a similar vein, Vidal observes that colonial myths, "first practised by Europeans, were taken over by Rwandans, taught, related, internalised, until they constituted a body of beliefs shared by an educated minority".[173] Chrétien, as well, underscores the efficacy of colonial education in instilling colonial historical beliefs and clichés about Hamitic Tutsi and Bantu Hutu, and believes that it was especially in the minds of the educated youth that these were perpetuated.[174] He argues that, in a context of "cultural colonialism" soaked with racial ideology and paternalism, history teachings had nourished essentialist and antagonistic racial identities among the country's few educated elites, ultimately leading to their profound "cultural alienation".[175] While a Hamitic consciousness was cultivated among young Tutsi, a Bantu consciousness was nurtured among young Hutu. The construction of a polarised consciousness, which was both taught and practised in schools, coincided with the development of distinct attitudes among the two groups. Elitist vanity and a "spirit of 'natural aristocracy'" were encouraged among the Tutsi,[176] who, as explained by Mamdani, having been made foreigners in their own country and "[n]ourished on a steady diet of Hamitic supremacy […] were appointed chiefs as if by birthright".[177] Feelings of frustration and a widespread inferiority complex were instead generated among the Hutu: excluded from their own history and looked down upon, they were largely denied

171 Gasanabo, *Mémoires*, 76–77.

172 Des Forges, *Leave None*, 45. Racist clichés depicting the Tutsi as a race born to rule were also reproduced in the school bulletin *Servir*. See, for instance, an exaltation of the Tutsi "natural aristocracy" in M. Piron, "Les Migrations Hamitiques", in: *Servir* 6 (1948), 280–283, qtd. in Chrétien, *Les Médias*, 87.

173 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 21.

174 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 16.

175 Ibid., 26–27. P. Erny adds that mission schools insisted on nurturing passive virtues such as humility, obedience, submission, resignation and duty. Also, he reports that, in order to enforce the assimilation of such values, the use of the whip and the *chicotte* (i. e. sjambok) was widely adopted. Erny, *L'Ecole*, 118.

176 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 14.

177 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 89, and 90–92.

any prospect of social promotion.[178] The next section will illustrate in more detail how this exclusion, which served to perpetuate a fundamentally unequal system, was put into practice through the implementation of discriminative educational policies favouring the Tutsi.

Vidal's findings are particularly insightful with regard to the relationship between a school-nurtured historical consciousness and negative attitudes towards the "other'" in Rwanda. In 1991, Vidal published a sociological study of the Rwandan crises of 1959 and 1973, in which she explored popular and intellectual representations of the Rwandan past. Her research concluded that the internalisation of colonial racial ideology and of its antagonistic image between "noble pastoralist Tutsi" and "commoner agriculturalist Hutu" was the prerogative of the educated strata that had been taught a written "*histoire-ressentiment*", a history to which she attributed a crucial role in inspiring virulent racial attitudes.[179] Vidal reported a stark contrast between the attitudes of the uneducated masses and the attitudes of educated and Westernised individuals, both groups having participated in anti-Tutsi pogroms. According to her analysis, the masses, whose oral traditions diverged from colonial historiographical constructions, did not blame their dissatisfaction on the entire Tutsi population. It was instead among educated Hutu who had been taught an "intellectual" *ethno-histoire* that ethnic passions and resentment prevailed and that the most resolute and virulent militants were recruited.[180]

Educational inequality and the enactment of the myth of Tutsi superiority

Education in colonial Rwanda, as reported above in relation to history teaching, was, in Mamdani's words, largely organised "around an active knowledge" of ethnic identities.[181] John Rutayisire et al. argue that colonial education had functioned as "a divisive instrument": it had "stressed differences between Hutu and Tutsi pupils, putting them into categories in and out of school".[182] Beside school history teachings, educational policies and practices appear to also have played an important role in this respect.

According to various sources, ethnicity was a central factor in determining people's access to educational opportunities in colonial Rwanda. In the first half

178 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 240.
179 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 19; 26, 33–34.
180 Ibid., 14, 21.
181 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 88.
182 J. Rutayisire et al., "Redefining Rwanda's Future: The Role of Curriculum in Social Reconstruction", in: S. Tawil and A. Harley (eds.), *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 332, and J. Rutayisire, "Rwanda: Synopsis of the Case Study", Geneva: UNESCO/IBE 2003.

of the twentieth century, state policies gave precedence to the education of the children of Tutsi chiefs and those from wealthy families.[183] The colonial authorities' desire to prioritise Tutsi education and to reserve for this allegedly noble race the best educational opportunities was fulfilled through the establishment of a two-tier segregationist system. Reportedly, young Hutu were typically provided a basic education that was primarily meant to prepare them for manual labour. Their Tutsi counterparts, instead, were offered a "superior" "assimilationist education" in special schools and in special classes in order to orient them towards a career in the colonial administration as state auxiliaries.[184] Joseph Gahama illustrates the segregated and unequal nature of the colonial education system in the 1920s, reporting that, "taught to the Tutsi, arithmetic and French were replaced with singing classes for the Hutu; and whereas a course in natural sciences was mandatory for the former, this was optional for the latter".[185]

The case of the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida* is indicative of the privileged position of the Tutsi in the field of education. This school, which opened in the early 1930s, was the most prestigious educational institution in Ruanda-Urundi as well as the only existing secondary school beside Catholic seminaries. Augustin Mariro asserts that, while this school generally "prioritised admission of the children of dignitaries", "only sons of chiefs or Tutsi were authorised to enter the senior secondary stream specializing in administration, the section reserved for

183 P. Erny, *L'Enseignement au Rwanda après l'Indépendance (1962–1980),* Paris 2003; S.J. Hoben, *School, Work and Equity: Educational Reform in Rwanda.* African research studies 16, Boston 1989; and Obura, *Never Again*, 101–119, 219–220. This policy was strongly advocated by key religious figures, such as the White Fathers Schumacher and Classe. In 1927, Classe declared, "we have in the Tutsi youth an incomparable element for progress". Qtd. in Vidal, *Sociologie*, 25. See also Gatwa, *The Churches*, 84–85; and I. Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda*, New York 1977, 161. According to R. Bourgeois, young wealthy Tutsi were privileged over *petits* Tutsi, Hutu and Twa in the pre-colonial period as well. Bourgeois suggests that wealthy Tutsi were exclusively admitted to the Rwandan traditional school, *itorero*, where they were trained to become *intore*, i. e. the elite. R. Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi*, Brussels 1957, 295.

184 Mamdani, *When Victims*, 88; and Newbury, *The Cohesion.* Rwanda's first school opened in Nyanza in 1905 and targeted the sons of chiefs. After 1907 special schools were set up with the stated aim of "reaching the sons of the chiefs Batoutsi". Such schools were opened in Nyanza (1912), Kabgayi and Rwaza (1913), Kigali (1914 and 1916), Save (1917), and Rwamagana (1919). Mamdani reports the decision taken by the White Fathers "to move the school in Nyanza to Kabgayi on the grounds that 'in Nyanza there were many sons of the Hutu being recruited'". 89. See also Gatwa, *The Churches*, 85.

185 J. Gahama, *Le Burundi sous Administration Belge: La Periode du Mandat 1919–1939.* 2nd ed., Paris 2001, 257. Linden further reports a situation in Save in the 1920s whereby Tutsi teachers taught Tutsi pupils, and allegedly more mediocre Hutu teachers taught Hutu children. Linden, *Church*, 163–164.

future chiefs".[186] Here, the distinction between chiefs' sons and other pupils was further highlighted through a practice requiring the former to wear white instead of khaki uniforms.[187] Statistics of school enrolments show that, from the day of its foundation until 1959, Tutsi pupils greatly outnumbered their Hutu counterparts. Lemarchand reports that this exclusive institution "had no Rwandan Hutu enrolled up to 1945, as opposed to 3 Hutu from Burundi and 46 Tutsi from both territories". A decade later, among the registered pupils were "3 Rwandan Hutu, 16 Barundi Hutu, 3 Congolese, and 63 Tutsi (from both Rwanda and Burundi)".[188] Pierre Erny and Catharine Newbury point to a systematic discrimination against Hutu pupils. They found that among the criteria determining children's admission to this school was a minimum height of 1.40 m, a measure supposedly meant to lessen Hutu's chances of entering the Astrida College and accessing positions of power within the state apparatus.[189] Erny additionally suggests that low school enrolment rates among the Hutu were justified at the time by depicting this group as inept or uninterested in studying.[190]

Feelings of "native superiority" among the Tutsi and "resentment of exclusion" among the Hutu,[191] which had long been nurtured in colonial Rwanda through both the overt and the hidden curriculum, surfaced a few years prior to the achievement of independence. Against the backdrop of increasing competition for scarce educational and employment opportunities, superiority-inferiority complexes deriving from Manichean teachings and structural inequalities resulted in a strained relationship between Hutu and Tutsi educated elites.[192] In 1957, a group of nine Hutu intellectuals who had come together at the *Grand séminaire* at Kabgayi issued their emancipatory *Bahutu Manifesto.* This document, originally titled *Notes on the Social Aspect of the Racial Native Problem in Rwanda*, denounced the dominance of the Tutsi "race". Concerns surrounding Hutu discrimination in education occupied a prominent place in the manifesto. According to its authors:

186 A. Mariro, *Burundi: De la Nation aux Ethnies ou la Naissance d'une Elite Tribalisée*, Dakar: BREDA UNESCO 1998, 51, cited in A. Obura, *Staying Power: Struggling to Reconstruct Education in Burundi since 1993*, Paris: UNESCO/IIEP 2008, 62.

187 Gahama, *Le Burundi sous Administration Belge*, 259.

188 Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 138. Chrétien reports that, between 1932 and 1957, the ratio between Rwandan Tutsi and Hutu in the school was approximately 80:20. *Le Défi*, 68, 153. See also Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 33; and J. Walker-Keleher, "Reconceptualizing the Relationship between Conflict and Education: The Case of Rwanda", in: *PRAXIS: The Fletcher Journal of Human Security* 21 (2006), 37–38. The term "Barundi" refers to the people of Burundi or of Burundian descent.

189 Erny, *L'Ecole*, 109; and Newbury, *The Cohesion.*

190 Erny, *L'Ecole*, 102.

191 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 36.

192 Ibid.

> The problem is above all a problem of political monopoly which is held by one race, the Tutsi; political monopoly which, given the totality of current structures becomes an economic and social monopoly; political, economic and social monopoly which, given the *de facto* discrimination in education, ends up being a cultural monopoly, to the great despair of the Hutu who see themselves condemned to remain forever subaltern manual labourers.[193]

On the eve of independence, the colonial racial discourse was bestowed with a new political purpose. In the words of Eltringham, "the discourse of 'Bantus and Hamites' no longer justified indirect rule, but the ambitions of a new educated class".[194] The next section examines the relationship between politics, ideology, and historiography as it played out under the leadership of an empowered Hutu elite in the wake of Rwanda's independence. It subsequently analyses the implications of the post-colonial politics of history and identity for the education system of independent Rwanda up until the 1994 genocide.

193 Cited in Mamdani, *When Victims*, 116. See also Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 71, and Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 88–89, 211–212.

194 Eltringham, *Accounting*, 19–20.

4. Post-colonial Rwanda

Hutu ethno-nationalism and the recycled "Hamitic theory"

In the early 1960s, Rwanda experienced a radical political transition. In the process of transitioning from colonial to independent rule, the country saw the replacement of the "Tutsi monarchy" by "a Hutu republic". Despite the drastic transformations at the political level, an analysis of ideological and historical discourses reveals a remarkable degree of continuity between colonial and post-colonial grand narratives.

The First Republic, headed by a Hutu elite that had been educated in Catholic seminaries, was founded on an ideology of Hutu ethno-nationalism. This ideology embraced a racialised understanding of the nation: it portrayed the Hutu as the autochthonous Bantu majority and the Tutsi as an invading and feudal Hamitic minority.[195] Informed by an ethnicist ideology, the First Republic introduced what Chrétien describes as an "ethno-democratic" system,[196] which openly favoured the Hutu, defined as "*le peuple*", over the long-privileged Tutsi, "in the name of justice".[197] Chrétien explains that the new system was based on a "confusion of democracy with racial arithmetic"; it was founded on the "association of the Hutu component to a natural political majority, democratic by birth, and of the Tutsi component to a minority that was equally hereditary".[198] Through discursive manoeuvring meant to justify the new socio-political system of Hutu dominance, the "Hamitic" Tutsi had thus turned from being con-

195 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 343; and N. Eltringham, "'Invaders Who Have Stolen the Country': The Hamitic Hypothesis, Race and the Rwandan Genocide", in: *Social Identities* 12(4) (2006), 425–446.

196 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 365–366. Elsewhere in his work, Chrétien speaks of an ideology of "*ethnisme*" and "*antihamitisme*" (59), as well as of "*idéologie d'autochtonie raciale*", "*idéologie essentialiste*" (244), "*véritable fascisme contemporain*" (46), "*nazisme tropical*" (57) and "*nazisme bantou*" (60), "*totalitarisme ethniste/raciale*" (197, 344), "*racisme ethnique*" (341), and "*racisme admis comme politiquement correct*" (383).

197 Mamdani, *When Victims*, xiii, 34.

198 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 57, 365–366.

sidered a superior and dominant race born to rule and to hold a privileged position of power into a foreign minority that was, correspondingly, not entitled to certain fundamental rights.

History, or rather mythico-histories, were again at the core of the new state ideology. A review of Hutu extremist propaganda circulating in the 1960s and again in the early 1990s reveals the abundant political use and abuse of history by Hutu ideologues. Newspapers in particular were rife with historical references, analogies, and clichés intended to remind the population of the "right" history of Rwanda. They explicitly urged the population not to forget their history.[199] Rwandan intellectuals and academics played a significant role in fostering historical clichés in support of the official ideology and of state policies.[200] As observed by André Sibomana in 1999, it was perhaps "not a coincidence that one of the brains behind Hutu extremist ideology, Ferdinand Nahimana [director of programmes of the infamous *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM)] was a historian".[201]

A set of recurrent historical themes appears to have been central to the ethnicist ideology on which the post-colonial state was founded. State propaganda liberally evoked Rwanda's ancient past, the aim being to demonstrate the primordial roots of ethnic difference and antagonism in Rwandan traditional society. To support their arguments, state ideologues relentlessly invoked the colonial pseudo-scholarship that still resonated in Rwanda.[202] Eltringham reports that the views of prominent historians of the colonial era, including the Tutsi monarchist Abbé Kagame, continued to reverberate in post-colonial Rwanda through their "continuous acceptance, reiteration, reinterpretation *and* refutation".[203] The new ruling elites recycled the Hamitic theory and its racial imagery, reinterpreting its premises and implications to coincide with their vested interests. The result was a "striking metamorphosis" illustrative of the malleability of mythical histories in Rwanda.[204] In the past, the Tutsi elites had taken pride in, and based much privilege on, the belief that their presumed natural superiority and dominance were founded on the greatness of their Hamitic ancestors. The Hutu elites later used that same history to depict their group as a victim of conquest and of secular oppression, humiliation, and ex-

199 Ibid., 148, 347–359.

200 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 97, 109.

201 A. Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guilbert and Herve Deguine*, London 1999, 81.

202 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 95, and Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 361.

203 Eltringham, *Accounting*, 186. See also C. Vidal on the continued popularity of Kagame's largely uncontested work at that time. Vidal, *Sociologie*, 55.

204 Lemarchand, *Ethnicity*, 7–11. G. Prunier similarly speaks of "two versions of the [same] myth". Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 80–81.

ploitation at the hands of foreign invaders.[205] There were no misgivings about reproducing colonial racial clichés and stereotypes in articles, radio broadcasts, and satirical cartoons in order to promote what Chrétien describes as a "cult of difference".[206] The media accentuated a "Tutsi" threat warranting constant vigilance on the part of "the Hutu people". The Tutsi were repeatedly depicted as innately cunning, malicious, hypocritical, arrogant, ungrateful, and tyrannical. They were portrayed as "a vicious and dangerous race for the Bantu people" and as "the secular enemy, the oppressor, the killer".[207]

Extremist propaganda evoked Rwanda's more recent history as well. State propagandists alluded especially to the "social revolution" of 1959. This watershed event, described by Chrétien as the "essential reference of Hutu 'conscientisation'",[208] was depicted by the post-colonial regimes and the hate media as "the founding victory" of the Hutu people,[209] through which they had put an end to four hundred years of tyrannical Tutsi rule and finally restored a legitimate "democratic" system. This foundational moment was extensively celebrated and commemorated in extremist propaganda. Songs by the Rwandan singer Bikindi, such as *Wasezereye* ("You said goodbye") and *Bene Sebahinzi* ("Sons of the father of the cultivators") were regularly broadcast and paraphrased on radio RTLM to exalt the "revolution".[210] Several observers have highlighted the mythical nature of the official portrayal of the event at that time. Eltringham, among others, draws attention to the distorted official representation of the "revolution" as a popular and spontaneous "liberation struggle" of the Hutu against the Tutsi. He observes the striking elision from the official record of the decisive Belgian involvement in the events as well as its erroneous application of a generalised image of oppressive Tutsi hegemony to an entire identity-group. Eltringham underlines that, while the state rhetoric denounced a

205 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 56, 134, 162. See also Vidal, *Sociologie*, 35, 60–61; and Erny, *L'Enseignement*, 35. Similarly, Lemarchand observes that, in the post-colonial time, "[w]hat Europeans naively perceived as a superior brand of human was better seen as the embodiment of the worst in human nature: cruelty and cunning, conquest and oppression. Where missionaries invoked Semitic origins, as a source of racial superiority, Hutu ideologues saw proof of foreignness". Lemarchand, *Ethnicity*, 10–11.

206 See Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 361, 37; 151–162.

207 Ibid., 77, 151, 162, 335; Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 36, 361; and Eltringham, *Accounting*, 67.

208 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 112.

209 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 39.

210 Chrétien, *Rwanda,* 119–121, 341–358. The song *Bene Sebahinzi* was brimming with references to erudite historiography, including A. Kagame's, and to historical episodes and figures of Rwanda's pre-colonial and colonial history. According to Chrétien, Bikindi became acquainted with Kagame's work during his two years of literature studies at university.

previous monopoly on power by the Tutsi race as a whole, in reality only a tiny fraction of this group held positions of power.[211]

Extremist propaganda in post-colonial Rwanda worked to "establish a climate of permanent revolution", as Chrétien puts it, by repeatedly warning against the menacing prospect of losing the gains of 1959 and returning to despotic Tutsi rule.[212] In the media, the war of the 1990s was placed within the context of a long-standing ethnic conflict between power-thirsty Tutsi and "the people", and was depicted in Manichean terms as a final struggle between good and evil.[213] In order to mobilise the population for this "final revolution", numerous historical analogies with the 1959 period were drawn to create a semblance of continuity with the past. Analogies were drawn between the founders of the revolution and of the First Republic on the one hand, and the leaders of the MRND-CDR-Hutu Power faction on the other. The purpose of such parallels was to strengthen the legitimacy of those who were presented as the heirs of the celebrated revolution. Analogies were also drawn between the monarchist rebels of the 1960s and the RPF movement. With an eye to demonstrating the persistence of a Tutsi threat to a legitimate status quo, the RPF rebels were portrayed as aspiring to avenge their forefathers and to regain power.[214] As Eltringham observes, these anachronistic constructions represent clear instances of political attempts to "blend the old with the new so that their lethal ideologies will be effective and make sense to people".[215]

Occurrences in neighbouring Burundi, a country with a demographic similar to Rwanda but which had been ruled by a Tutsi oligarchy since 1966, were also used in extremist rhetoric to warn against the Tutsi danger. References were made to the "genocide" of educated Hutu in 1972 and to the assassination of Burundi's first-ever Hutu president in 1993. These tragic events were presented by the Rwandan hate media of the 1990s as tangible proof of the existence of a Tutsi plan to exterminate the Hutu elites in order to subjugate "the people" and to establish a great Tutsi empire across the whole region.[216]

In addition to national and regional history, world history was similarly evoked by Hutu extremists to support their cause. With the aim of providing historical justification for the killings that had been encouraged in Rwanda in the 1990s, the hate media offered comparisons with the French Revolution and

211 Eltringham also refers to a depiction of the revolution as a liberation from a "double colonialism" – at the hands of the Tutsi and of the Europeans. *Accounting*, 35, 41, 44–47, 81.
212 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 113. See also Mamdani, *When Victims*, 230–233.
213 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 137–138, 321, 326; Eltringham, *Accounting*, 66.
214 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 130, 215, 300; Eltringham, *Accounting*, 90, 148.
215 A.L. Hinton, *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, Berkeley 2002, 11, cited in Eltringham, *Accounting*, 50.
216 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 39, 162–175, and Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 332.

the Second World War. In an analogy with the latter, Hutu propagandists compared the RPF and the notorious *Interahamwe* militias to the Nazis and to the heroic anti-Nazi resistance respectively.[217]

The historical narratives that were disseminated in Rwanda in the first half of the 1990s are deemed to have played an important role in nurturing divisive feelings of ethnic belonging, in engendering mistrust and fear, and in inciting violence. In her 1995 publication *Leave None to Tell the Story*, Des Forges suggests that

> Rwandans take history seriously. Hutu who killed Tutsi did so for many reasons, but beneath the individual motivations lay a common fear rooted in firmly held but mistaken ideas of the Rwandan past. Organizers of the genocide, who had themselves grown up with the distortions of history, skillfully exploited misconceptions about who the Tutsi were, where they had come from, and what they had done in the past. From these elements, they fueled the fear and hatred that made genocide imaginable.[218]

Chrétien, Mamdani and Peter Uvin echo the observations made by Des Forges.[219] Chrétien affirms that the largely anachronistic and scientifically unsound accounts that had been formulated by extremist pseudo-historians were centred on a dangerous "rhetoric of 'victimisation'",[220] the aim of which was to serve as a reminder of "the racial red thread of Tutsi malignancy" and the "centuries-long suffering" of the Hutu.[221] Ultimately, he asserts, this propaganda conveyed the concept of "the a priori innocence of the Hutu and the general culpability of the Tutsi" in order to legitimise and condone Tutsi violence as an act of popular self-defence.[222]

Pre-genocide schooling and the institutionalisation of "ethnism"

The "ethnism" that was propagated by the Rwandan state after independence involved all spheres of society. As will be discussed below, the education sector was no exception. Its capacity to regulate access to modernity, wealth, and power made education a major political concern and one of the social domains to be most critically re-shaped by the politics and ideology of the new regime. Educational policies and practices, including history teaching, once again came to

217 Ibid., 333.
218 Des Forges, *Leave None*, 31.
219 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 217–248; Mamdani, *When Victims*, 230–233; and Uvin, "Prejudice, Crisis and Genocide in Rwanda", in: *African Studies Review* 40(2) (1997), 102.
220 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 358.
221 Ibid., 358, and Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 292, 333–336.
222 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 233, 335.

reflect, and to contribute towards, the consolidation of a newly established socio-political order.

Teaching a cult of difference

The literature review conducted for the purpose of this study revealed the centrality of history to both the colonial and post-colonial official discourses. Notwithstanding the persistent political obsession with the past, there was a remarkable delay in the introduction of national history teaching into Rwandan schools. It was not until the 1970s that specific school textbooks on Rwandan history were produced. Existing analyses of the teaching introduced at the time suggest that educational institutions in independent Rwanda, as under colonial rule, again functioned as instruments of the ruling elites for the propagation of their specific ideology and official history. In her study of Rwanda's post-genocide educational reconstruction, Anna Obura argues that, through the curriculum, learning materials and teachers' input, the pre-genocide school system had reproduced an "official, stereotypical, simplistic and erroneous version of Rwandan history".[223] Gasanabo's analysis of Rwanda's pre-genocide history curricula and textbooks reiterates Obura's argument, highlighting in particular the subject's prominent concern with the theme of ethnicity.[224]

The following sections build on Gasanabo's textbook study, which is of particular significance and relevance for the present research, starting with an analysis of the contents of Rwanda's post-colonial history textbooks, especially their portrayals of some of the most sensitive and controversial topics in Rwandan history. The analysis reviews *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda,* a 64-page booklet written by the Belgian priest and history teacher Roger Heremans, which was later adopted by the then government as the first official textbook on Rwandan history for secondary schools.[225] History curricula and teaching materials which were introduced during the Second Republic are also

223 Obura, *Never Again*, 101. See also E. Mutabazi, "En Quoi l'Enseignement de l'Histoire avant le Genocide a-t-il Contributé à la Souffrance à l'Ecole au Rwanda?", in: *Les Collectifs du Cirp* 2 (2011), 103–116; Republic of Rwanda, Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire/ Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche Scientifique et de la Culture, *La Politique et la Planification de l'Education au Rwanda*, Kigali: MINEPRISEC/ MINPRISUPRES 1995; Rutayisire et al., "Redefining"; and Rutembesa, "Les Récits".

224 Gasanabo, *Mémoires*, 103–104. See also J.-D. Gasanabo, "L'Holocauste et le Génocide comme Thème d'Enseignement à l'Ecole: Le Cas du Rwanda". Paper presented at the Conference "Learning and Remembering: The Holocaust, Genocide and State Organised Crime in the Twentieth Century", Berlin, March 12–15, 2003.

225 R. Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, Kigali: Editions Rwandaises 1971.

reviewed.[226] They include the first official teacher guide on Rwandan history, *Histoire 1^e Année du Tronc Commun*, published by the Ministry of Education in 1977,[227] and a set of teacher guides for primary school level produced in the early 1980s, which subsumed the study of history, geography, and civic education.[228] They also include two history textbooks which were produced for secondary school level in the second half of the 1980s, namely *Histoire du Rwanda I^ère Partie* (1987) and *II^ème Partie* (1989) (henceforth abbreviated as *Histoire I* and *II*).[229]

The analysis is organised into three parts exploring respectively the representation of Rwanda's pre-colonial identities and social relations, of colo-

226 The curriculum revision took place within the framework of an overall school reform that was announced by President Habyarimana in August 1973. Implemented in 1979, this reform was designed to "ruralize, vocationalize, and democratize education", as well as to nationalise education by promoting the local language and culture. The reform, among other things, turned Kinyarwanda into the language of instruction for the entire primary level. Also, it introduced a 8-year primary school system. Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 90, and Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 80–82, 164, and Erny, *L'Enseignement.*

227 Republic of Rwanda, MINEDUC, *Histoire, 1^ère Année du Tronc Commun*, Kigali: Bureau Pédagogique de l'Enseignement Secondaire, septembre 1977, henceforth referred to as TC.

228 The teacher guides for primary school level varied in length from 14 to 96 pages. They were developed by teams of three to four people and were published by the *Direction Générale des Etudes et Recherches Pédagogiques* of the Ministry of primary and secondary education (MINEPRISEC). Republic of Rwanda, MINEPRISEC, *Ubumenyi bw'Isi, Amateka, Uburere Mboneragihugu. Umwaka wa 5. Igitabo cy'Umwalimu*, Kigali: Ibiro by'Integanyanyigisho z'Amashuli Abanza n'iz'Agamije Amajyambere y'Imyuga, Mata 1983 [*Geography, History, Civic Education. 5^th Grade Primary School. Teacher's Book*, Kigali: Directorate of Primary and Rural Education, April 1983]; Republic of Rwanda, MINEPRISEC, *Ubumenyi bw'isi, Amateka, Uburere Mboneragihugu. Umwaka wa 6. Igitabo cy'Umwalimu*, Kigali: Ibiro by'Integanyanyigisho z'Amashuli Abanza n'iz'Agamije Amajyambere y'Imyuga, Mata 1985 [*Geography, History, Civic Education. 6^th Grade Primary School. Teacher's Book*, Kigali: Directorate of Primary and Rural Education, April 1985]; Republic of Rwanda, MINEPRISEC, *Ubumenyi bw'Isi, Amateka, Uburere Mboneragihugu. Umwaka wa 8. Igitabo cy'Umwalimu*, Kigali: Ibiro by'Integanyanyigisho z'Amashuli Abanza n'iz'Agamije Amajyambere y'Imyuga, Nzeli 1982 [*Geography, History, Civic Education. 8^th Grade Primary School. Teacher's Book*, Kigali: Directorate of Primary and Rural Education, September 1982], henceforth referred to by the abbreviations P5, P6, and P8.

229 The two teacher guides for secondary school level were produced by V. Sinsebyimfura of the History Section of the *Direction des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire. Histoire du Rwanda, Ie Partie*, Kigali: Direction des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire, February 1987, and *Histoire du Rwanda, IIe Partie*, Kigali: Direction des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire, October 1989. The 150-page *Histoire I* covered the sources of Rwanda's history (pp. 1–8), the history of settlement (pp. 9–23), the civilisation and organisation of Rwandan traditional society – with reference to the concepts of ethnic group, clan, tribe, lineage (pp. 24–33) as well as reference to economic and spiritual life (pp. 93–147), – and Rwanda under the Nyiginya dynasty (1312–1896) (pp. 34–92). *Histoire II,* covered Rwanda under German and Belgian administration (pp. 1–36 and pp. 37–143), and independent Rwanda until 1975 (pp. 144–168). The teacher guides included an outline of general and specific objectives, syntheses, evaluation questions and a bibliography, as well as documentary texts, illustrations and maps.

nisation and the events between 1959 and 1962, and of the two republics up to 1975. As will be argued in depth below, the analysis of the history course taught at that time demonstrates a general preoccupation with ethnic division and tension from a historical perspective, and with providing historical justification for the professed differences and the dominant power of the Hutu. The course emphasised such themes as the origins, settlement, and specific activities of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa; the existence of distinct Hutu and Tutsi principalities before the creation of Rwanda; the collaboration between the Tutsi monarchy and the colonial rulers; the unfairness of the pastoral clientship contract *ubuhake*; and the emancipatory Hutu revolution that marked the decolonisation process.[230] It also worked towards legitimising the ruling Hutu elites by stressing their virtues and achievements.

An analysis of pre-genocide curricula and textbooks

The pre-colonial era: a history of successive ethnic migrations and Tutsi domination

A review of school materials used during the First and Second Republics and of their portrayals of Rwanda's ancient history and society reveals a focus on social differences. In contrast to what is often cited, however, the message they conveyed was not one-sided and was only partly in line with the propaganda that was disseminated in those years. Their discourse appears both divisive and cohesive in their simultaneous emphasis of both social diversity and conflict, and unity and harmony.

In textbooks issued before the genocide of 1994, Rwanda's traditional society was described as being composed of three distinct "*ethnies*": the Hutu, the Tutsi, and the Twa.[231] They were understood to be "three socially different and hier-

230 Other topics included: Rwandan traditions, the kingdom's creation and expansion, and the reigns of various kings; the arrival and realisations of missionaries and of the Germans and the Belgians; and the period of decolonisation and the country's achievement of independence. Mubashankwaya reports that the 1975 secondary school history curriculum was organised into "Ancient Rwanda (X–XIX centuries)", "Modern Rwanda: the colonial period (1900–1959)", and "Contemporary Rwanda (1959–1962)". With regard to ancient Rwanda, topics included "the first inhabitants", "the first kingdoms", and "the arrival of Ethiopid peoples", followed by "the constitution and expansion of Rwanda" and its civilisation and organisation. As for the colonial period, the curriculum included the arrival of the first Europeans, the Rucunshu coup, World War I, German and Belgian colonisation, and the evangelisation of Rwanda. The curriculum further covered the "Revolution", the Republic (i. e. its creation and organisation), and the country's independence and subsequent problems.

231 *Histoire I* also introduced the notions of clans, lineages, and tribes. The third concept was said to be irrelevant in the Rwandan context.

archical groups", differing in their origins, time of arrival in Rwanda, and primary socio-economic occupation. The learning objectives of a chapter on the "Early settlements of Rwanda" ("*Premiers peuplements du Rwanda*") featuring in *Histoire I* demonstrates a clear emphasis on the themes of origins and migration in the teaching of Rwanda's traditional society. The chapter expected Rwandan pupils to be able "to give the order of arrival of the different populations of Rwanda", "to describe the formation of the first Hutu kingdoms", and "to determine the origins of the Tutsi populations" and "the technique used by the Tutsi populations for their settlement".[232]

In accordance with the official history of ancient Rwanda, both *Histoire I* and *Histoire II* recounted a history of successive migrations and settlement. Twa hunter-gatherers from the Central African forests were depicted as Rwanda's first inhabitants. According to the textbooks, their settlement on the territory had been followed between the seventh and the tenth century by the arrival of Bantu agriculturalist Hutu from West Africa, i. e. Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria. The Tutsi, described as slender and tall pastoralists like "the Tutsi of Burundi, the Hima of Uganda and Tanzania, [and] the Masai of Kenya", were portrayed as Rwanda's last settlers. They were believed to have arrived from "North-East Africa, Sudan or Ethiopia" and to have settled in the area between the tenth and the fourteenth century.[233]

While accepting colonial theories on origins and migration, pre-genocide textbooks surprisingly seemed to distance themselves from a belief in the foreignness of the Tutsi and in the existence of an eternal ethnic conflict in Rwandan society – two themes liberally evoked in the political discourse and the state propaganda of the time. *Histoire I*, in particular, refuted the hypothesis that associated the arrival of the Tutsi with a bellicose conquest of Rwanda by racially superior and civilizing Hamites. According to its author, "[t]heir small numbers and their lack of cohesion would not have favoured a warlike entry".[234] The textbooks instead spoke of a rather peaceful and unproblematic "slow infiltration" and subsequent cultural assimilation of the Tutsi.[235] They portrayed Tutsi relations with the other two "ethnic groups" as harmonic and symbiotic.[236] *Histoire I* nevertheless intimated an eventual condition of Tutsi domination in pre-colonial Rwanda. In the author's words,

232 *Histoire I*, 9.

233 Ibid., 18–19; P6, 137; and Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 21–22. *Histoire I* spoke of divergent hypotheses with regard to the origins of the Tutsi. It however reported a consensus with regard to the time of their arrival in Rwanda.

234 *Histoire I*, 18–19.

235 Ibid., 19, 38. See also Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 22, 58; and P8, 99.

236 P8 and Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda.*

> Rwandan traditional society is composed of three ethnic groups called: Abatwa, Abahutu, Abatutsi. These three groups share the sentiment of forming one people, the Banyarwanda, living in one country, Rwanda […] As the three groups lived together, they came to appreciate and complete each other in their mores and in their professions. Since the arrival of the Tutsi in the country, they [the Tutsi] adopted the language and certain customs of the sedentary farmers. Little by little, they [the Tutsi] managed to dominate them [the Hutu].[237]

The textbook mentioned a gradual seizure of Hutu land by the Tutsi.[238] Rather than through brute force, this appropriation was reportedly accomplished by the pastoralist Tutsi through their cattle, described as "a source of wealth" and as "[t]heir main instrument of domination".[239] The book referred in particular to the *ubuhake* pastoral clientship system. According to the textbook, the expansion of Tutsi kingdoms in the area had resulted from the practice of exchanging land and services for livestock, through which the agriculturalist Hutu had turned into "a vast clientele" of the Tutsi.[240] Post-colonial textbooks condemned this form of clientelism as an increasingly abusive and "very demanding" and "inhumane" system through which powerful and wealthy cattle-owners, or "*seigneurs*", used to enforce their clients' unconditional "obedience" and "submission". The teacher guide explained that this degenerate practice had eventually led to a condition of "enslavement", "economic exploitation", and ultimately "political domination".[241]

Equally remarkably, whilst *Histoire I* adopted the concept of *ethnies* to refer to Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi, it simultaneously criticised this terminology in defiance of the ethnicist state ideology. The textbook described the categorisation of the Rwandan population into *ethnies* as being archaic. According to the teacher guide, this categorisation was only applicable in the ancient context to refer to peoples that had successively settled in Rwanda and should be considered inadequate when referring to the present. A re-conceptualisation was deemed

237 *Histoire I*, 128.

238 One primary school textbook instead spoke of a conquest of Hutu territories by the Tutsi ("the Tutsi conquered the territories of the Hutu"). P8, 99. In more positive terms, another depicted the Tutsi as the founders of *Rwanda rwa Gasabo,* who had later been assisted by the Hutu in the expansion of the kingdom. In the words of the corresponding teacher guide, "the Tutsi obtained plots and pastures in exchange for livestock products. From these pastures, they created a first territory which they called Rwanda […] the Hutu followed them and became their collaborators and helped them in the conquest of other territories". P6, 137. See also *Histoire I*, 99; and *Histoire II*, 68–69. *Histoire I* also reminded pupils that the king was considered to transcend ethnic differences. It emphasised that "the king does not belong to any of the country's three *ethnies*". 132.

239 *Histoire I*, 98.

240 Ibid., 20, 95.

241 Ibid., 129. See also *Histoire II*, 68–76; Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 34; and P5, 155.

necessary based on the argument that these "social groups" had gradually come to share the same language, culture, territory, and organisation. In the words of the author:

> This term could be understood at the time of the initial settlement of Rwanda since each community lived entrenched within its barriers […] Nowadays, there is no language barrier between the different social groups, nor cultural or morphological specificity typical of the Twa, Hutu or Tutsi […] The division operated and the classification adopted to designate the three groups should be reconsidered. The term "ethnic group" should be reserved to the historical vocabulary of ancient Rwanda because, applied to the situation of the moment, it only serves to convey confused and more or less artificial ideas.[242]

In the early 1990s, several changes were introduced in Rwanda's school curricula following democratisation and related political reforms. At junior secondary level, a new curriculum removed references to the history of settlement and to ethnic groups, possibly as a move towards reconciling a divided nation. The revised course emphasised Rwanda's territorial expansion and its traditional civilisation and organisation, thereby focusing on the notions of clan and lineage.[243] As pointed out by Gasanabo, however, allusions to the three groups' distinct origins and characteristics continued to feature in the curricula for other school grades as well as in textbooks.[244]

The colonial era: Tutsi collaboration and the Hutu democratic revolution

The various textbooks produced during the two republics put a rather positive spin on the role of missionaries and colonial authorities in Rwanda's development and modernisation, notably in the social, economic, and cultural domains. Among other things, *Histoire II* referred to "a great socio-cultural oeuvre" that had been promoted by Christian missionaries, "animated by the same desire to lift the Rwandan people out of ignorance".[245] Their educational activities were

242 *Histoire I*, 31.

243 The new curriculum prescribed the study of "pre-colonial Rwanda" and of "Rwanda under colonisation". Topics included German occupation and administration, the arrival of missionaries, World War I, the country's political, economic, and cultural organisation under the Belgians, and the revolution and independence. Republic of Rwanda, MINEPREREC, *Session de Formation Accelerée des Enseignants des 1ères Années du Sécondaire*, Kigali July 1991. This curriculum revision occurred within the framework of an overall school reform that was launched in 1991, which, among other things, re-introduced a 6-year primary school system. See also A. Mubashankwaya, "L'Enseignement de l'Histoire au Secondaire: Bilan et Perspectives", in : D. Byanafashe (ed.), *Les Défis de l'Historiographie Rwandaise*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda 2004, 351–357.

244 Gasanabo, *Mémoires*, 110–111.

245 *Histoire II*, 79.

lauded as a "noble enterprise of empowerment of the Rwandan people".[246] One primary school textbook further exalted the Christian churches as "promoters and holders of equality and justice".[247]

A more critical tone was employed in relation to colonial actions in the political domain. *Histoire II* underscored the brutality of the colonial suppression of internal dissidence as well as the unfairness of the territorial loss that had been unilaterally and arbitrarily imposed on the kingdom. Within this context of abuse, the textbook appeared markedly ambiguous with regard to the policy of indirect rule and its related responsibilities. On one hand, *Histoire II* minimised the responsibility of local chiefs by highlighting their complicit but subdued role in this policy of indirect rule, which was described as being founded on "a pure lie". According to the author, local authorities had merely functioned as "faithful instruments of the colonial power"[248] within a system where the Belgians were the real power-holders.[249] At the same time, *Histoire II* adopted an apologetic stance towards the colonial authorities by portraying the contribution of colonial reforms to the "reinforcement of the Tutsi hegemony" and the bolstering of "feelings of ethnic belonging"[250] as an unintentional result of the country's reorganisation and modernisation that had been promoted by the colonial authorities, rather than as a deliberate strategy of "divide and rule". The textbook suggested that "[w]ithout realizing it, the Belgian administration strengthened the control of the Tutsi rulers over the peasant masses to such a degree that it made it intolerable".[251] A similar apologetic view is evident in Heremans' book. The author presented the removal of Hutu chiefs from positions of power as "the result of a double complot of the Tutsi and of the Catholic Church", and described their return to power as the consequence of the Belgian authorities' realisation of the inherently unfair and illegitimate marginalisation to which Rwanda's majority group had been subjected. In Heremans' words:

246 P5, 129, 143; and *Histoire II*, 56–67, 73–93. With regard to the evangelisation efforts, *Histoire II* stated that "the missionaries showed exceptional courage in front of the lukewarmness and hostility of leaders" who had been "refractory". 77. Heremans seemed to salute the 1931 Belgian deposition of King Musinga in favour of Rudahigwa. He depicted the period that followed as the beginning of "the glorious years" and of the "truly extraordinary drive of almost an entire people towards Christianity". *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 50.

247 P5, 152. Gasanabo observes that no criticism was levelled, for instance, against the practice of forced labour. This appeared to be legitimated as a necessary practice for the country's development.

248 Ibid., 94.

249 *Histoire II*, 38–39, 101.

250 Ibid., 102.

251 Ibid., 101.

> Until 1952, all management positions were occupied by Tutsi. […] Towards the end of the colonial period, the Belgian government increasingly understood that it was not possible to continue to remove from power the majority of the population.[252]

Histoire II seemed to further legitimate what was described as a necessary popular "revolution", or "jacquerie" (a peasant uprising).[253] Its outbreak in 1959 was primarily blamed on an uncompromising Tutsi aristocracy, determined to preserve its position of power and privilege.[254] The Tutsi leadership and their UNAR party were accused of obstructing democratic reform through provocation and intimidation. Their demands for immediate independence, combined with the use of a rhetoric "obscuring the existence of the Hutu-Tutsi problem", were understood as a strategy to ensure "that the Tutsi maintained their power" and that they kept the population under the yoke of a "feudal monarchy".[255] Against this backdrop, a violent response by "the people" was deemed inevitable.[256] According to *Histoire II*, "faced with such obstinacy, there really remained only one solution. It was the revolution".[257]

In the textbooks, the "negative position" of the Tutsi-dominated UNAR party was contrasted with the stance held by the rival Hutu elites.[258] Their Hutu Manifesto was depicted as a "rather moderate" document proposing "democratic" and "egalitarian" ideas, which had been taught in Rwandan schools and seminaries by the Belgians. Hutu leaders were said to have "fought for justice and democracy" and to have been "determined to work hard to bring down this monarchy that was no longer wanted".[259] Within this context of struggle, the textbooks praised the role that the Belgian administration had eventually played in supporting democratisation and Hutu emancipation in Rwanda. The colonial authorities were commended for their commitment to suppressing the monopoly and privileges of the ruling Tutsi aristocracy that they had initially

252 Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 48.

253 *Histoire II*, 127; P5, 159; P8, 133. Gasanabo reports that in textbooks for P5 and P8, "*ubuhake* is cited as one of the distant causes of the revolution". P5, 160; and P8, 133. *Mémoires*, 140.

254 P5, 159; P8, 133; TC, 8; Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 48; *Histoire II*, 109, 112. This group was also referred to as traditionalist Tutsi or conservative monarchists.

255 P5, 157, 160; *Histoire II*, 109–110, 141.

256 According to a primary school textbook, "[t]he people began to kill, to pillage, to set fire, to hunt certain Tutsi chiefs". P5, 16. See also P8, 135.

257 *Histoire II*, 110.

258 On Parmehutu, see *Histoire II*, 109–110, 115; as well as P5, 162; P8, 134; TC, 8. *Histoire II* also referred to the positive role of certain Tutsi elites. In its words, "[a] minority of Hutu and Tutsi intellectuals became aware of the problem and of the deep malaise that already raged in the country". 53. A distinction was hereby made between the conservative UNAR party and progressive Tutsi who later founded RADER. Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 55.

259 P5, 152; and *Histoire II*, 113.

supported. They were lauded for favouring the long marginalised Hutu masses in "a reversal of power relations" and for introducing measures that alleviated intolerable demands on "the people".[260] According to *Histoire II*, thanks to such changes, "from a feudal society, the country was heading towards a real democracy".[261]

Histoire II exalted the "Rwandan revolution" as a "victory of democracy over the arbitrary".[262] At the same time, the textbook's celebratory tone was diminished by presenting the 1959 troubles as a "real disaster", coinciding with an unprecedented ethnic war. "For the first time", the book explained, "the Hutu and the Tutsi waged a war without mercy".[263] In the author's words, this "popular insurrection" had irrevocably caused "the tearing apart and the lack of cohesion between the different social groups that make up the Rwandan nation".[264]

The two republics: saveguarding the gains of the revolution

The textbooks produced under Habyarimana's regime celebrated Parmehutu's victory and praised its achievements. *Histoire II*, in particular, exalted the efforts made by the previous government to advance economic and socio-cultural development, democratisation, and social equality and justice in Rwanda. *Histoire II* mentioned, among other things, the promotion of merit-based access to education and employment; it thereby omitted any allusion to the discriminative quota system that had been introduced in these two sectors to the disadvantage of those labelled as Tutsi.[265]

The celebration of the First Republic was accompanied by a demonisation of its "enemies". In *Histoire II*, emphasis was placed on the menace posed to Rwanda's national security by Tutsi refugees turned rebels after 1959. These refugees were presented as "terrorists", "invaders", and "enemies" of the Republic, who "had chosen the path of exile".[266] They were accused of having destabilised the country through "lugubrious activity", including assassinations

260 P5, 164 and 153; P8, 135; Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 54; TC, 9; *Histoire II*, 101, 129–130, and 75. The textbooks reveal some disagreement as to the main advocate of the abolition of *ubuhake*, namely King Rudahigwa or the Belgian authorities. Compare *Histoire II*, 72; TC, 15; and P5, 155.

261 *Histoire II*, 104. See also page 108; and P5, 153–154.

262 *Histoire II*, 137, and 154.

263 *Histoire II* referred to the attack of Hutu chief Mbonyumutwa by a group of young Tutsi in 1959, explaining that rumours of his death "provoked a great wave of revenge which immediately spread across the country". The textbook suggested that, "For the first time, the Hutu and Tutsi waged a war without mercy. There were hundreds of dead and thousands of wounded. Many houses were burned and large masses of people were displaced. Several properties were looted or damaged. It was a real disaster". 126–127.

264 Ibid., 167.

265 *Histoire II*, 154. See also Heremans, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*, 57.

266 *Histoire II*, 152.

and armed robberies, and especially through "aggression" aimed at "crushing the young republic and at restoring the monarchy".[267] Their militant actions were depicted as the cause of deadly reprisals against numerous, frequently innocent, Tutsi living inside Rwanda.[268] The refugees' primary responsibility for the internal violence was further underscored by alluding to an otherwise rather peaceful cohabitation of Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, which had been disrupted by the refugees' acts of aggression. According to the teacher's guide, Tutsi living in Rwanda "had more or less accommodated themselves to the new situation, that is to say, to the Hutu hegemony".[269]

Criticism of Kayibanda's regime was expressed insofar as it served to legitimise the military coup that had overthrown the First Republic. In the textbooks developed during the Second Republic, the coup was portrayed as a righteous action aimed at re-establishing national peace, unity, and public order following the "tragic events" of 1973, which had targeted educated Tutsi and which the regime had been incapable of containing.[270] The coup, described as a "bloodless 'moral coup d'état'", was also depicted as a necessary act to end the moral degeneration of certain leaders of the First Republic.[271] The textbook justified the demise of these politicians by denouncing their betrayal of the "noble" ideals of the revolution and by condemning the nepotism and regionalism practised by corrupt officials at the expense of the popular masses.[272] The intervention of the National Guard, portrayed as the "guarantor of national peace and territorial integrity", was legitimised by presenting this body as having assumed a patriotic duty of responsibility in the face of "permanent insecurity, political division, and a fratricidal war".[273] Similarly, Habyarimana's party found legitimation in its representation as "the only possible means to guarantee the oeuvre of pacification, reconciliation, and national unity". The MRND was exalted as "the only political body able to gather within it all the forces of the country without any discrimination of religious, ethnic, regional, and social nature".[274] The legitimation of the Second Republic was accompanied by praise for the new government's achievements. The textbooks underlined the state's unrelenting efforts to promote internal peace and democracy, socio-economic and cultural

267 Ibid., 146, 167.
268 Ibid., 147.
269 Ibid., 152.
270 Ibid., 158–159.
271 Ibid., 166.
272 Ibid., 158.
273 Ibid., 159.
274 Ibid., 161.

development, and regional cooperation and international solidarity.[275] Teachers' and students' voices: pre-genocide school memories

The textbook analysis presented above speaks volumes about the nature and the aims of history teaching as sanctioned by Habyarimana's regime before the genocide. Testimonies gathered from Rwandans about their school memories constitute an additional source of information allowing a better understanding of the impact of such teachings on the people's psyche. The collection of testimonies published in 2001 by the British NGO African Rights, titled *The Heart of Education,* is particularly insightful. Experiences recounted by teachers and other school personnel confirmed the propagandistic and divisive nature of pre-genocide teachings in Rwanda as well as the now widespread belief in the direct causal relationship between such teachings and the 1994 genocide. They reported that school history "was mainly focused on the history of migrations, of the ethnic groups, the majority and the minority, etc."[276] Pupils were taught that "their ancestors had been dominated and abused by the ancestors of the other group – enhancing revenge" and that "the group they belong to must dominate the other".[277] One teacher interviewed after the genocide concluded that:

> The contents of the history course, which used to be taught in primary schools, had a direct bearing on the genocide of 1994. It concentrated exclusively on ethnic divisions [...]. The children used to learn them by heart as if they were the gospel truth. They are in fact the misconceptions which are at the very root of the genocide.[278]

In a 2004 publication on the challenges of Rwandan historiography, history teacher A. Mubashankwaya reiterates the bias and selectiveness that used to characterise Rwandan school history, and points to the "indelible marks [school history had left] on this youth from within which the country always drew its elite".[279] The author underscores that the partisan history that had been taught before the genocide had led to pupils' truncated and mostly negative image of their country's past. Mubashankwaya suggests that, of their country's history, many Rwandans who had been educated in those years predominantly recalled "Rwanda's wars of expansion, the wickedness of one or the other component of

275 Ibid., 166.

276 African Rights, *The Heart of Education. Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools*, Kigali 2001, 27.

277 Walker-Keleher, "Reconceptualizing", 42. Gasanabo reports the remarkable testimony of a Tutsi man regarding his daughter's reaction of shame to historical teachings conveyed in school before the genocide. The interviewee recounted that his daughter had once told him that "[o]ur teacher said that the Tutsi were wicked, that they beat the Hutu, that they humiliated them. The Tutsi did nothing; it's the Hutu who worked for them. You understand dad, the Tutsi were really nasty. I think we should change and give up being Tutsi". *Mémoires*, 164.

278 Walker-Keleher, "Reconceptualizing", 41–42.

279 Mubashankwaya, "L'Enseignement", 349.

Rwandan society, or simply the misdeeds of colonisation or of the institution of 'ubuhake'".[280] Such observations on the impact of pre-genocide history teaching on Rwandan society appear to contradict the main objectives of the history course as they were stated in *Histoire I*. Besides promoting patriotism and international solidarity and understanding, the course officially aimed to eradicate "feelings of racism, chauvinism, and of all forms of xenophobia".[281]

In many respects, the contents and objectives of the pre-genocide history curriculum overlapped with the civic education course that was taught at the time. The report by African Rights suggests that this school subject had been designed with a particularly strong ideological bias. Its authors document that the course used to exalt the "democratic Hutu republican government" and its triumph against the old "oppressive Tutsi monarchy".[282] An interviewee confirmed the divisive effect of the information imparted through civics and pointed out the echoes of those lessons in the political propaganda that was disseminated outside the classroom. In his words, this school subject "contributed enormously to radicalizing ethnic identities"; also, he suggests, "what was taught in the civics course was repeated in the popular political gatherings where the song was the triumph of republicanism over the monarch, of the Hutu over the Tutsi".[283]

The propagandistic power of formal education in post-colonial Rwanda was reportedly reinforced by a traditional teacher-centred pedagogy. Evidence suggests that a passive form of education, which was based on frontal lectures and rote learning, was favoured over an education which instead encouraged pupils' independent and critical thinking. The primacy of pupils' memorisation of state-sanctioned knowledge appears manifest in the nature of the narrative and the evaluation questions reported in pre-genocide history textbooks. They presented a single version of history, centred on a series of facts and dates, which pupils were required to copy from the blackboard and learn by heart. No opportunities for debating complex and controversial issues were given in the classroom. Through such practices, schools proved to be effective tools for indoctrination and assimilation of the dominant ideology.[284]

The relationship between politics and education that emerges from the analysis of textbooks and from Rwandan testimonies is further supported by a review of extremist media of the early 1990s. Several excerpts reproduced by Chrétien in a ground-breaking study on the *médias de la haine* in Rwanda

280 Ibid., 351.
281 *Histoire I*, x.
282 African Rights, *The Heart*, 9.
283 Ibid., 8.
284 Erny, *L'Ecole,* 38–43, 99; Weinstein et al., "School Voices", 64; and F. Muhimpundu, *Education et Citoyenneté au Rwanda*, Paris 2002, 154–155.

revealed the hate media's strong concern with educational issues. The political and ideological preoccupation with history teaching, in particular, comes to light in a number of issues of *Kangura Magazine*.[285] In issue number 8, this propaganda tool criticised the school curriculum for its over-prominent focus on the Tutsi dynasties and for its outrageous neglect of the 1959 revolution.[286] The notorious "Hutu commandments", which were released in *Kangura Magazine* in issue number 6, also declared a duty to teach all Hutu about the 1959 revolution and the 1961 referendum that overthrew the Tutsi monarchy as well as about the Hutu ideology. All Hutu were urged to widely propagate and teach this ideology, while those who dared to condemn a fellow Hutu for doing so were to be considered traitors.[287] Another article, as we shall see in the next section, asserted the need to guarantee the numerical predominance of the Hutu in the education sector.

Evidence suggests that the state's educational efforts to convey its ideological and historical discourse deeply affected people's collective consciousness and memory. State teachings are deemed to have contributed to the reversal of a previous superiority-inferiority complex, to have encouraged a sense of collective belonging and grievance among Hutu pupils, and to have incited feelings of mutual distrust, suspicion, and resentment within society.[288] The efficacy of formal education in spreading mythico-historical teachings and stereotypes and in promoting ethnic hatred has been revealed by Vidal. In her first-hand account of the 1973 troubles, she observed strong feelings of contempt and racial hatred between Hutu and Tutsi students in the 1960s and 1970s. She reported a particular virulence of feeling among these groups of youths in 1973. Vidal found that:

> About the Other, everything was denigrated, his physiognomy, his way of eating, talking, his origin. These mythologised traits, which composed a hateful portrait, were stereotypes imported from a history that students did not read – it might be recalled these consisted in scholarly works which were not easily available – but which were circulated by teachers and by the public.[289]

285 *Kangura Magazine* was published by the state-owned Regie de l'Imprimerie Scolaire, a printing company set up in 1985 to produce schoolbooks as well as government documents. Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 30–31.

286 Ibid., 140.

287 Ibid., 142.

288 F.-X. Bangamwabo et al., *Les Rélations Interéthniques au Rwanda á la Lumière de l'Agression d'Octobre 1990 – Genèse, Soubassement et Perspectives*, Ruhengeri 1991, 130.

289 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 40.

Educational policies and the reversal of inequality

Beside school teachings, an equally important role in fuelling division and tension in pre-genocide Rwanda is believed to have been played by educational policies and practices which reflected the state ideology. At the policy level, the most direct implication of state ideology for the education sector comprised a reversal of the structural inequality and exclusion that had characterised colonial schools. This reversal was accomplished through ethnic quotas as well as regional and gender quotas, which were introduced to regulate access to scant educational opportunities at post-primary school level. The system of ethnic quotas was designed on the basis of a "theoretical national population of 90 per cent Hutu, 9 per cent Tutsi and 1 per cent Twa".[290] Its stated aim was to compensate for past injustices against the Hutu by reducing Tutsi chances of social mobility.[291]

Despite the introduction of this new measure, the legacy of long-standing Hutu discrimination in education persisted under the rule of the First Republic, becoming an increasing source of frustration among Hutu. This legacy was manifest in the disproportionate numbers of Tutsi that were reported in higher educational institutions and in employment in modern sectors.[292] In an attempt to exploit the situation for its own vested interests, the growing discontent was soon mobilised by a regime teetering on the edge of collapse and eager to galvanise support among a divided Hutu community. In early 1973, a massive purge and persecution of educated and qualified Tutsi was instigated in secondary and tertiary educational institutions and in public and private offices with the aim of "verifying" the adherence to ethnic quotas. During the purge, lists of Tutsi were drawn up by "Committees of Public Safety" and hung on school and office walls to demand their immediate departure.[293] As mentioned

290 B. Cooksey, *Basic Education Sector Review*, Kigali 1992, 18.

291 This policy was referred to as *iringaniza*. This term, according to L. McLean Hilker, "roughly translates as 'social justice'". L. McLean Hilker, *The Role of Education in Driving Conflict and Building Peace – The Case of Rwanda. Background Paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011"The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education"*, Paris: UNESCO 2010), 6, note 10, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001913/191301e.pdf [last accessed on 24/09/2015]. See also Bangamwabo, *Les Relations*, 300–306; Erny, *L'Enseignement*; Chrétien, *Rwanda*, 90, and Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 80–82, 164; MINEPRISEC, *Des Disparités Ethniques et Régionales dans l'Enseignement Secondaire Rwandais: Des Années 1960 à 1980*, Kigali 1986; A. Mugesera, *Imibereho y'Abatutsi kuri Repubulika ya Mbere n'iya Kabiri (1959–1990)*, Kigali 2004, 309, 312–313. For statistics on enrolment rates in the 1960s and 1970s, see Erny, *L'Enseignement*, 118, and V. Ozinian and J. Chabrillac, *Profil du Système eEducatif au Rwanda*, Paris: UNESCO 1976.

292 J.-P. Chrétien, "Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi", in : J.-L. Amselle and E. M'Bokolo (eds.), *Au Cœur de l'Ethnie*, 158–159; and Vidal, *Sociologie*, 37–38.

293 Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 73, and Chrétien, *Afrique des Grands Lacs*, 268–269; Eltringham, 21; F.-X.

earlier, Vidal's research into the 1973 troubles revealed an almost exclusive involvement in this violent movement by the minority of civil servants and "*assimilés*" (the educated elites). Vidal observes that "the events of 1973 had […] shown that the ethnic ideology retained its virulence among the 'modern' sections of the country".[294] The primary involvement of students in the violence of 1973 is also recorded in *Jeunesse d'Hier au Rwanda* by Erny. The author reports the testimonies of several Tutsi university students and their recollections of incessant insults, threats, and harassment on campus.[295]

The demise of the Kayibanda regime a couple of months later was followed by a more rigorous implementation of what was presented as an "equitable" quota system. This became a priority of the new government. The stated aim of this measure was to put an end to the persistent ethnic disequilibrium in the education system and to promote the democratisation of the sector. Merit, which was determined by unpublished examination results, was now to be strictly measured by ethnic group and thus weighted differently in respect to admissions.[296] According to Mugesera, Tutsi enrolled in secondary education represented 36 % of Rwanda's pupils in the 1962–63 academic year; a decade later, that proportion had been drastically reduced to a national average of 8 %.[297] Gourevitch refers to an additional practice of "reverse meritocracy", through which Tutsi pupils "with the lowest scores were favored over those [Tutsi pupils] who performed best".[298] African Rights further suggests that, under Habyarimana, bribery was often the only avenue available to young Tutsi to gain access to post-primary education.[299]

The implementation of ethnic-based admission policies was facilitated and monitored through the institutionalisation of procedures and mechanisms

Munyarugerero, *Réseaux, Pouvoirs, Oppositions: La Compétition Politique au Rwanda*, Paris 2003, 135–136; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 60–61; and Reyntjens, *Pouvoir*, 501–504.

294 Vidal, *Sociologie*, 39.

295 Erny, *Jeunesse d'Hier au Rwanda: Textes d'Ecoliers et d'Etudiants Recueillis entre 1974 et 1976: Matériaux pour une Psychologie*, Paris 2003, 156–165. See also P. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, New York 1998, 66–67.

296 Hoben reports that, in the determination of pupils' access to post-primary education, the "entrance examination was only one of several screens and not necessarily the most important". Hoben, *School*, 106.

297 Tutsi enrolments were particularly low in the almost exclusively Hutu provinces of Ruhengeri, Byumba, and Gisenyi. Mugesera also reported low Tutsi enrolment rates at the tertiary level: in 1982–83, Tutsi students at the National University of Rwanda amounted to only 6.6 %. *Imibereho.* As for the primary level, according to official statistics on school enrolments in 1989–90, Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa pupils accounted for 89.9 %, 9.4 % and 0.2 %, respectively. Republic of Rwanda, MINEPRISEC, *Statistique de l'Enseignement 1989/1990*, Kigali 1990, 63, in Obura, *Never Again*, 44.

298 Gourevitch, *We Wish*, 66.

299 African Rights, *The Heart*, 71.

which required pupils' compulsory ethnic identification. Testimonies confirm that, at the beginning of the school year, pupils were asked to identify themselves by their ethnic affiliation. They were asked to do so by raising their hands, by standing up, and by dividing themselves according to their ethnic group. A primary school teacher who was interviewed by African Rights recounted that:

> Before the genocide, each pupil's ethnic origin was recorded on his or her school registration form. At the beginning of each academic year, racist Hutu teachers used to call out the Tutsi students only, making the point that the rest of the class were Hutus. The Tutsis often felt bad about standing up because the rest of the class had a bad image of them.[300]

Such practices reportedly had the effect of strengthening young people's awareness of their ethnic differences. According to various first-hand accounts, it was often in the classroom that young Rwandans were first confronted with questions of ethnic belonging, of which many had been unaware until then.

As mentioned in the previous section, during the civil war in the early 1990s the issue of educational access was evoked by extremist media in an effort to awaken and mobilise feelings of anger and frustration among the Hutu population. Time and again, extremist newspapers, spearheaded by *Kangura*, lamented the large representation of Tutsi in educational institutions.[301] This same extremist position was held by many Hutu intellectuals, including the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ruhengeri, M. Balibutsa. The Dean vehemently defended the legitimacy of the quota system, which had increasingly come under attack and was finally abolished in the early 1990s, during a period that witnessed signs of change in both discourse and practice.[302]

After the early shoots of reform were brought to a halt by the outbreak of the

300 Ibid., 68. See also Erny, *L'Ecole*, 56–57; Gasanabo, *Mémoires*, 163–165; L. McLean Hilker, *Everyday Ethnicities: Identity and Reconciliation among Youth in Postgenocide Rwanda.* Ph.D. thesis, Brighton: University of Sussex 2009; Rutayisire et al., "Redefining", 332; and Walker-Keleher, "Reconceptualizing". According to the testimony of a government minister, when he was a student, "[t]he teacher asked us [the class] to stand in two lines face to face. He asked if we looked the same. We laughed because we had the same life, traveled to the same school, wore the same clothes. The teacher told us we were not the same: he compared our heights and noses. Then our class was divided: long noses on one side, flat noses on the other. We had not been aware of our ethnic identity [...] but after this incident we no longer played together with banana leaf footballs". M. Hodgkin, "Reconciliation in Rwanda: Education, History and the State", in: *Journal of International Affairs* 60(1) (2006), 201, www.jia.sipa.columbia.edu/files/jia/199–210_hodgkin.pdf [last accessed on 06/07/2011]. Testimonies collected in informal conversations in the framework of the present study confirmed these experiences.

301 *Kangura*, issue numbers 6, 8, 13, 26, 29, 33, 40; *Kangura International*, issue number 10; *Ikindi*, issue number 22; and *Zirikana*, issue number 6. Qtd. in Chrétien, *Rwanda,* 36, 108, 146–148, 151, 157, 233, 260, 325.

302 Ibid., 107, 335; and Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 81, 334–335. See also Eltringham, *Accounting*, 83, 192.

genocide in 1994, a process of radical change took off in the wake of this tragic event. The next chapter examines the transformations experienced in post-genocide Rwanda at the level of politics and ideology, and their repercussions on concomitant processes of historiographical production and education reform under the leadership of the current RPF government.

5. Post-genocide Rwanda

Building a "New Rwanda": (re-)writing history in the service of national unity

In Rwanda's immediate post-genocide period, the political administration that took power after the military victory of the RPF clearly distanced itself from the ethnicist discourse of the old regime. A new ideology was formulated, which centred on the adage of "Unity and Reconciliation" and which contrasted with the previous discourse and policies that had defined the nation in ethnic terms and had been intended to shape and reinforce a collective consciousness among the Hutu. The post-genocide government committed itself to surmounting ethnic divisions in Rwanda by introducing a policy of "de-ethnicisation" and "unification" which effectively outlawed references to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.[303] Its mission and vision, as stated in official documents, has been to progressively deconstruct dangerous "'Hutu-Tutsi' exclusive identitarism" and to build a "new Rwanda" around an inclusive civic and national identity based on the concept of *Ubunyarwanda*, or "Rwandanness".[304]

The change of regime and the concomitant formulation of a policy of "Unity and Reconciliation" have been accompanied with a repudiation of pre-genocide historiography. This key policy has guided the construction of a new official

303 S. Buckley-Zistel, "Dividing and Uniting. The Use of Citizenship Discourses in Conflict and Reconciliation in Rwanda", in: *Global Society* 20(1) (2006), 101–113; "Nation, Narration, Unification? The Politics of History Teaching after the Rwandan Genocide, in:" *Journal of Genocide Research* 11(1) (2009), 31–53; and "Transitional Justice, National Memory and History Teaching in Rwanda", paper presented at the 4th European Conference on African Studies, Uppsala, June 2011, www.nai.uu.se/ecas-4/panels/21–40/panel-36/Susanne-Buckley-Zistel-Full-paper.pdf [last accessed on 25/03/2014]. Officially, references to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are indulged in the public sphere on condition that they are not used for divisive purposes. In practice, however, expressing "ethnic" belonging, especially for Hutu, can lead to grave accusations of divisionism.

304 Republic of Rwanda (RoR) – Senate, *Genocide Ideology and Strategies for its Eradication*, Kigali 2006, 255.

historical narrative which is today presented as the only truthful account of the country's past.[305] Its arguments are rationalised in a number of official documents, notably *The Unity of Rwandans* released by the Office of the President in 1999, *The Rwandan Conflict* published by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in 2005, and *Genocide Ideology and Strategies for its Eradication* produced by the Senate in 2006.[306] In accordance with the political vision of the current leadership, history in post-genocide Rwanda is being used to "rebuild" a long undermined national consciousness and pride among its citizens.[307] The present narrative is largely unifying and nationalist as well as highly normative and moralistic. It is in stark contrast with the previously official, and now competing, narrative held by Hutu extremists. A comparison of the two reveals a major interpretational shift whereby heroes have turned into villains and vice versa, and new meanings and moral connotations have been assigned to key historical events.

At the core of the new official discourse and historiography is the "myth" of Rwanda as a "country of milk and honey" that rose again in the wake of the genocide in 1994 after having been destroyed by evil forces. The narrative is characterised by a valorisation and idealisation of Rwanda's ancient history and by a demonization of colonisation. Today, the country's pre-colonial history is invoked to prove the primordial unity of the Rwandan nation rather than the primordial differences and antagonisms between Hutu and Tutsi. The pre-colonial era is no longer depicted as a time of occupation and feudal oppression of the autochthonous Bantu Hutu majority by a foreign Hamitic race of Tutsi invaders. It is now extolled as a golden age of unity and harmony in an old nation-state, whose strength had been the result of the solidarity of its people and of their admirable patriotism in their united fight against foreign menaces.[308] The narrative suggests that ethnic divisions and conflict did not exist in ancient Rwanda. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, so the argument goes, were not distinct and antagonistic ethnic or racial groups, as the colonisers and the previous regimes had wanted people to believe. They were instead fluid and symbiotic

305 Weldon speaks of the construction of "a new national narrative that allows only one version of Rwanda's past", in: Weldon, "Memory", 177.

306 Republic of Rwanda (RoR) – Office of the President of the Republic (OP), *The Unity of Rwandans: Before the Colonial Period and Under Colonial Rule; Under the First Republic*, Kigali 1999; A. Shyaka, *The Rwandan Conflict: Origin, Development, Exit Strategies*, Kigali: NURC 2005; and RoR-Senate. The official narrative is also reflected in academic conferences and in domestic academic publications such as *Cahiers Lumières et Société* and *Dialogue/Kigali.*

307 RoR-Senate, *Genocide Ideology*, 255.

308 The cornerstone government policy-document *Vision 2020* traces the origins of Rwanda back to the 11th century. Republic of Rwanda (RoR) – Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance (MINECOFIN), *Rwanda Vision 2020*, Kigali 2000, 5.

socio-economic and occupational identities of little salience, which were superseded by more significant clan and familial affiliations.[309] The official history maintains that the strong interdependency on which the old social order was built largely relied on clientship systems. Long condemned by former regimes as ways of oppressing the Hutu people, these systems are now regarded as mechanisms of social cohesion and as forms of mutually beneficial partnership, which in fact allowed the underprivileged to improve their living conditions. Rwandans' ancient practices and values, which characterised this supposedly golden age, are today considered as important sources of inspiration for the present and the future. The preamble to the Rwandan Constitution declares that "we enjoy the privilege of having one country, a common language, a common culture and a long shared history which ought to lead to a common vision of our destiny". It thereby encourages Rwandans "to draw from our centuries-old history the positive values which characterised our ancestors [and] that must be the basis for the existence and flourishing of our Nation".[310]

Whilst romanticising ancient history, the official discourse emphasises the culpability of the colonisers in engendering conflict in Rwanda's traditional society. The colonial authorities are now accused of having used ethnicity to deliberately create division and tension among the autochthonous population of Rwanda to better impose their rule. Ethnicist discourses and practices that were first enforced by outsiders are deemed to have destroyed the ideal ancient social order, eventually proving fatal to the Rwandan nation. In the words of President Paul Kagame, "[t]he different sections of Rwandans, Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa, are and were, until the colonial adventure, Banyarwanda – or Rwandan people".[311] Similarly, the publication *The Unity of Rwandans* declares that "the truth

309 The 2006 publication by the Rwandan Senate mentioned earlier affirms that, "[i]n that pre-colonial traditional Rwanda, the Bahutu, the Batutsi and the Batwa are just ordinary social components and, compared to lineages, clans and the nation, they constitute a secondary identity only indicating economic activities which were generally practiced by each of the social components". 262.

310 Republic of Rwanda, *The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda*, www.cjcr.gov.rw/ eng/ constitution_eng.doc [last accessed on 24/03/2014].

311 Speech given at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on March 7, 2003. P. Kagame, "Beyond Absolute Terror: Post-Genocide Reconstruction in Rwanda", in: U. Shankar Jha and S. Narayan Yadav, *Rwanda: Towards Reconciliation, Good Governance and Development*, New Delhi 2003, 114. The government's position was made clear at a conference held in Kigali in 1996 in order to present an evaluation study on *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide*. On this occasion, discussions largely focused on the manner in which Rwandan history was portrayed in the report. In his opening speech, former President Bizimungu condemned colonial distortions and their direct role in the genocide. He referred in particular to Tutsi and Hutu characterisations as "Hamite/Bantu, noble/lowly, invader/oppressed, cattle-keeper/cultivator, aristocrat-lord/peasant slave, [and] intelligent-cunning/simplistic-stupid". Government officials subsequently criticised the report's arguments on the pre-colonial existence of ethnic tensions, instead underscoring that divi-

from history is that before the Colonial period […] there was strong unity between Rwandans".[312] In stressing the colonial origins of internal conflict in Rwanda, parts of this document defend the controversial clientship system by rejecting existing arguments that this practice was a system of exploitation exacted by Tutsi chiefs and instead primarily point the finger at a colonial forced labour policy which had negatively impacted the entire nation. The authors maintain that, upon "the Belgians' arrival in Rwanda, something that bothered all Rwandans […] was the colonial forced labour […], and not the clientship as it was often said, written and sung from 1959 and later until today".[313]

Rwanda's more recent past has also been revisited. The current authorities have advanced a new interpretation of the events of 1959. This watershed moment in the nation's history, previously viewed as a national triumph that had brought democracy and social justice to the country, is now portrayed as a terrible national tragedy which was instigated and supported by the colonisers in reaction to the Tutsi elites' demands for immediate independence. This turning point is currently described as the beginning of a history of Tutsi discrimination, oppression, and persecution, the blame for which is primarily placed on "political calculation and manipulation" by selfish, corrupt, despotic, and racist regimes under foreign influence (e. g. of Belgium and France).[314] As for the 1994 genocide, the official history rejects as false and outrageous the theory attributing the violence to a spontaneous outburst of popular rage following the RPF's "war of aggression" and the assassination of the then President Habyarimana. Today, the massacres are depicted as the culmination of a long and zealously planned genocide against the Tutsi. According to the government rhetoric, during the "Tutsi genocide" over one million innocent and defenceless civilians were killed by countless merciless *génocidaires* who had been brainwashed by hate-mongering propaganda. President Kagame directly implicated the former colonial power and the local Hutu elites in the post-colonial violence. In 2003, he declared that, "[o]nce terror and mass murder were introduced in 1959 under the auspices of the Belgian Administration, subsequent regimes tried genocide in their exercise of power". As he explained, "[t]he period 1959–1994 is indeed a history of genocide in slow motion":[315] the "[g]enocide started in 1959, then

sions had resulted from the colonial crystallisation of socio-economic classes into ethnic groups through the introduction of "ethnic" identity cards. United Nations, Office of the Resident Co-ordinator, *Rwanda. United Nations Situation Report*, Kigali 1996, 33–34, www.repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/5319/2241.pdf?sequence=1 [last accessed on 29/05/2014].

312 RoR–OP, *The Unity*, 4.

313 Ibid., 35.

314 Buckley-Zistel, "Nation", 40.

315 Kagame, "Beyond Absolute Terror".

1963, 1966, 1967, 1973, 1993, 1994".[316] In its assignation of responsibility for the tragic events, the official discourse denounces the failure of the international community to intervene and bring an end to the violence. Conversely, it praises the RPF for its critical role in ensuring a return to peace and normalcy. The official narrative no longer depicts the RPF as an aggressor and a murdering force that committed abominable crimes, including genocide, against innocent Hutu.[317] The party is now exalted for having heroically fought and defeated the murderous Hutu regime through a righteous "liberation war" which put an end to both the Tutsi genocide and the dictatorship of the former regime. It is also lauded for its achievements in rebuilding the country and the nation. The new rulers, claiming to have broken with a long-standing history of "bad leadership", have widely advertised their successful attempts to promote justice, unity and reconciliation, good governance and democracy, and progress and development, in the interests and for the benefit of all Rwandans.

Contemporary scholarship on Rwanda supports the official narrative insofar as it also rejects certain previously dominant arguments which the current government has been vehemently refuting. Current academic opinion, however, also substantially questions, criticises, and discredits the present hegemonic discourse. René Lemarchand, among many, has contended that the Rwandan authorities "continue to manipulate the historical record for the sake of an official memory",[318] a memory which he describes as "thwarted", "manipulated", and "enforced".[319] Similarly, Johan Pottier and Filip Reyntjens have spoken of a "disinformation" campaign orchestrated by the government for the purpose of retaining power.[320]

Accusations of historical manipulation and falsification have been directed at

316 Kagame, qtd. in R. Jere-Malanda, "Interview with Paul Kagame", in: *New African Magazine* (July 2000), cited in Eltringham, *Accounting*, 36, and in N. Eltringham, "Debating the Rwandan Genocide", in: P. Kaarsholm (ed.), *Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa*, Oxford 2006, 79. Kagame concludes that "[t]he 1994 genocide was the result of a 100-year betrayal by the state, failure in the colonial and post-colonial governments' mandate to protect and defend all citizens". Qtd. in B. Oomen, "Donor-Driven Justice and its Discontents: The Case of Rwanda", in: *Development and Change* 36(5) (2005), 901, www.ucr.nl/about-ucr/Faculty-and-Staff/Social-Science/Documents/Barbara%20Oomen/001_Oomen%202005%20Donor.pdf [last accessed on 03/06/2014].

317 Chrétien, *Rwanda*, and Chrétien, *Le Défi*.

318 Lemarchand, *The Dynamics*, 105.

319 Lemarchand, "Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation in Rwanda", in: S. Marysse, F. Reyntjens, and S. Vandeginste (eds.), *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2006–2007*, Paris/Antwerp 2007, 21–30, adopting concepts developed by Ricœur, *Memory*.

320 See J. Pottier, Chapter "For Beginners, By Beginners: Knowledge Construction under the Rwandese Patriotic Front", in: J. Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival, and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 2002, 109–129; and Reyntjens, *The Great African War*.

the government's representation of both Rwanda's pre-colonial and colonial history. Scholars today support the official history by debunking old theories on origins and migration and by confirming the critical role of colonisation in racialising and deepening divisions in Rwandan society. At the same time, doubts have been raised about the factual accuracy of the government's characterisation of pre-colonial Rwanda as a nation-state with an established national consciousness and of colonisation as the source of all societal tensions. The purported image of a condition of ancient unity that was disrupted by external forces has been described in various works as a "myth" and a "nostalgic utopia".[321] Recent scholarly findings have highlighted the government's disregard of the existence of regional differences, of entrenched Hutu-Tutsi divisions and inequalities as well as of factional rivalry, violence, exploitation, and oppression in pre-colonial Rwanda, especially under Rwabugiri's reign. Also, research has revealed that the government appears to have lost sight of the opportunistic role played by local elites, including Tutsi chiefs, in implementing colonial exploitative practices for their own advantage.

Criticism has been especially fierce with regards to the government's account of the country's more recent violent past. Besides being arraigned for its simplistic explanation of the genocide as the outcome of persistent ethnicism, the official narrative has been condemned for promoting a Manichean representation of the war and the genocide which generalises guilt and victimhood along ethnic lines.[322] The government appears to have created a clear-cut distinction between Hutu perpetrators and Tutsi victims by neglecting the suffering of the former and the crimes of the latter.[323] Critics have denounced a situation

321 Vansina, *Antecedents*, 199.

322 According to Brauman et al., "every Hutu is suspect since his ethnic community is responsible for the genocide", and "only the Tutsi qualify as victims". R. Brauman, S. Smith, and C. Vidal, "Politique de Terreur et Privilège d'Impunité au Rwanda", in : *Esprit* (2000), 156. Similarly, Lemarchand and Niwese speak of an assumption according to which "only Hutu have blood on their hands, and only Tutsi blood". R. Lemarchand and M. Niwese, "Mass Murder, the Politics of Memory and Post-Genocide Reconstruction: The Cases of Rwanda and Burundi", in: B. Pouligny, S. Chesterman and A. Schnabel (eds.), *After Mass Crime: Rebuilding States and Communities*, New York 2007, 178.

323 Brauman et al., "Politique"; J. Burnet, "Whose Genocide? Whose Truth? Representations of Victim and Perpetrator in Rwanda", in: A.L. Hinton and K.L. O'Neill (eds.), *Genocide: Truth, Memory, and Representation*, Durham 2009, 80–110, and J. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us: Amplified Silence and the Politics of Memory in Rwanda.* Ph.D. thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill 2005; R. Lemarchand, "Coming to Terms with the Past: The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: *L'Observatoire de l'Afrique Centrale* (July 23, 2000); T. Longman, "Memory, Justice, and Power in Post-Genocide Rwanda", paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 2, 2006; and J. Pottier, "Escape from Genocide: The Politics of Identity in Rwanda's Massacres", in: V. Broch-Due (ed.), *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa*, New York 2005, 195–213.

whereby the Tutsi are currently recognised as the only genocide victims through the paradoxical practice of underscoring the historical victimisation of this group while proscribing "ethnic" identities. This one-sided acknowledgment of suffering is manifest in the official replacement of the more generic expressions of "Rwandan genocide" and "genocide and massacres" with the more specific term "genocide against the Tutsi". Observers have furthermore contested the government's theory of the long-standing existence of a Tutsi extermination plan[324] as well as its high estimates of genocide victims and perpetrators. Genocide victims are widely reported by external sources to have amounted to approximately 800,000 as opposed to over one million maintained by the current government;[325] perpetrators are estimated to have been in the hundreds of thousands rather than in the millions as has been suggested by several government authorities.[326] While underscoring the massive participation of Hutu in the violence, the official narrative has appeared remarkably silent with regard to Hutu who suffered at the hands of either Hutu extremists or Tutsi individuals seeking revenge. On this point, Lemarchand has spoken of a "hijacking" and "assassination of Hutu memory", purposely "airbrushed out of history".[327]

Numerous foreign observers have particularly questioned the virtuous and immaculate official portrayal of the RPF, denouncing the silence promoted on its reported crimes as a key contributing factor to the widely condemned official

324 See, for instance, A. Guichaoua, *Rwanda: De la Guerre au Génocide: Les Politiques Criminelles au Rwanda (1990–1994)*, Paris 2010. While the scholar recognises the occurrence of anti-Tutsi speeches and actions as early as 1959, he argues that the genocide was effectively organised and set in motion by the interim government only after Habyarimana's assassination. Bitterly contested by the current government, this argument has been denounced as "negationist". See also J.K. Gasana, *Rwanda: Du Parti-Etat à l'Etat Garnison*, Paris 2002.

325 Compare, on the one hand, Republic of Rwanda, Ministry for Local Government, Department for Information and Social Affairs, *The Counting of the Genocide Victims. Final Report*, Kigali 2002; and, on the other, R. Lemarchand, "Rwanda: The Rationality of Genocide", in: *A Journal of Opinion* 23 (1995), 8–11, and F. Reyntjens, "Estimation du Nombre de Personnes Tuées au Rwanda en 1994", in: S. Marysse and F. Reyntjens (eds.), *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs Annuaire 1996–1997*, Paris 1997, 179–186. While the government estimated 1,074,017 victims, of whom 94 % were Tusi, Reyntjens suggests that nearly half of the number of victims suggested by the government were probably Hutu victims of RPF crimes. Reyntjens, "Estimation", 182. See also P. Péan's revisionist theory, according to which Tutsi victims amounted to "only" 280,000 and Hutu victims to "over one million" since the 1990s. P. Péan, *Noires Fureurs, Blancs Menteurs: Rwanda 1990–1994*, Paris 2005, 177. He also depicted the Tutsi as "one of the most deceitful races under the sun". Ibid., 40.

326 The number of Hutu perpetrators was estimated by some government officials to amount to 3 million. The often cited figures suggested by S. Straus estimate genocide perpetrators around 175,000–215,000. Of these, no more than 10 % are believed to account for most of the killings. S. Straus, "How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide? An Estimate", in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1) (2004), 94.

327 Lemarchand, "Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation", 21.

amnesia of Hutu suffering. The state narrative exalts the RPF as Rwanda's liberator and saviour, an image on which the ruling party founds its legitimacy;[328] at the same time, it absolves the RPF from all responsibility for the violence. According to critics, the official storyline obscures and dismisses the fate of the tens of thousands of innocent Hutu who were reportedly killed by RPF soldiers both during the genocide and during military operations in Rwanda[329] and in neighbouring DR Congo.[330] In Congo, in particular, its acts against Rwandan Hutu refugees have often been characterised as genocidal. Despite the considerable evidence brought to support these allegations, the state rhetoric has utterly denied the systematic and widespread nature of the alleged crimes. At best, the dominant discourse in Rwanda has justified the RPF's actions in the name of national security in a context in which, according to Lemarchand, its (Hutu) victims have been "conveniently lumped together as 'génocidaires'".[331] Reports of excess deaths have thereby been typically explained away by describing them as a regrettable but inevitable side-effect of a righteous struggle against the *génocidaires*; alternatively they have been depicted as the unfortunate result of the deeds of a handful of renegade individuals who had acted in violation of RPF policies and who have consequently been duly punished.[332] The RPF's virtuous

328 F. Reyntjens, "Rwanda, Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship", in: *African Affairs* 103(411) (2004), 177. See also, Lemarchand, *The Dynamics*; and C. Vidal, "Les Commémorations du Génocide au Rwanda", in: *Les Temps Modernes* 613 (2001), 1–46.

329 Several reports claim the death of 5,000 innocent Hutu in the 1995 operation that closed the Kibeho camp for internally displaced persons, as opposed to the regime's figure of 300. Evidence also suggests the death of at least 16,000 civilians in operations that were launched in Northern Rwanda in 1997 with the aim of responding to cross-border attacks by DRC-based Hutu rebels. See Des Forges, *Leave None*, 726–729; Lemarchand, *The Dynamics,* 73; Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 37–42; Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 175–176; and C. Vidal, "Les Humanitaires, Témoins pour l'Histoire", in: *Les Temps Modernes* 627 (2004), 92–108. Des Forges mentioned the UN-commissioned Gersony Report, according to which tens of thousands of Hutu were massacred by the RPA in Rwanda in only a few months in 1994.

330 Killings in neighbouring DRC, which are estimated to have cost 200,000 lives, were perpetrated during military operations aimed at dismantling Rwandan refugee camps that were functioning as training camps and as bases for insurgent attacks by *génocidaires.* See in particular, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *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*, New York: UNOHCHR, August 2010, www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ca99bc22.html [last accessed on 01/04/2015]; and Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 80–102. The Rwandan army's prolonged presence in the DRC has additionally been denounced as largely having economic and expansionist purposes. See also Lemarchand, *The Dynamics*, 17–19.

331 Lemarchand, "The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda", occasional paper of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Minneapolis 2007, 6.

332 Only few RPF officers have in fact been tried. See Human Rights Watch, *Law and Reality:*

self-portrayal has been further tarnished by accusations of its shared responsibility for the genocide. The fiercest critics have denounced the RPF's invasion and violent insurgency as a selfish and irresponsible act of aggression which was aimed at gaining power at all costs and which eventually played a crucial role in creating the conditions conducive to mass violence by inevitably sparking anti-Tutsi sentiments.[333] This view has been expressed, among others, by Lemarchand, who claims that there is today a need to recognize that "Hutu and Tutsi were victims of a calamity for which responsibility is shared by elements of both communities".[334]

The government's present-day plea for a return to a primordial de-ethnicised condition has received mixed reactions. Commended by some as a strategy to overcome ethnic divisions and to promote peaceful co-existence, the government's unitarist discourse and policies have been denounced by others as being both self-serving and dangerous. What Lemarchand calls a policy of "enforced ethnic amnesia",[335] namely the rejection of an apparently still salient form of identity among many Rwandans,[336] has been viewed as a scheme to conceal the current political and military supremacy of a minority of Tutsi returnees from Uganda.[337] Critics consider the enforced policy of "de-ethnicisation", combined

Progress in Judicial Reform in Rwanda, New York 2008, 89–95, 103–109, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/rwanda0708_1.pdf [last accessed on 31/03/2014].

333 A.J. Kuperman, "Provoking Genocide: A Revised History of the Rwanda Patriotic Front", in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1) (2004), 79; Prunier, *Africa*, 15; F. Reyntjens, *Trois Jours Qui Ont Fait Basculer l'Histoire*, Paris 1995; and A.J. Ruzibiza, *Rwanda. L'Histoire Secrète*, Paris 2005, 10. In 2006, President Kagame was accused by the French magistrate J.-L. Bruguière of having orchestrated Habyarimana's assassination. A recent French investigation dismissed these charges. "Paul Kagame allies 'did not shoot down plane' that sparked Rwanda genocide", in: *The Telegraph* (10/01/2012), www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/rwanda/9006201/Paul-Kagame-allies-did-not-shoot-down-plane-that-sparked-Rwanda-genocide.html [last accessed on 10/06/2014]. See also Lemarchand, "Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation", 23, and Lemarchand, "The Politics", 4–5.

334 Lemarchand, "The Politics", 5.

335 Ibid., 8.

336 See research by Freedman et al., Ingelaere, the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP), and Longman and Rutagengwa, among others.

337 M. Dorsey, "Violence and Power-Building in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: R. Doom and J. Gorus (eds.), *Politics of Identity and Economies of Conflict in the Great Lakes Region*, Brussels 2000, 311–348; International Crisis Group, *Rwanda at the End of the Transition: A Necessary Political Liberalisation*, Nairobi/Brussel 2002; Lemarchand and Niwese, "Mass Murder", and R. Lemarchand, "The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: P. Clark and Z. Kaufman (eds.), *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*, Oxford 2007, 65–76; and Reyntjens, "Rwanda, Ten Years On". According to Buckley-Zistel, "[i]n contrast to the previous Hutu-dominated regimes, which assimilated ethnic and political majority and excluded the Tutsi, the RPF-dominated regime founds its legitimacy on an anti-ethnic project of national

with a hidden state of ethnic inequality, to be a major obstacle to genuine reconciliation and social transformation in post-genocide Rwanda.[338] In Lemarchand's words:

> The imposition of an official memory, purged of ethnic references, is not just a convenient ploy to mask the brutal realities of ethnic discrimination. It institutionalizes a mode of thought control profoundly antithetical to any kind of inter-ethnic dialogue aimed at recognition and forgiveness. This is hardly the way to bring Hutu and Tutsi closer together in a common understanding of their tragic past.[339]

Susanne Buckley-Zistel further comments that, while the country has often been depicted by observers as a time-bomb threatened by simmering tensions, "[p]retending peace is a common, and widely accepted, practice in Rwanda".[340] This is a practice which, according to Buckley-Zistel, calls for caution in that "it leaves social antagonisms untouched".[341]

Mass (re-)education and the legalised censorship of alternative truths

Much contested by foreign scholarship, the official discourse on the country's historical trajectory dominates the public domain in post-genocide Rwanda. Various channels have been employed by the government to propagate its narrative as part of a social engineering project which relies heavily on mass (re-)education.[342] The public has been "educated" about Rwanda's past and present and prepared for the future through a univocal government-controlled media and through regular communications by representatives of state institutions,

restoration and a radically transformed founding discourse which only works to obscure the predominance of Tutsi in all domains of society". Buckley-Zistel, "Nation", 47.

338 A 2010 study conducted by the Kigali-based Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) revealed a widespread lack of trust and popular perceptions of "ethnic related injustices in the labour market, justice and public administration sectors". IRDP, *Ethnic Identity and Social Cohesion in Rwanda: Critical Analysis of Political, Social and Economic Challenges*, Kigali 2010, 30. See also A. Kohen, M. Zanchelli, and L. Drake, "Personal and Political Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: *Social Justice Research* 24(1) (2011), 85–106.

339 Lemarchand, "Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation", 30. See also N. Eltringham, "The Past is Elsewhere: The Paradoxes of Proscribing Ethnicity in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: Straus and Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda*, 269–282.

340 S. Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Coexistence in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: *Africa* 76(2) (2006), 145.

341 Ibid., 147.

342 See also Buckley-Zistel, "Nation"; Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008), 663–690, and S. Freedman et al., "Teaching History in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: S. Straus and L. Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda*, 297–315.

notably as part of a multiplicity of what Andrea Purdekova refers to as "state-ordained activities", held at both national and local level.[343] Prominent tools used by the government to propagate its ideology, as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, also include commemorative activities and genocide memorials, community trials (*gacaca*), and schools and academic institutions. In addition, the government has made ample use of informal education structures, notably the *ingando* "solidarity camps". Run by NURC's Civic Education Department, these camps, which offered lectures on Rwanda's past and current affairs as well as self-defence training, have enabled the "re-education" of large sections of Rwandan society, including Hutu ex-combatants, returning refugees, released prisoners, community leaders, and students.[344] In recent years, this mechanism has been replaced by *itorero,* a similar "neo-traditional" institution, the aim of which has been to "inspire positive values among Rwandans and to strengthen the[ir] volunteerism".[345]

The government's intensive educational efforts appear to have resulted in a generalised acceptance of the new official historical account as the true history of Rwanda.[346] Exactly how genuine this seemingly widespread endorsement and appropriation of the state narrative really is by the Rwandan population has, however, been questioned by several observers on account of the top-down imposition of this narrative and of a strictly enforced "censorship of alternative

343 A. Purdekova, "'Even I Am Not Here, There are So Many Eyes': Surveillance and State Reach in Rwanda", in: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 49(3) (2011), 475–497.

344 J. Kearney, "A Unified Rwanda? Ethnicity, History and Reconciliation in the Ingando Peace and Solidarity Camp", in: J. Paulson (ed.), *Education and Reconciliation*, London 2011, 151–177; C. Mgbako, "Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: *Harvard Human Rights Law Journal* 18 (2005), 201–224; Penal Reform International, *From Camp to Hill: The Reintegration of Released Prisoners*, Kigali 2004; and S.M. Thomson, "Re-Education for Reconciliation: Participant Observations on the Ingando Camps", in: Straus and Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda*, 331–339. On NURC's work, see Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), *Evaluation et Etudes d'Impact de la Commission National pour l'Unité et la Reconciliation (CNUR)*, Kigali 2005, 7–8; and NURC, *The Road Towards Unity and Reconciliation. Ten Years After (1994–2004)*, Kigali 2004.

345 Republic of Rwanda – National Itorero Commission, *Itorero Program Strategy*, November 2011, www.minaloc.gov.rw/fileadmin/documents/Minaloc_Documents/NIC_POLICY.pdf [last accessed on 25/03/2014].

346 See, for instance, the results of the "National History Essay, Poetry and Song Writing Competition" that was organised by the NGO Never Again International in Rwanda in 2004. In this contest, 3,000 secondary and tertiary school students were asked to elaborate on the following question: "Based on the history of Rwanda, what can we the youth do so that genocide should never happen again?". Never Again International, "Outcomes of the Youth Competition Organised by Never Again in Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide", Kigali 2004, www.neveragaininternational.org/documents/Eassys.pdf [last accessed on 08/07/2010].

accounts".[347] Concerned observers have exposed a situation whereby mass education in post-genocide Rwanda has been accompanied by tightly controlled narrative production, through which the government has effectively established a monopoly on the public truth. In the last decade especially, the government has been rigorously imposing what Buckley-Zistel calls "a narrative closure on the interpretation of the past"[348] by resorting to an increasingly wide range of repressive legal constraints. Analysts have called attention to a series of laws that have been introduced in Rwanda since 2001 and which concern broadly defined concepts of "divisionism", "revisionism", "negationism", and "genocide ideology".[349] These laws, most notably the 2008 *Law Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology*, have been reportedly used as tools to criminalise all deviation from the official discourse on history and identity as well as to discourage any questioning of the government's policies and human rights record.[350] In various reports, international non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and International Crisis Group have lamented the restricted freedom of speech that has been judicially enforced by the Rwandan government.[351] Several scholars have also condemned the abuse of the memory and legacy of the genocide promoted by the current regime through its invocation of the perils of divisionism. Lemarchand, for instance, has

347 Buckley-Zistel, "Nation", 31.

348 Ibid., 46. Quoting S. Cobb, the author defines narrative closure as the "process through which narratives seal off alternative interpretations to themselves". S. Cobb, "Narrative Perspective on Mediation. Towards the Materialization of the 'Storyteller' Metaphor", in: J.P. Folgner and T. Jones (eds.), *New Directions in Mediation. Communication Research and Perspectives*, Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi 1994, 54.

349 Criminalisation has been ensured through the 2001 *Law on Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Discrimination and Sectarianism*, the 2003 *Law Repressing the Crime of Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes*, and the 2008 *Law Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology*. Divisionism or sectarianism is described as "the use of any speech, written statement or action that divides people, that is likely to spark conflicts among people, or that causes an uprising which might degenerate into strife among people based on discrimination […]". Law no. 47/2001, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda*, Year 41, no. 4, February 1, 2002. The 2006 study by the Senate describes "genocide ideology" as "a set of ideas or representations whose major role is to stir up hatred and create a pernicious atmosphere favoring the implementation and legitimisation of the persecution and elimination of a category of the population". In the past few years, various parliamentary investigations have been conducted to appraise the presence of "genocide ideology" in Rwandan society. See Ad hoc Parliament Commission on Genocide Ideology, *Genocide Ideology*, Kigali 2004.

350 This law permits prison terms ranging from ten to twenty-five years. Law N.18/2008 of 23/07/2008, Article 3. Following criticism of ambiguity and excess, a new, more precise and more lenient draft law was passed by Parliament in the summer of 2013. See E. Musoni, "Senators Endorse Lighter Sentence for Genocide Ideology", in: *The New Times* (02/08/2013), http://allafrica.com/stories/201308020129.html [last accessed on 27/03/2014].

351 See, *inter alias,* HRW, *Law and Reality*, 41–43; and ICG, *Rwanda at the End of the Transition*.

argued that the genocide has been exploited as "a unique opportunity to legislate ethnic identities out of existence" and "to ban almost any type of organised opposition".[352] Buckley-Zistel reports that, "[i]n case of offence, individuals are threatened or arrested, newspapers closed down, political parties banned, NGOs prohibited and even international organisations expelled".[353] Purdekova further traces the government's success in ensuring "effective political control" and a largely undiversified discursive context in post-genocide Rwanda to an "increasing permeation of the state into all aspects of life", which "diminishes open dissent and tightens the reproduction and reproducibility of the official script". She also points to the "state of surveillance" guaranteed in Rwanda through an extensive network of military and civilian monitors. As a result, she argues, "neither religious organizations, schools, nor associations or even private sector and the family escape the state's reach […] they cannot openly oppose and often are urged to align with and assist the state".[354]

Scholars have postulated that, while existing restraints on freedom of speech have compelled the population to internalise the state-sanctioned history and vision and their relative discursive constraints, reality is far more complex. Recent studies have revealed a situation whereby, although echoed in the public sphere, the regime's "definite ideas about Rwandan history […] are not in harmony with those held by many Rwandans", either Hutu or Tutsi.[355] Alternative versions appear to have continued to circulate more or less clandestinely within Rwanda, and more freely abroad. According to observers, behind a semblance of generalised agreement about the past – what Bert Ingelaere describes as a "rehearsed consensus",[356] – perceptions of the "truth" in post-genocide Rwanda inevitably differ between Hutu and Tutsi, as well as among

352 Lemarchand, "The politics", 1. See also D. Beswick, "Managing Dissent in a Post-Genocide Environment: The Challenge of Political Space in Rwanda", in: *Development and Change* 41 (2) (2010), 225–251; Longman, "Obstacles to Peacebuilding in Rwanda", in: T.M. Ali and R.O. Matthews (eds.), *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peacebuilding in Africa*, Toronto 2004, 76; and L. Waldorf, "Censorship and Propaganda in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: A. Thompson (ed.), *The Media*, 404–416, and L. Waldorf, "Instrumentalizing Genocide. The RPF's Campaign against 'Genocide Ideology'", in: Straus and Waldorf, *Remaking Rwanda*, 48–66.

353 Buckley-Zistel, "Nation", 46. Scholars as well, such as Reyntjens, Des Forges, and Prunier, who accused the RPF of having committed serious crimes, endured heavy criticism from the Rwandan government and were declared *personae non gratae.*

354 Purdekova, "'Even If I Am Not Here'", 493.

355 Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008), 665; and R. Uwibereyeho King, "Evaluation of a Community-Based Mental Health Model in Postgenocide Rwanda", in: CNLG, *16 Years after the Genocide Perpetrated against Tutsi (1994–2010): Handling its Consequences*, Kigali, March 2011, 113–129.

356 B. Ingelaere, "Do We Understand Life after Genocide? Center and Periphery in the Construction of Knowledge in Rwanda", in: *African Studies Review* 53(1) (2010), 41–59.

survivors, perpetrators, returnees, etc. In her research, Elisabeth King identifies at least five main types of civilian memories of violence in post-genocide Rwanda, some of which are acknowledged and others repressed. "The former," she argues, "are predominantly from Tutsi, and include some narratives from Hutu that helped rescue other Rwandans; the latter are from Hutu who have memories of violence perpetrated by the RPF, and also include Tutsi and ethnically mixed Rwandans whose memories contradict the narrative with which the RPF legitimates its position".[357] Such alternative views, reflecting different memories, life experiences, and political stances, have been mainly shared privately within trusted circles. Their public expression has been reportedly restrained to what Susan Thomson refers to as "subtle, indirect, and non-confrontational acts of everyday resistance". In a context in which people in Rwanda today barely "whisper their truth", peasants in particular have been found to silently protest against official discourse and policies by "staying on the sidelines", by showing "irreverent compliance", and by retreating into obstinate "muteness".[358] As mentioned earlier, many Rwandans, according to Buckley-Zistel, are only "pretending peace" by subjecting persisting ethnic cleavages to a pragmatic strategy of "chosen amnesia" in response to fears of government coercion and a necessity to peacefully live with the other.[359]

The next sections of this chapter take a closer look at some of the most prominent tools of mass (re-)education employed by the post-genocide government to propagate its official discourse in recent years. The first section reviews informal educational practices, notably state-sponsored memorialisation and judicial mechanisms and processes that have been set up in Rwanda in

357 E. King, "Memory Controversies in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Challenges for Peacebuilding", in: *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 5(3) (2010), 303. See also Eltringham, *Accounting*; Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008); T. Longman and T. Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda", in: E. Stover and H. Weinstein (eds.), *My Neighbor, My Enemy*, 162–182; McLean Hilker, "Young Rwandans' Narratives of the Past (and Present)", in: S. Straus and L. Waldorf, *Remaking Rwanda*, 316–330; C. Newbury and D. Newbury, "A Catholic Mass in Kigali: Contested Views of the Genocide and Ethnicity in Rwanda", in: *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 33(203) (1999), 292–328; Pottier, *Reimagining*; and S. Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*, Ithaca 2006. Freedman et al., for instance, report a belief among several Hutu educational stakeholders in the pre-colonial existence of ethnicity. Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008), 676–677.

358 S. Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power: Everyday Resistance to Reconciliation in Post-genocide Rwanda*, Madison 2013; "Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-Genocide Reconciliation", in: *African Affairs* 110(140) (2011), 439–456; and *Resisting Reconciliation: State Power and Everyday Life in Post-Genocide Rwanda*. Ph.D. thesis, Halifax: Dalhousie University 2009. See also E. Zorbas, "What does Reconciliation after Genocide Mean? Public Transcripts and Hidden Transcripts in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 1(1) (2009), 127–147.

359 Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering".

order to deal with the country's violent past and to address its memory and legacy. Informed by the wealth of literature produced in the past two decades on the theme of memory, justice, and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, the passages below illustrate the aims of such mechanisms and their reception as well as their hypothesised effects on social relations in the country. The second section focuses on formal education and more specifically on school history. It explores the politics of education reform in post-genocide Rwanda by drawing attention to the dominant actors, discourses, and policies that have influenced the process. It then seeks to investigate the possible impact of education reform on the country's younger generation and on its future.

The pedagogical function of state-sponsored transitional justice

Rwanda's vast "memory industry": between remembering and forgetting

In Rwanda, the genocide has been assigned a central place in the new official historical narrative. As Lisa Moore points out, today this tragic event functions "as the starting point and culmination of Rwanda's history".[360] Its memory is omnipresent in Rwanda. Since the end of the genocide, pervasive memorialisation practices, including annual commemorations, frequent solemn reburial ceremonies, and ubiquitous memorial sites, have demonstrated the determination of the current government to establish a duty to remember.[361] Every year, the population is mobilised en masse to participate in countless commemorative activities organized across the country under the coordination of the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG).[362] Rwanda's vast "memory industry"[363] has assumed an important pedagogical function in society: it has

360 L.M. Moore, "(Re)covering the Past, Remembering Trauma: The Politics of Commemoration at Sites of Atrocity", in: *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 20 (Spring 2009), 55, www.princeton.edu/jpia/past-issues-1/2009/3.pdf [last accessed on 20/06/2014]. See also Longman, "Memory, Justice, and Power", 2.

361 Commemorations are held each year during the official mourning period, which runs from 7 April to 4 July (date of the "liberation" of Kigali by the RPA). Mainly concentrated during the first week, commemorative ceremonies are organised by the government in collaboration with the genocide survivors' association IBUKA (literally: "remember"). For an overview and description of memorial sites in Rwanda, see www.genocidememorials.cga.harvard.edu, www.chs.univ-paris1.fr/genocides_et_politiques_memorielles, www.museum.gov.rw, and www.kigalimemorialcentre.org. See also J. Meierhenrich, "Topographies of Remembering and Forgetting: The Transformation of Lieux de Mémoire in Rwanda", in: S. Straus and L. Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda*, 283–296.

362 The commission was created in 2007. See www.cnlg.gov.rw.

363 L.K. Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse", in: *Representations* 69, Special Issue: *Grounds for Remembering* (2000), 127–150.

educated Rwandans about the genocide and its history, thus consolidating a definite memory of this tragedy.

Rwanda's memorial sites, in particular, demonstrate the government's active desire to keep the memory of the genocide alive. The country is punctuated by "crosses, mass graves and memorial gardens".[364] Several sites, such as the exceptionally graphic Murambi Genocide Memorial Centre, consist of ravaged buildings where unburied and exhumed human remains are publicly displayed "in their original positions of violation".[365] This "*voyeurisme du cadavre*",[366] as Vidal defines it in an article on "symbolic violence, forced memorisation and official history" in post-genocide Rwanda, supports the government's discourse on the war and genocide: these sites appear as strong physical reminders of the enormous human loss, the victims' innocence and excruciating agony, the wickedness of the perpetrators, the inaction and even complicity of the international community,[367] and the heroism and political legitimacy of President Kagame and the RPF as the liberators of Rwanda. They also serve as a warning against "divisionism" and as a compelling call to unity and reconciliation.

Most memorials in Rwanda largely convey this narrative implicitly. The most explicit formulation of this narrative is found at the Kigali Memorial Centre at Gisozi, a site that was inaugurated in 2004 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the genocide.[368] The site, which holds the remains of over 250,000 genocide victims, includes a permanent multimedia exhibition as well as a documentation and education centre. This "memorial museum", as Amy Sodaro describes it, has a clear educational function. It "seeks to not only remember, preserve, and document the past, but also to educate future generations to prevent genocide and human rights abuses and create a more democratic fu-

364 K. Doughty, "Memorials, Human Remains and Controversy in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: *Anthropology News*, www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2011/08/31/memorials-human-remains-and-controversy-in-post-genocide-rwanda [last accessed on 12/10/2011].

365 Moore, "(Re)covering", 55.

366 C. Vidal, "La Commémoration du Génocide au Rwanda. Violence Symbolique, Mémorisation Forcée et Histoire Officielle", in: *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 175 (2004), 560, www.etudesafricaines.revues.org/4737 [last accessed on 03/06/2014].

367 Moore reports that, "at the Murambi Technical School Memorial, signposts located around the periphery of the memorial indicate where the French 'Operation Turquoise' troops played volleyball with the *Interahamwe* militias while the corpses were still freshly massacred". Moore, "(Re)covering", 55.

368 See www.kigalimemorialcentre.org [last accessed on 21/10/2011]; and www.kigaligenocidememorial.org [last accessed on 02/07/2014]. Since its establishment, the centre has been the target of several grenade attacks, thus evidencing the contentious nature of this site. J. Karuhanga, "Rwanda: One Injured in Grenade Attack on Gisozi Genocide Memorial", in: *The New Times* (16/04/2009), http://allafrica.com/stories/200904160257.html [last accessed on 05/08/2014]; A. Asiimwe, "Grenade Kills Policeman at Rwanda Genocide Museum", in: *Reuters* (11/04/2008), www.reuters.com/article/2008/04/11/us-rwanda-genocide-idUSL1190168320080411 [last accessed on 05/08/2014].

ture".[369] The centre's website explains that its education team has been "working with schools and the Ministry of Education to help utilise the Kigali Memorial Centre as a resource for the new national curriculum, examining lessons from the genocide, human rights and responsibilities, and supporting civic education".[370] Since 2009, the centre has offered interactive workshops on the history of the genocide to several thousand secondary school pupils. The programme has included the screening of *We are all Rwandans*, a short film recounting the true story of a group of secondary school pupils in western Rwanda who in 1997 were executed by Hutu extremists after refusing to separate into Hutu and Tutsi.[371]

The memorial's pedagogical function is fulfilled particularly by the permanent exhibition, a visit to which is an integral part of the school workshops organised by the centre. The exhibit recounts the history of Rwanda before, during, and after the genocide.[372] Rwanda's history as narrated at Gisozi reproduces the official discourse. At Gisozi, the public is educated about the root causes of the genocide, namely the colonial legacy of societal division and hate-mongering propaganda. The narrative emphasises the determinant role played by the Belgian colonisers and the Catholic Church in sowing the seeds of conflict and violence in Rwanda. It thus portrays the Rwandan people as a nation victimised at the hands of foreign actors. The centre explains that "[w]e had lived in peace for many centuries, but now [with the arrival of the colonisers] the divide between us had begun". The colonisers are blamed for having racialised and politicised identities and for having "encouraged" "ethnic cleansing" and a mass

369 A. Sodaro, "Remembering for the Future? Genocide Remembrance at the Kigali Memorial", paper presented at the *Irmgard Coninx Stiftung Roundtable on Memory Politics*, Berlin 2009, 2.

370 The website further explains that "[s]urvivors of the genocide are trained as guides at the Centre and, together with the professional education staff, will play an important role in telling the story, in conjunction with the aims of the national curriculum". In this educational task, "[o]ne key challenge", according to the website, "is to adopt an approach that, while truthful and accurate, does not accuse or alienate a large proportion of the students", www.kigaligenocidememorial.org/old/education/index.html [last accessed on 02/07/2014].

371 Interviews, Kigali Memorial Center (14 June 2011 and 10 April 2014). More recently, the format of these workshops has evolved. An in-depth analysis of the educational programmes currently being run by the memorial centre in Kigali is being conducted as part of an ongoing research project intended to complement the present study.

372 The website presents the history of Rwanda in eleven sections, namely: Roots (Colonial time); Church, politics and race; Political landscapes (Path to a "Final Solution"); RPF invasion; Peace process; Propaganda; Eve of genocide; The genocide ("Apocalypse"); The world watches (International response); Post-genocide justice; and Consequences, www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/genocide/rwanda.html. See also A. Sodaro, "Politics of the Past: Remembering the Rwandan Genocide at the Kigali Memorial Center", in: E. Lehrer, C.E. Milton, and M. Eileen Patterson (eds.), *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, New York 2011, 72–90.

exodus of Tutsi between 1959 and 1973.[373] The war launched by the RPF in 1990 is legitimised as a last resort after "many peaceful efforts" to convince the old regime, assisted by foreign forces (French in particular), to welcome Tutsi refugees back into their country.[374] After implicitly blaming Habyarimana's assassination on Hutu extremist elements,[375] the exhibit extensively describes the planned, systematic, and brutal nature of the genocidal violence of 1994 and the inadequacy of the international response. The website of the centre underscores that, in Rwanda, "[t]here was no ethnic war. There was civil war. But the genocide happened and it was something different". Visitors at Gisozi are educated about the horrors of the genocide through panels, recorded testimonies, photographs, video images, and displays of weaponry and victims' clothing. A particularly emotive component of the exhibit, titled "Tomorrow Lost", is dedicated to the memory of the child victims of the genocide.[376] The memorial employs a rather simplistic and Manichean tone to describe the dynamics of the genocide. Rwanda in 1994 is portrayed as having "turned into a nation of brutal, sadistic, merciless killers, and of innocent victims – overnight".[377]

In a context in which Rwandan society has been neatly separated into "merciless killers" and "innocent victims", memorialisation practices seem to unambiguously attribute these two opposite roles to Hutu and Tutsi respectively in line with the official discourse. Any ambiguity on the identity of the victims of the 1994 massacres, as mentioned earlier, has been cleared by replacing the expressions "Rwandan genocide" with the expression "genocide against the Tutsi".[378] Consistently, as reported by Moore, "the signs marking national me-

373 The centre reports that "[o]ver 700,000 Tutsis were exiled from our country between 1959–1973 as a result of the ethnic cleansing encouraged by the Belgian colonialists". According to the centre, the Belgians had also been behind the drafting of the Hutu Manifesto in 1957.

374 According to the website, the aim of the RPF's invasion was "to reclaim a homeland, and to force the government of President Juvenal Habyarimana into a power-sharing agreement".

375 The website does so by reporting *Kangura*'s predictions of this incident, as well as by underscoring the immediacy of well-coordinated killings following the president's murder.

376 A last section of the exhibit, titled "Wasted Lives", provides a larger and comparative framework of analysis by offering an overview of genocides around the world, including the Holocaust and the genocides in South-West Africa, Armenia, Cambodia, and Bosnia.

377 www.kigaligenocidememorial.org/old/genocide/rwanda/thegenocide.html [last accessed on 02/07/2014]. In 2009, President Kagame himself similarly declared that "[t]he genocide touched the lives of all Rwandans; no individual or community was spared. Every Rwandan is either a genocide survivor or a perpetrator, or the friend or relative of a survivor or perpetrator". P. Kagame, "Preface", in: Clark and Kaufman (eds.), *After Genocide*, xxi.

378 These terms are respectively translated in Kinyarwanda as "*itsembabwoko n'itsembatsemba*" and "*jenoside yakorewe aba Tutsi*". The reformulation has been legally provided for through amendments to the Constitution in 2008. See art. 14. J. Burnet, "(In)Justice: Truth, Reconciliation, and Revenge in Rwanda's *Gacaca*", in: A.L. Hinton (ed.), *Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence*, New Brunswick 2010, 103.

morials are being rewritten from *Le génocide* to read *Le génocide de Tutsi*".[379] Whilst emphasising the Tutsi identity of the genocide victims, Rwanda's national mourning activities, and the official memory they seek to promote, have shown a blatant neglect of the suffering of the Hutu victims of this tragedy, thus effectively establishing what Jennie Burnet refers to as a Tutsi "monopoly on suffering".[380] Though frustration has been observed among Tutsi survivors as well, who feel their suffering has been exploited for political purposes by the elites in power,[381] critics have drawn particular attention to the predicament of the numerous Hutu survivors and their families who have been left to suffer silently as their experiences of victimhood have been "erased from the national imagination".[382]

At least three groups of Hutu victims have been largely forgotten or unfairly represented in the narrative produced through official memorialisation practices. The first group consists of those Hutu who actively opposed the genocide and who were themselves victims of the *génocidaires*. With respect to this group, the dominant narrative disseminated through official memorialisation practices has been criticised for mentioning only *en passant* the killing of so-called "moderate Hutu" or "Hutu of the opposition" during the genocide.[383] It has furthermore been criticised for its relative silence on reported cases of ordinary Hutu who risked or lost their lives as they resisted genocidal orders and sought to protect and save fellow Rwandans.[384] Only limited public space is allowed for these stories. The permanent exhibition at the Kigali Genocide Centre, in par-

379 Moore, "(Re)covering", 55.

380 Burnet, "Whose Genocide?", 88. See also Brauman et al., "Politique", 155; and Vidal, "La Commémoration". According to Vidal, official ceremonies have been characterised by a violent climate marked by accusations made by Tutsi survivors against Hutu individuals or by stigmatisations of an entire "ethnic" group.

381 See K. Doughty, "Commemoration and Narratives of Community Healing: Ten Years after the Rwandan Genocide", in: T. Fayola and M. Heaton (eds.), *Health Knowledge and Belief Systems in Africa*, Durham 2008, 198; and King, "Memory Controversies", 298. A Tutsi genocide survivor interviewed by Jean Hatzfeld spoke of an inability "to voice one's anger, sadness, and longing for what is lost" and "to tell one's whole story for fear of offending a Hutu or annoying the authorities". Hatzfeld, *The Antelope's Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide*, New York 2009, 89–90.

382 Burnet, "Whose Genocide?", 91.

383 This expression has been criticised by several authors. Eltringham underscores the limitations of this term, which "fails to communicate the pro-active resistance these actors demonstrated". *Accounting*, 97.

384 P. Conway, "Righteous Hutus: Can Stories of Courageous Rescuers Help in Rwanda's Reconciliation Process", in: *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3(7) (2011), 217–223; V. Jefremovas, "Acts of Human Kindness: Tutsi, Hutu, and the Genocide", in: *A Journal of Opinion* 23 (1995), 28–31; T. Longman, "Genocide and Socio-Political Change: Massacres in Two Rwandan Villages", in: *A Journal of Opinion* 23 (1995), 18–21; and D. Newbury, "Understanding Genocide", in: *African Studies Review* 41 (1998), 80–82.

ticular, features a few panels which are dedicated to the "Resistance to Genocide", and which include the stories of six named rescuers. The panels at Gisozi indicate that "Hutus who did not comply [with the orders to help kill Tutsi] were threatened with death" and that "[a] number of Hutus who did not subscribe to the genocidal ideology, as well as those who tried to protect Tutsis were persecuted and killed".[385] The second group of victims that is neglected in official memorialisation practices includes innocent Hutu who were caught up in the genocidal violence, many of whom were killed or forced into a life of hardship in exile. The third and final category consists of the numerous innocent Hutu victims who were reportedly massacred both during and after the war and the genocide, either in individual revenge killings or systematically by RPF troops. As King points out in her article on memory controversies in post-genocide Rwanda, today "there is no public space in Rwanda for Hutu memories of violence perpetrated by the RPF. Indeed, saying that there are 'unpunished RPF crimes' is equated with negation of genocide and may classify as the punishable offense of 'genocide ideology'".[386]

385 The panels dedicated to the "Resistance to Genocide" at Gisozi explain that "resistance took many forms. The RPF led the political and armed resistance to genocide. Members of moderate wings of different political parties made passionate calls for resistance. Some of the victims organized resistance to the killings. A number of Hutus and others hid targeted victims sometimes at the risk of their own lives". Stories of Hutu rescuers, in particular, have occasionally been publicised during ceremonies at memorial sites. See Conway, "Righteous Hutus". It should be further noted that a handful of Hutu have been officially recognised as heroes, next to Rwanda's most prominent heroes Maj. Gen. Fred Gisa Rwigema and the Unknown Soldier, who died in battle during the "liberation war". They are paid tribute on National Heroes' Day, a public holiday in Rwanda which is celebrated annually on February 1, and during which a wreath is laid by public officials at the Heroes Mausoleum in Kigali. Among the official heroes are former moderate Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwiligiyimana and the Hutu casual worker Felicite Niyitegeka, who was killed for refusing to abandon a group of Tutsi she had sheltered in her home. At the time of the twentieth celebration of this day, the only living persons to have been recognised as heroes are the students at Nyange who survived the 1997 massacre in their school after defying orders by extremist militias to separate along ethnic lines. As recently reported in *The New Times*, in 2014 a team of academics from the University of Rwanda, led by Rwandan historian Paul Rutayisire, was set up under the aegis of the Chancellery for Heroes and National Orders and Decorations of Honour to vet a list of eighteen Rwandans who had been nominated by the public in a country-wide campaign. E. Musoni and E. Kwibuka, "Two Decades of Celebrating Rwanda's Towering Heroes", in: *The New Times* (01/02/2014), www.newtimes.co.rw/news/index.php?i=15620&a=74199 [last accessed on 05/08/2014].

386 King, "Memory Controversies", 299. Whereas Hutu narratives of violence are practically outlawed in present-day Rwanda, a number of accounts of Hutu suffering and survival have been published and are now widely read abroad. See M. Niwese, *Le Peuple Rwandais un Pied dans la Tombe: Récit d'un Réfugié Etudiant*, Paris 2001; P. Mpayimana, *Réfugiés Rwandais: Entre Marteau et Enclume. Récit du Calvaire au Zaire, 1996–1997*, Paris 2004; B. Rugumaho, *L'Hécatombe des Réfugiés Rwandais dans l'Ex-Zaire: Témoignage d'un Sur-*

According to critics, the selective official memory of the genocide, and the imposed amnesia and lack of permitted mourning for the Hutu victims of Rwanda's tragic recent history, have hindered the goals of national unity and reconciliation and have exacerbated societal divisions. The state narrative is believed to have led to the construction of two separate ethnic memories by homogenising disparate experiences of the genocide along ethnic lines. By presenting Rwanda's post-colonial history as a history of continuous Tutsi persecution from 1959 until 1994, a shared status of victimhood has been crafted among the Tutsi community, and more specifically among both genocide survivors and returnees. At the same time, by denying due recognition to the suffering of members of the Hutu community or to their acts of resistance against extremism, the entire group seems to be attributed a collective role as relentless perpetrators. A Hutu collective memory of shared victimhood is deemed to have emerged as an inevitable response to the perceived injustice. Concerns with regard to the suppressed memory of the Hutu and their unrecognised right to truth and mourning surfaced during the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation that was organised by NURC in the year 2000. These concerns were poignantly voiced by a Hutu participant. He declared:

> We do not say it loud enough, but the question of Hutu memory is a prerequisite for people to sit together and honestly discuss the real problems of the country, because as only one part of the population of Rwanda is authorised to mourn its dead, to scream its distress, without the other part being able to mourn as well, reconciliation will have to wait.[387]

Vidal suggests that this lack of recognition of Hutu victimhood had led to a refusal by some to "share the pain" of Tutsi genocide survivors, notably during genocide commemorations.[388] The testimony of a Rwandan woman who was interviewed by Longman and Rutagengwa confirms this attitude. The interviewee, who "lost two children to disease in a refugee camp outside Bukavu" in the DR Congo in the wake of the genocide, explained that:

> For me, to commemorate the genocide, I don't find it useful. Even those [implying the repatriated Tutsi] who did not see the genocide, when they talk about it all the time, it makes it seem like it will happen again […] When others go to the site to commemorate, I stay home and think about what I have lost. What happened to me has no place in this [official] commemoration, because my children died differently and elsewhere.[389]

vivant, Paris 2004; and M.B. Umutesi's *Surviving the Slaughter. The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire*, Madison 2004.

387 Vidal, "La Commémoration", 583, quoting "Sommet sur la réconciliation: un premier pas concluant mais prudent", in: *Agence France-Presse (AFP)* (20/10/2000).

388 Ibid., 582.

389 Longman and Rutagengwa, "Memory", 174.

With the introduction of increasing legal constraints in the past decade or so, such covert forms of resistance are believed to represent the only safe option of expressing dissent for the estimated thousands of families who have had no space to publicly commemorate their suffering. Open contestation of current memorialisation practices in Rwanda has resulted in the arrest of several dissenting citizens during the commemoration period. Those arrested face the risk of severe punishment as evidenced by the prominent conviction of Hutu opposition leader and former presidential candidate Victoire Ingabire for the criticism she voiced at the Kigali Genocide Memorial in April 2010 about the failure to also remember the Hutu victims of Rwanda's tragedy. In December 2013, she was convicted to fifteen years in jail on charges of "conspiring against the authorities through terrorism and war", of "belittling the genocide", and of "spreading rumours with the intention of inciting the public to violence".[390] As a result of such harsh repression of dissenting voices, Burnet suggests, "[f]ear has become a way of life for Rwandans whose individual and familial experiences of violence do not fit into the nationalized mythico-histories about the genocide".[391]

While suppressed in Rwanda, parallel memories of the genocide have proliferated outside the country. Every year, newspapers report how in Belgium, for instance, a country which is home to the largest Rwandan community in Europe, separate and competing gatherings have taken place to commemorate the traumatic events. Commemorative events have been held both on 7 April, in commemoration of the "Tutsi genocide", and on 6 April, in commemoration of *all* the victims of the "Rwandan genocide". Whereas the former have been organised by the Rwandan embassy and Rwanda's umbrella association for genocide survivor organisations IBUKA, the latter have been organised by movements associated to exiled Hutu, notably by the *Centre de Lutte contre l'Impunité et l'Injustice au Rwanda* (CLIIR).[392]

390 "Rwanda: L'Opposante Victoire Ingabire Condamnée à 15 Ans de Prison en Appel", in: *Le Monde* (13/12/2013), www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/12/13/rwanda-l-opposante-victoire-ingabire-condamnee-a-15-ans-de-prison-en-appel_4334077_3212.html [last accessed on 22/03/2014].

391 Burnet, "Whose Genocide?", 100.

392 G. Ndoba, "Le Travail de Mémoire au Rwanda: Enjeux et Défis", in : Pole Institute, *Le Devoir de Mémoire au Nord Kivu: Enjeux et Défis*, Goma 2008, 19; "Commémorations Concurrentes du Génocide Rwandais à Bruxelles", in: *La Libre Belgique* (03/04/2011), www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/article/652590/commemorations-concurrentes-du-genocide-rwandais-a-bruxelles.html [last accessed on 4/10/2011]. On the website of the CLIIR, its coordinator Joseph Matata declares that, "[i]n any economic war sponsored by foreign networks, before killing people one first begins by killing the truth and distorting historical facts. Twas, Tutsis and Hutus lived on the hills together. They helped each other and married each other and spoke the same language. It took the war of 01/10/1990 and the terrorist attack of 06/04/1994 to install chaos and anarchy. The Rwandan state was decapitated and

As will be outlined in the next section, the criticism that has been levelled against Rwanda's official memorialisation practices is echoed in the analyses of the various judicial strategies through which the RPF-dominated government has dealt with the violent past. Its approach to justice, too, is seen to support the official narrative of the war and the genocide and to thereby divide rather than unite Rwanda.

Writing history out of justice: public trials and the pursuit of a victor's truth

Since the violence ended in 1994, the government's efforts to reconcile the country with its recent tumultuous past have concentrated on the colossal endeavour to bring the perpetrators of the genocide to justice.[393] In addition to domestic special chambers and prosecutions by third countries, this task has been fulfilled by two main mechanisms. The first is the Arusha-based ad hoc International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Created by the UN Security Council in 1994, the ICTR was mandated with prosecuting individuals who carried the highest responsibility for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity that had been perpetrated throughout 1994 both in Rwanda and abroad.[394] Seventy-five cases had been completed by the time of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in April 2014.[395] The second instrument is *gacaca*, a

the Rwandese were abandoned to their fate. The highway to plunder the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been paved by the bodies of our close relatives, neighbors, friends and acquaintances killed by slaughterers from all sides", www.cliir.org/detail/06042013-commemoration-du-genocide-rwandais-sans-discrimination-ethnique.html [last accessed on 22/03/2014].

393 For an overview of the various legal processes, see, e. g., Clark and Kaufman (eds.), *After Genocide*; and A. Des Forges and T. Longman, "Legal Responses to Genocide in Rwanda", in: E. Stover and H. Weinstein (eds.), *My Neighbor, My Enemy*, 49–68. For a study on Rwandan attitudes towards justice and reconciliation, see T. Longman, H.M. Weinstein, and P.N. Pham, "Connecting Justice to Human Experience: Attitudes toward Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda", in: E. Stover and H. Weinstein (eds.), *My Neighbor, My Enemy*, 206–225. On memory, identity, and reconciliation in Rwanda, including popular views on reconciliation, prosecution, forgiveness, acknowledgment, reparation, and other transitional justice-related issues, see Longman and Rutagengwa, "Memory", 163–182.

394 OHCHR, *Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States, between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994*, www.ohchr.org/english/law/itr.htm [last accessed on 27/09/2011].

395 www.unictr.org/Cases/tabid/204/Default.aspx [last accessed on 02/07/2014]. An evaluation of the ICTR can be found in E. Coban-Ozturk, "Completing the Tribunal: ICTR's Contributions and Deficiencies", in: *European Scientific Journal* 10(4) (2014), 36–53; and E. Møse, "Main Achievements of the ICTR", in: *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 3

community court system inspired by local tradition and which involved public trials overseen by lay judges who were elected by their communities. Its mandate had been to investigate and prosecute crimes of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity that were committed in the hills of Rwanda between October 1990 and December 1994. This "re-invented" traditional conflict resolution mechanism, which ceased to operate in 2012, was formally introduced in 2001 in response to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of international and domestic justice. In the course of a decade, twelve thousand *gacaca* courts processed nearly two million cases, thereby promoting what Ingelaere defines as "mass accountability for mass crime(s)".[396]

Both the ICTR and *gacaca* have been widely criticised by foreign observers for their unequal and politicised application of justice.[397] These mechanisms have been accused of pursuing a victor's justice as they have exclusively dealt with the genocide and with Hutu perpetrators, while largely exempting RPF soldiers and Tutsi individuals from investigation and prosecution. In this sense, Longman argues that, "when it comes to justice, ethnicity continues to matter" in post-genocide Rwanda.[398] With regard to the ICTR, human rights organisations as well as scholars have drawn attention to this mechanism's failure to prosecute

(2005), 920–943. See also N. Eltringham, "Judging the 'Crime of Crimes': Continuity and Improvisation at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda", in: A.L. Hinton (ed.), *Transitional Justice*, 206–226; and N. Eltringham, "'We are not a Truth Commission': Fragmented Narratives and the Historical Record at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda", in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 11(1) (2009), 55–79.

396 B. Ingelaere, "Changing Lenses and Contextualizing the Rwandan (Post-)Genocide", in: F. Reyntjens and S. Marysse (eds.), *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Dix Ans de Transitions Conflictuelles, Annuaire 2005–2006*, Paris 2007, 408. *Gacaca* thereby contributed to uncovering much of the truth about what happened during the genocide at the local level. Truth-finding has been facilitated by the inherently participatory nature of the *gacaca* process as well as by a system of plea-bargaining encouraging large-scale confessions in exchange for penalty reduction. C. Ntampaka, "Le Retour à la Tradition dans le Jugement du Génocide Rwandais: Le Gacaca, Justice Participative", in: *Bulletin des Séances/Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer* 48(4) (2002), 419–455; and Republic of Rwanda – National Service of Gacaca Courts (NSGC), *Gacaca Courts Process: Implementation and Achievements*, Kigali, September 2009.

397 P. Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers*, New York 2010; HRW, *Justice Compromised. The Legacy of Rwanda's Community-Based Gacaca*, New York 2011; B. Ingelaere, *Peasants, Power and the Past. The Gacaca Courts and Rwanda's Transition from Below*. Ph.D. thesis, Antwerp University 2012; Penal Reform International (PRI), *The Contribution of the Gacaca Jurisdictions to Resolving Cases Arising from the Genocide. Contributions, Limitations and Expectations of the Post-Gacaca Phase – Final Monitoring and Research Report on the Gacaca Process*, London 2010; S. Thomson, "The Darker Side of Transitional Justice: The Power Dynamics behind Rwanda's Gacaca Courts", in: *Africa* 81(3) (2011), 373–390.

398 Longman argues that "[p]eople know that in Rwanda today, whether or not they will be held accountable for crimes during the war is determined by their ethnicity and the ethnicity of those they attacked". Longman, "Memory", 4.

even a single case against any member of the RPF.[399] *Gacaca*, too, has been criticised for functioning as a state-controlled forum of discussion which solely addressed crimes perpetrated against Tutsi. Klaas de Jonge suggests that, "during the *Gacaca* meetings the few Hutu who wanted to discuss killings by the RPA/RPF were often not allowed to speak about their suffering".[400] Because of its selectiveness, this mechanism is suspected to have countered the goals of peace and reconciliation.

Instead of promoting dialogue, mutual understanding, recognition, trust, and empathy, *gacaca* is believed to have led to increased alienation and to have fuelled fear, mistrust, conflict, and violence in society.[401] The *gacaca* process seems to have deepened an ethnic divide which, as mentioned earlier, has also found expression in the refusal by some Hutu to participate in the commemoration of Tutsi genocide victims. Reportedly, *gacaca* sessions have been similarly marked by a disinclination among the Hutu population to actively participate in the meetings where they were required to denounce fellow Hutu and to uncover the truth about crimes committed against their Tutsi neighbours.[402] The potential of this mechanism to unveil the truth about the tragic events appears to have thus been constrained by acts of self-censorship by people who opted to silently protest against what they perceived to be an unfair and imposed process. The ability to recover the truth is deemed to have been further compromised by a widespread culture of silence among witnesses and survivors, who feared reprisals by fellow Rwandans.[403] As Lemarchand explains, in post-genocide Rwanda, "setting the record straight is a dangerous activity".[404]

399 According to various sources, although investigations were initiated by Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte, they were eventually abandoned due to pressure from the Rwandan government. Longman, "Memory", 23. See also a 2008 open letter from HRW Executive Director, Kenneth Roth, to the ICTR Prosecutor regarding the prosecution of RPF crimes. HRW, "ICTR: Address Crimes Committed by the RPF. A Letter to the ICTR Prosecutor", (11/12/2008), www.hrw.org/news/2008/12/12/ictr-address-crimes-committed-rpf [last accessed on 03/06/2014].

400 K. De Jonge, "PRI's Research on *Gacaca*", 4, www.penalreform.org/files/Klass%20de%20-Jonge_Gacaca.pdf [last accessed on 19/10/2011].

401 It is important to note that the introduction of *gacaca* has caused security issues as the process has been marked by threats and murders of survivors, witnesses, and judges.

402 PRI, *Research*, 13.

403 In some cases, the accused appear to have either told half truths in order to minimise their role, or to have utterly denied any involvement, portraying accusations as acts of revenge for old familial disputes. Ibid., 13. According to de Jonge, former head of mission for PRI in Rwanda and coordinator of PRI *Gacaca* research from 2001 until 2005, "[a]lthough a significant number of detainees made confessions, it is widely believed that these testimonies are only partial, admitting minor crimes, and blaming some people for complicity – mostly those already deceased or "disappeared" after the genocide – while keeping silent on the involvement of others". De Jonge, "PRI's Research", 3.

404 Lemarchand, "Genocide", 25–26.

Consequently, critics have argued, a substantial gap lies between, on the one hand, the discourse on the genocide that has been formulated by the government and which has been supported by top-down truth-seeking mechanisms, and, on the other, popular experiences and views, which have instead remained largely untold.

Current practices have led numerous observers to conclude that judicial mechanisms in post-genocide Rwanda have thus produced a partial and one-sided historical record and collective memory which only include a truth that is consistent with the official discourse and which safeguards the RPF's righteous image. Trials are believed to have contributed to the promotion of a collective amnesia of the stories of non-genocide victims, and in particular of victims of crimes perpetrated by the RPF, while at the same time ensuring the establishment of a thorough record of the crimes committed by members of the former regime and by Hutu individuals against the Tutsi community. Critics have argued that the RPF's wish to bury the truth about its crimes resulted in the option of establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission being immediately discarded in favour of a one-sided mass prosecution of genocide perpetrators.[405] Against this backdrop, André Guichaoua recently concluded that "[t]he memory war will continue because the work of truth-seeking has not been brought to completion".[406] The necessity of a thorough investigation into past violence and abuse in Rwanda has been further underscored by Lemarchand. The scholar comments that "[i]t is doubtful that the full truth will ever be known about the circumstances and scale of the atrocities committed in former Belgian Africa, but unless a concerted effort is made to get closer to the facts and move out of the

405 Des Forges and Longman, "Legal Responses", 61; J.K. Sebarenzi, "Rwanda: The Fundamental Obstacles to Reconciliation", in: *Global Security and Cooperation Quarterly* 3 (2002), www.ssrc.org/gsc/newsletter3/sebarenzi.htm [last accessed on 03/04/2012]; and S. Vandeginste, *A Truth and Reconciliation Approach to the Genocide and Crimes against Humanity in Rwanda*, working paper, University of Antwerp 1998. The option of establishing a TRC was advocated, among others, in J. Sarkin, "The Tensions between Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Politics, Human Rights, Due Process and the Role of the Gacaca Courts in Dealing with the Genocide", in: *Journal of African Law* 45(2) (2001), 143–172; J. Sarkin, "Preconditions and Processes for Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda: The Possible Interim Role of Gacaca Community Courts", in: *Law Democracy and Development* (1999), 223–238; J. Sarkin, "The Necessity and Challenges of Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda", in: *Human Rights Quarterly* 21(3) (1999), 767–823; and J. Sarkin, "Promoting Justice, Truth and Reconciliation in Transitional Societies: Evaluating Rwanda's Approach in the New-Millennium of Using Community-Based Gacaca Tribunals to Deal with the Past", in: *International Law Forum* 2(2) (2000), 112–121. While such a commission was not established, several commissions of inquiry were set up both abroad – by the UN, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and the French and Belgian parliaments – and in Rwanda.

406 Guichaoua, *Rwanda*, 583.

fantasy-land of official mythologies, the collective memory of Hutu and Tutsi will continue to enshrine the same myths".[407]

As will be illustrated in the next section, the politicisation that has pervaded Rwanda's transitional justice processes and mechanisms, viewed here as important elements of state-sponsored mass education, has not spared the formal education sector. Just like memorialisation and judicial practices through which the populace has been educated about the "truth", educational institutions appear to have functioned as important vectors of the current official discourse.

Never again? Reforming schools after genocide

In the aftermath of the genocide, the new government was confronted with major challenges in the field of education. The violent events that crippled Rwanda in 1994 severely debilitated the sector: much of the infrastructure had been damaged or destroyed;[408] most teachers had been killed, displaced or imprisoned;[409] and many school children had been traumatised by the experience of violence, loss, and displacement.[410] During this period, schools had been

407 Lemarchand, "Genocide in the Great Lakes", 12–13.

408 According to Rwanda's government, up to 65 % of all schools were damaged during the genocide. MINEPRISEC/MINESUPRES, *Actes de Séminaire sur l'Assistance d'Urgence et la Reconstruction du Système Educatif au Rwanda*, Kigali 1994. The same devastation hit the National University, the National Library, the National Archives, and the offices of the Ministry of Education. Obura, *Never Again*, 49. See also N. Cantwell, *Starting from Zero: The Promotion and Protection of Children's Rights in Post-Genocide Rwanda, July 1994–1996*, Florence: Innocenti Research Centre/UNICEF 1997.

409 Freedman et al. report that, in the aftermath of the genocide, more than 75 % of all Rwandan teachers were unaccounted for as a result of the violence. S.W. Freedman et al., "Confronting the Past in Rwandan Schools", in: E. Stover and H. Weinstein (eds.), *My Neighbor, My Enemy*, 250.

410 L. Gupta, *Exposure to War Related Violence among Rwanda Children and Adolescents: A Brief Report on the National Baseline Trauma Survey.* UNICEF Trauma Recovery Programme, Kigali 1996; and R. Neugebauer et al., "Post-Traumatic Stress Reactions among Rwandan Children and Adolescents in the Early Aftermath of Genocide", in: *International Journal of Epidemiology* 38(4) (2009), 1033–1045. Several studies have reported that exposure to violence had significantly affected children's educational achievements in post-genocide Rwanda. R. Akresh and D. de Walque, "Armed Conflict and Schooling: Evidence from the 1994 Rwandan Genocide", in: *HiCN Working Papers* 47 (2008), www.hicn.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/wp47.pdf [last accessed on 06/06/2014]; and A. Guariso and M. Verpoorten, "Armed Conflict and Schooling in Rwanda: Digging Deeper", in: *HiCN Working Papers* 166 (2014), www.hicn.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/HiCN-WP-1662.pdf [last accessed on 06/06/2014]. Severe trauma was also reported among teachers. In an interview with African Rights, a teacher survivor of the genocide testified his difficulties to teach. He affirmed not to be able to forget when "[his] students ran after [him] during the genocide, wanting to kill [him]". Another teacher expressed his

common sites of mass violence. The Murambi Technical School, now a national memorial site, bears testimony to this tragedy. In April 1994, tens of thousands were slaughtered on its premises. Obura recounts that "[l]ocal leaders had called people to schools […] 'to keep them safe', and the people had been massacred there, by teachers […] and by fellow pupils".[411] The role played by Rwanda's schools in the conflict and violence resulted in a generalised erosion of faith in the education system. According to Obura, parents had been reluctant to take their children back to school after the genocide.[412]

In the wake of the war, the incumbent government made significant efforts to promptly reconstruct and rehabilitate the dilapidated system.[413] The restoration of educational provision was presented by the Ministry of Education as a "powerful strategy of social normalisation and progressive pacification of the country".[414] Based on a belief that Rwanda's pre-genocide schooling had contributed to the outbreak of violence, a number of educational reforms were also gradually introduced by the government with a view to transforming Rwandan schools into instruments of peace, reconciliation, and development. These reforms addressed educational policies related to access and equality and the content of curricula and textbooks.

Promoting equality and a culture of peace and national unity

A review of educational policies introduced after 1994 seems to point to the post-genocide government's strong commitment to breaking with a history of ethnic and regional division, discrimination, and favouritism. Its stated aim has been to guarantee inclusive and equal educational opportunities to all Rwandans. This

discomfort "standing in front of a class containing children of the *génocidaires* and having to teach them". African Rights, *The Heart*, 68, 73.

411 Obura, *Never Again*, 57. While many educated people had been involved in the violence, the bulk of the genocide militias was reportedly comprised of unemployed and undereducated youth. African Rights, *Rwanda*, 56; Des Forges, *Leave None*, 129; M. Sommers, *Fearing Africa's Young Men: The Case of Rwanda*, Social development papers, Conflict prevention and reconstruction, paper No. 32, Washington: The World Bank 2006, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2006/02/13/000090341_20060213142651/Rendered/PDF/351490RW0Young0men0WP3201PUBLIC1.pdf [last accessed on 26/05/2014].

412 Obura, *Never Again*, 56–57.

413 Ibid. See also K. Kumar et al., "Study 4: Rebuilding Post-War Rwanda: The Role of the International Community", in: D. Millwood (ed.), *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, Washington: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda 1996, 31–34.

414 Republic of Rwanda – Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Professional Training (MIJESCAFOP), *Shared Values and Promoting a Culture of Peace in Rwanda. Conference Report*, Kigali: October 1998, 22–23.

objective has been pursued through various means. Amongst them are the abolition of the previously compulsory regional and ethnic identification of pupils and staff and the prohibition of discrimination. Access to primary education has been made available to every child in fulfilment of the international goals of Education for All, universal primary education, and gender parity.[415] At the secondary and tertiary levels, admission is now transparent and determined by merit.[416] In addition, a tuition-free "nine-year basic education" programme was introduced in 2009 with the intention of further widening access to post-primary education.[417] In an effort to be inclusive, the new government also introduced a trilingual policy in order to cater for the needs of its highly diverse school population, a diversity arising in part from the massive repatriation of a large Anglophone Tutsi diaspora.[418] This policy prescribed the compulsory study of English in addition to Kinyarwanda and French as well as the possibility for pupils to choose French or English as their principal language of instruction.[419]

State policies promoting equal educational opportunities have been widely praised. A number of concerns have however been raised. A primary concern relates to an unforeseen consequence of the above-mentioned language reform. Reportedly, the reform effectively established a segregated system separating Anglophone returnees from Uganda, who are mostly Tutsi, from Francophone pupils, who grew up either in Rwanda or in the diaspora in the DR Congo and Burundi.[420] In 2008, a radical change was introduced when English was pre-

415 School enrolments have significantly increased since the end of the genocide. Grave discrepancies however persist between children from urban and rural areas and from different socio-economic backgrounds. Republic of Rwanda (RoR) – Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008–2012*, Kigali 2007; RoR – Ministry of Education, *Education Sector Strategy Plan 2008–2012*, Kigali 2008, RoR – Ministry of Education, *Indicators in the Education System*, Kigali: MINEDUC 2008, and RoR – Ministry of Education, *Rwanda Education Statistics*, Kigali 2012; RoR – National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), *The Evolution of Poverty in Rwanda from 2001 to 2011: Results from the Household Surveys (EICV)*, Kigali 2012; and the World Bank, *Education in Rwanda: Rebalancing Resources to Accelerate Post-Conflict Development and Poverty Reduction*, Washington 2004, and World Bank, *Rwanda Education Country Status Report*, Washington 2011.

416 RoR – Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research, *Education Sector Policy*, Kigali 2003, 4. Transparency and accountability have been ensured through the Rwandan National Examination Council, www.rnec.ac.rw.

417 RoR – MINEDUC, *Nine Year Basic Education Implementation. Fast Track Strategies*, Kigali 2008.

418 For a discussion on Rwandan refugees' education, see L. Bird, *Surviving School: Education for Refugee Children from Rwanda 1994–1996*, Paris: UNESCO/IIEP 2003.

419 MINEDUC, *Education Sector Policy*, 14, 23–24.

420 McLean-Hilker, "The Role", 11–12; and Walker-Keleher, "Reconceptualizing", 46.

scribed as the only language of instruction from upper-primary level onwards.[421] This policy greatly disadvantaged the Francophone majority, affecting the equality of educational opportunities and thereby risking an increase in tensions.[422] A second concern has been expressed with regard to the current allocation of bursaries to genocide survivors through the *Fonds National pour l'Assistance aux Rescapés du Genocide* (FARG). Evidence suggests that this practice has created considerable disparities and tensions between FARG and non-FARG pupils. Reportedly, given that FARG beneficiaries are primarily Tutsi, these tensions have to a large extent coincided with an "ethnic" divide.[423] This division appears also to be manifest in an often visible separation in schools between members and non-members of the *Association des Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide* (AERG), an association which gathers students who are survivors of the genocide or who are children of genocide survivors.

In the aftermath of the genocide, the reform of educational policies outlined above was accompanied by a substantial revision of teaching content. In post-genocide Rwanda, old curricula and textbooks were immediately repudiated for conveying a distorted and antagonistic view of Rwandan history and society. It was deemed necessary to rigorously review the existing materials and adapt them to the values of the new era.[424] According to former Minister of Education

421 French is now an elective and non-examined subject. This policy was introduced during a period marked by deteriorating diplomatic relations with France and by Rwanda's acceptance into the East African Community and into the British Commonwealth.

422 According to recent studies, less than 15 % of the Rwandan population is fluent in French and less than 5 % in English. B.L. Samuelson and S.W. Freedman, "Language Policy, Multilingual Education, and Power in Rwanda", in: *Language Policy* 9(3) (2010), 191–215. See also A. Obura and L. Bird, *Education Marginalisation in Post-Conflict Settings: A Comparison of Government and Donor Responses in Burundi and Rwanda. Background Paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010 "Reaching the Marginalized"*. UNESCO 2009, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186602e.pdf [last accessed on 24/09/2015], 10.

423 McLean Hilker, "Everyday Ethnicities", "The Role", and "Identity and Reconciliation among Rwanda's Urban Youth", Policy Working Paper, Brighton: University of Sussex 2011; IRDP, *Sustaining Peace in Rwanda: Voice of the People*, Kigali 2003; and Walker-Keleher, "Reconceptualizing", 46. Kirrily Pells reports that, during a National Summit for Children, one child expressed his dissatisfaction with what he perceived to be an unequal situation. The child affirmed that "we children who have our parents in prison we do not like the Government of National Unity. We want the government to help us like the others". K. Pells, "Building a Rwanda 'Fit for Children'", in: Scott and Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda*, 81.

424 Reportedly, in the aftermath of the genocide, old teachings continued to be conveyed in Hutu refugee camps across the border. According to the 2001 Machel report on *The Impact of War on Children*, "many refugee schools left unassisted by the international community came under the control of the ousted Rwandan government that had been responsible for the 1994 genocide. They used the opportunity to teach Hutu youth a curriculum intended to prolong the ethnic divide". Similarly, in his study on *Emergency Education for Children*, Marc Sommers reports that, "[r]eserved for young Rwandan Hutu refugee elites, it was

Romain Murenzi, in the pre-war curriculum "there was too much about human differences and too little about human similarities. Too much about collective duty and too little about individual responsibility. Too much about the past and too little about the future".[425] Today, the focus of the national curriculum appears to have significantly shifted.

In line with the president's belief that "[p]eople […] can be taught to be good",[426] Rwandan schools have been entrusted with a new mission. Official documents show schools are now expected to promote a culture of democracy, peace, and respect for human rights, and to prepare children to be responsible and unprejudiced citizens.[427] Schools are also considered an important instrument in the fight against "genocide ideology" and in the pursuit of the goal to "rebuild national identity" and to eradicate a dangerous "'Hutu-Tutsi' exclusive identarism".[428] In accordance with the official view that "traditional values of unity must be reasserted, reinforced and taught to all Rwandans",[429] schools are envisaged as the medium through which to teach the next generation of Rwandans "to identify themselves as belonging to one and [the] same nation".[430] The expectation, as expressed in the official report on *Genocide Ideology and Strategies for Its Eradication*, is that, "[o]nce informed and trained, school-

widely assumed that the schools in the camps emphasised the sort of ethnically based version of Rwandan history that provided the rationale for ethnic genocide". G. Machel, *The Impact of War on Children: A Review of Progress Since the 1996 United Nations Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, London 2001, 102; and M. Sommers, *Emergency Education for Children*, Cambridge 1999, 7, web.mit.edu/cis/www/migration/pubs/mellon/1_children.pdf [last accessed on 05/05/2014].

425 RoR – National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), *Report of the National Curriculum Conference*, Kigali 2002, 2; and RoR – Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research, *National Curriculum Development Centre 6-Year Plan: 2003 to 2008*, Kigali 2003, 31.

426 P. Kagame, qtd. in Gourevitch, *We Wish*, 224.

427 RoR – MINEDUC, *Report of Workshop Seminar on Revising and Harmonizing the Teaching Programme for Primary-School Education*, Kigali 1996, 6; and RoR – MIJESCAFOP, *Shared Values*, 22–23. In the words of prominent Rwandan educationalists, including the present director general of the Rwanda Education Board (REB) John Rutayisire, the mission of Rwandan schools is to instil "desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes", namely, to "enhance the realization of Vision 2020, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme, and other policies and principles aimed at peace, unity, reconciliation, and social cohesion". Rutayisire et al., "Redefining", 339.

428 RoR – Senate, *Genocide Ideology*, 255. The document states that "[f]ighting the ideology of genocide has to be done through activities such as fighting ignorance through school as well as family education". Ibid., 162.

429 RoR – OP, *The Unity*, 16.

430 J. Rutayisire, "The Role of Teachers in the Social and Political Reconstruction of Post-Genocide Rwanda", in: F. Leach and M. Dunne (eds.), *Education, Conflict and Reconciliation: International Perspectives*, Bern 2007, 120.

children will not only be 'prepared' to resist family 'intoxication' but also equipped to enlighten their families".[431]

Consistent with the new mission attributed to Rwandan schools, the national curriculum has been revised to integrate notions of peace and reconciliation into various subjects. Also, a commitment has been made to train teachers with a view "to turn[ing] them into artisans of peace education".[432] Revised courses in civic studies and political education have functioned as the principal carrier subjects for peace education. In the introduction to the political education curriculum, this subject is presented as being "based on the culture of peace". Its stated aim is to "teach pupils positive attitudes, in order to know their rights and duties […] to put forward unity, truth and justice, peace and reconciliation, and conflict resolution, which will help us attain true development".[433] Schools have been promoting such "positive" teachings through extra-curricular activities as well, notably through after-school clubs such as Unity and Reconciliation clubs, Anti-Genocide clubs, and Human Rights clubs. A culture of peace has likewise been promoted in higher education. In 1999, the former National University of Rwanda (NUR; now University of Rwanda, UR), once a site of discrimination, violence, and genocide, established a Centre for Conflict Management (CCM). In recent years, the centre has been offering civic and peace education courses to university students as well as master programmes in Peace and Genocide Studies.[434]

The post-genocide challenges of teaching the nation's history

Compared to other school subjects, history has proved a particularly challenging area of reform. The pre-genocide history course was rejected because it was "devised in an era when the past was evoked to mobilise a Hutu ethnic con-

431 RoR – Senate, *Genocide Ideology*, 293. On the other hand, Rutayisire et al. argue, "[p]arents need to be involved and endeavour to tell the truth to their children". Rutayisire et al., "Redefining", 359.

432 RoR – MIJESCAFOP, *Shared Values*, 22–23. A UNICEF-sponsored pilot programme in Education for Peace was launched in 1997. Fountain, *Peace Education*. In her study, Obura, however, reports to have found no trace of this programme in the country. Obura, *Never Again*, 77–79; RoR – NCDC, *National Curriculum*, 33.

433 African Rights, *The Heart*, 10.

434 A.Karakezi Urusaro, "African Universities and Social Reconstruction: What Mission and What Strategies? The Case of the Conflict Management Centre of the National University of Rwanda", in: *African Sociological Review* 7(2) (2003), 95–112; "NUR to Launch Genocide Course", in: *The New Times* (22/08/2008), www.newtimes.co.rw/news/views/article_print.php?i=&a=8917&icon=Print [last accessed on 29/06/2014]; www.ccm.nur.ac.rw [last accessed on 27/03/2014].

sciousness".[435] In 1995, a temporary moratorium on the teaching of Rwanda's past was put in place until a revised version of the country's history could be agreed on. A long process of concomitant historical reconstruction and curriculum and textbook revision followed, which culminated in the *de facto* reintroduction of this subject into Rwandan schools over a decade later. The following sections take a closer look at this process by reviewing various key initiatives that have been undertaken in response to the imperative need of writing and teaching a "new history" of Rwanda.

Mobilising academia: "correcting history" for future generations

In light of the negative role that historiography and history teaching are presumed to have played in fuelling division and tension, a thorough re-examination and demystification of the country's national history was soon recognised as being of paramount importance by concerned Rwandans in the wake of the genocide.[436] The aspiration was for the Rwandan people to achieve a common and objective reading of the past as well as to regain ownership of a history that had long been dominated by old colonial myths and stereotypes. Frequent calls were made to replace the "false" ethnicist history that had been propagated by the former regimes with a more truthful and unifying account of the nation.[437]

The considerable challenges involved in such an undertaking were not to be underestimated. In 2002, the Rwandan scholar Eugène Ntaganda pointed to these challenges by underscoring the exceptional manipulations to which Rwandan history had been subjected. In a special issue of the CCM *Cahiers du Centre de Gestion des Conflits*, the former scientific coordinator of the centre observes that "[t]he history [of Rwanda] has been the subject of polemical interpretations, approximations and simplifications of which there are few examples as caricatural as this in the history of ex-colonies".[438] John Rutayisire et al. further suggest that the daunting task of writing national history in an objective and inclusive manner had inevitably been compounded by the highly divided and traumatised nature of Rwandan post-genocide society. Multiple, and often antagonist, memories appear to have been competing with each other,

435 African Rights, *The Heart*, 3.

436 Based on the belief that "the distortion of history led to genocide", some teachers interviewed by African Rights concluded that it was preferable not to teach history at all rather than to use the old textbooks that were impregnated with divisionism. Reference was made, in particular, to *Histoire du Rwanda* and to R. Heremans' *Introduction à l'Histoire du Rwanda*. African Rights, *The Heart*, 22, 27.

437 RoR – NCDC, *National Curriculum*, 34.

438 E. Ntaganda, "Editorial", in: *Peuplement du Rwanda. Enjeux et Perspectives*. Butare (*Cahiers du Centre de Gestion des Conflits* 5), 2002, 6.

with perceptions of the "truth" largely differing on the basis of identity.[439] According to C. Newbury, "not surprisingly in such a polarised atmosphere, historical reconstruction is itself highly contested".[440]

Today, writing on Rwanda is considered a "perilous business", especially when it comes to dealing with identity issues and with the history of the conflict. Several analysts have alluded to the constant risk of being accused of either Tutsi or Hutu partisanship. In an article on "the challenges of representing the Rwandan genocide", Eltringham affirms that, in post-genocide Rwanda, "impartiality is almost impossible to achieve. However creative (and careful) a writer attempts to be there will always be room for accusations of bias towards one side or the other".[441] Allegations of pro-Tutsi or pro-RPF bias have targeted the works of such prominent authors as Colette Braekman, Gérard Prunier, Philip Gourevitch, and, especially, Jean-Pierre Chrétien.[442] The French scholar

439 Rutayisire et al., "Redefining", 315–374. See also Buckley-Zistel, "Dividing"; Eltringham, *Accounting*; V. Jefremovas, "Contested Identities: Power and the Fictions of Ethnicity, Ethnography and History in Rwanda", in: *Anthropologica* 39(1–2) (1997), 91–104; Lemarchand, "Genocide in the Great Lakes", and Lemarchand, "Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation"; Lemarchand and Niwese, "Mass Murder"; C. Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda", in: *Africa Today* 45(1) (1998), 7–24; and J. Vansina, "The Politics of History and the Crisis in Central Africa", in: *Africa Today* 45(1) (1998), 37–44.

440 Newbury, "Ethnicity", 9.

441 N. Eltringham, "The Blind Men and the Elephant. The Challenge of Representing the Rwandan Genocide", in: P. Caplan (ed.), *The Ethics of Anthropology: Debates and Dilemmas*, London/New York 2003, 106. Prunier, among others, refers to the "perilous business" of writing on Rwanda in a post-genocide context which he describes as an "ideologically loaded climate of Rwanda-watching where every writer is closely scrutinised for the most minute and coded sign of pro-Hutu or pro-Tutsi sympathies". *The Rwanda Crisis*, 357. Similarly, Jefremovas argues that "Rwandan history is a minefield" and "navigating the waters of Rwandan and Burundian representations of history and ethnicity is a treacherous undertaking". V. Jefremovas, "Treacherous Waters: The Politics of History and the Politics of Genocide in Rwanda and Burundi", in: *Africa* 70(2) (2000), 298. See also Mamdani, *When Victims*, 41.

442 African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, London 1995; C. Braeckman, *Rwanda: Histoire d'un Génocide*, Paris 1994; P. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You*, New York 1998; and G. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, New York 1995. An exception among the early post-genocide writings was the balanced and solidly grounded HRW report by Des Forges. Braeckman's view of the RPF became more critical in her later publication *Les Nouveaux Prédateurs: Politique des Puissances en Afrique Centrale*, Paris 2003. Also, Prunier's second edition of *The Rwanda Crisis* (1997) includes an additional chapter recognizing RPF's responsibility in the events. In the revised edition, Prunier comments on accusations that had been levelled by one reviewer against his 1995 edition (R. Govaerts, *SAIS Review* (Summer/Fall 1996), 199–201). The accusation of being "remarkably soft in his treatment of the RPF" is recognised by Prunier as being "largely true and to a degree understandable" given the "enormous (and largely unconscious) temptation to present in a favourable light any social or political force that can provide some sort of a moral coun-

has often been criticised for replicating the RPF's official rendering of the facts. According to Lemarchand, Chrétien's arguments largely demonise the Hutu and justify the RPF's actions while appearing to disregard the RPF's onus of responsibility and Hutu suffering.[443] At the other end of the spectrum are revisionist and negationist writings by pro-Hutu observers, most notably Charles Onana and Pierre Péan. Péan's work, in particular, has been described by Lemarchand, among others, as "a notoriously tendentious effort to rewrite the history of the genocide as a Tutsi-engineered plot".[444] Lemarchand himself, together with a few other foreign scholars and journalists, has been singled out for demonstrating a pro-Hutu bias.[445] To a great extent, polemics have thus prevailed over a dispassionate scientific dialogue. As expressed, with regret, by Lemarchand, polemical discourse has greatly compromised the potential of applying scholarship to unravel and mediate the existing "meta-conflict", and the possibility of academia contributing to a better understanding of the past and ultimately to social cohesion and reconciliation in Rwanda.

It is in this highly politicised and polarised environment that a number of debates and initiatives were organised in Rwanda with the aim of collectively discussing, analysing, and writing the country's history. Within a strictly controlled setting, such historiographical endeavours appear to have largely resulted in the validation and reproduction of the official discourse.

A first major initiative took place within the framework of a series of reflection meetings that were held at the Office of the President between May 1998 and March 1999. Alongside "problems regarding democracy, justice, economy and security", the examination of history and the unveiling of the supposed "TRUTH" was granted a conspicuous place in the discussions.[446] One of the recommendations formulated in the final report highlighted the need to clarify Rwandan history, including its "bad events". The aim was to achieve a common reading of the past, to counter the divisionist ideology that had been taught since the colonial period, and to promote initiatives that would reinforce national

terpoison" to the "massive evil" represented by the genocide. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 365.

443 Lemarchand, "Rwanda. The State of Research", 7–9.

444 C. Onana, *Secrets du Génocide Rwandais: Enquête sur les Mystères d'un Président*, Paris 2002; and Péan, *Noires Fureurs*. Another tendentious work was published in 2009 by C. Davenport and A. Stam, "What Really Happened in Rwanda?", in: *Miller-McCune* (2009), www.millermccune.com/politics/what-really-happened-in-rwanda-3432/ [last accessed 08/04/2012]. The authors labelled the 1994 events as a politicide rather than as genocide. Also, they claimed that most victims had possibly been Hutu, and not Tutsi. See also negationist statements by the *Association des Rescapés du Génocide des Refugiés Rwandais en République Démocratique du Congo*, quoted in Lemarchand, "The Politics", 3.

445 See, for instance, Chrétien, *Le Défi*, 387–388.

446 P. Bizimungu, *Report on the Reflection Meetings Held in the Office of the President from May 1998 to March 1999*, Kigali 1999, 11.

unity.[447] In response to these concerns, a 13-member committee was set up by former President Bizimungu in June 1998. This body, which was mainly composed of national political figures, was chaired by the two prominent historians Gamaliel Mbonimana and Paul Rutayisire. Its mandate revealed a clear political orientation. The committee was expected to examine the historical evolution of Rwanda's unity and to suggest ways to promote unity among Rwandans today. The final result of the discussions, which were held twice a week for almost a year, was the previously mentioned 1999 publication *The Unity of Rwandans.* To a large extent, this text reproduces the official historical discourse. The document traces the causes of the "genocide against the Tutsi" back to the colonial disruption of Rwanda's ancient unity and to the post-colonial perpetuation of externally imposed divisions. According to the report, genocide had been committed in the years 1959–1960, 1963–1964, 1973, and finally during "the terrible genocide of Tutsi in 1994".[448] Although its narrative echoes the government's position on Rwanda's past, the study presents a more nuanced picture than the official view. Among other things, the document acknowledges the transformation of relations under King Rwabugiri. It also recognises both the "critical" responsibility of colonial actors in "Rwanda's misfortune" and the "obvious" role of Rwandans.[449] With regard to the "ethnicity question", the text recognises the existence of various theories on the origins and relations of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. It then concludes that, regardless of which theory is accepted as being accurate, "the Banyarwanda must understand that maintaining themselves prisoners of their belonging to ethnic Hutu, Tutsi and Twa groups is one of the big obstacles standing in their way to development".[450]

Between 1998 and 1999, debates on the history of Rwanda were held in other circles as well. During a conference on the culture of peace which was organised in October 1998 by the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Professional Training (MIJESCAFOP), participants called for the creation of "a formal forum for the restitution of the scientific truth of Rwanda's history".[451] Simultaneously, a group of academics at NUR proposed readdressing history in order to allow Rwandans to face the past and to "reconstruct our society".[452] The Rwandan

447 Ibid., 13.

448 RoR – OP, *The Unity*, 52. The document, however, also refers more generally to "genocide and massacres", 57.

449 Ibid., 57.

450 Ibid., 58.

451 Other recommendations that were advanced on this occasion relate to the promotion of a culture of peace through formal and informal education programmes, the commissioning of a comparative genocide study aimed at preventing the recurrence of violence, and the construction of genocide memorials.

452 Comment by a conference participant reported in the transcripts from the project "Hopes on the Horizon", a production from Blackside Inc., made available by the American Public

scholars stressed the urgency of filling the "big gap between what is written and the reality" and to "correct" history before it "inspires another genocide".[453] Two national seminars were subsequently held in the university town of Butare; the first in December 1998 and the second in October 1999. Their purpose was to collectively examine and revisit the country's controversial past with a view to writing and teaching a "new history of Rwanda". The initiative was guided by a wish to "depoliticize the history of Rwanda in some of its sequences by clearing it, in all transparency, impartiality and objectivity, of fallacious hypotheses and political falsifications in order to finally achieve the greatest possible historical truth".[454] The product of the two seminars, which incorporated contributions from several participants, was the 2004 publication of two volumes on *Les Défis de l'Historiographie Rwandaise* [The Challenges of Rwandan Historiography]. The publication was edited by Rwandan history professor Déogratias Byanafashe and was sponsored by UNESCO.[455]

The first seminar was titled "Political changes in 1959. Was it a revolution or not?" On this occasion, a number of controversial historical topics, most notably the 1959 events, were discussed by some fifty attendees.[456] A review of the conclusions presented in the seminar report reveals their striking resemblance to the arguments advanced by the government. In particular, the report outlined the following:

- the ancient settlement of the country and the existence of a pre-colonial nation-state with an integrated society;
- the crucial role of the colonial authorities, both in ethnicizing society and in encouraging the 1959–1962 "revolution";
- the portrayal of the "revolution" as a tragedy and as "an uprising against one part of the population itself occupied!" (by the Belgians);

Broadcasting Service (PBS), www.pbs.org/hopes/rwanda/transcript.html [last accessed on 09/06/2014].

453 Comment by Byanafashe, qtd. from "Hopes on the Horizon". Ibid.

454 Byanafashe (ed.), *Les Défis de l'Historiographie Rwandaise. Tome 1: Les Faits Controverses*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, June 2004, 11. See also Byanafashe (ed.), *Les Défis de l'Historiographie Rwandaise, Tome 2: La "Révolution de 1959, Mythe ou Réalité"?*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, August 2004.

455 Contributors in the first volume included twenty Rwandans: eight historians, one archeologist, one museologist, four linguists, one sociologist, one psychologist, one jurist, one economist as well as the former vice-president of the National High Council and a former local chief. Contributors to the second volume included six historians, one sociologist, and one philosopher.

456 Participants discussed issues related to methodology and chronology, and to such topics as settlement, nation-state, and borders; traditional relations; colonisation and evangelisation; political changes and their nature in the period 1959–1994, in particular from 1959 to 1962; and the genocide in 1994.

– the inadequacy of the term "Rwandan genocide" as opposed to "Tutsi genocide", and the invalidity of the "double genocide" theory and of the thesis of a "spontaneous popular rage" to describe and explain the violent events of 1994.[457]

Several exiled Hutu intellectuals who had not attended the seminar criticised the debate for being biased and unrepresentative of Hutu views. According to former Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu, a true revolution had taken place in 1959, through which the Rwandan people had succeeded in overthrowing an exploitative and oppressive Tutsi feudal system. He suggested that denying such a reality would not change the fact that "[the] humiliation [suffered before 1959] has not left the mind of the Hutu".[458]

Following animated discussions on whether or not there had been a "revolution" in 1959, a second seminar was convened specifically on the "(Political) changes in Rwanda between 1959 and 1962".[459] Its main purpose was to clarify roles and responsibilities in the events that had marked these turbulent years. According to Mbonimana, the intention of the seminar was to bring people together to discuss this watershed period and reach a consensus on the basis of available evidence. Mbonimana underscored the need for the discussions to take historical complexity into account. He referred to

> the fact that there were killings, the fact that Tutsis collaborated closely with the colonial powers, the fact that the Tutsis who were in power in the Royal Court did not fully consider the claims of the Hutus, the fact that in 1960 the Tutsis were exiled for 30 years, the fact that in 1982 they were rejected […] The fact that there have been intermarriages.[460]

At the end of the seminar, a number of recommendations were formulated. One of them called for the creation of "a national commission for the review and revision of the history of Rwanda" under the auspices of NUR's History Department. The expectation was that such a commission would write a new history of Rwanda, which would serve as a key reference for the revision of history textbooks.

Shortly after the President's Office reflection meetings and the two NUR seminars, the matter of history was re-addressed at the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation in 2000. During the event, participants reiterated the

457 Byanafashe (ed.), *Les Défis, Tome 1*, 7–11.

458 Qtd. from "Hopes on the Horizon".

459 According to Byanafashe, the events were referred to as "political change" following disagreements among the participants at the seminar as to whether the term "revolution" had a positive or neutral connotation. Byanafashe, qtd. from "Hopes on the Horizon". See Byanafashe, *Les Défis, Tome 2.*

460 Qtd. from "Hopes on the Horizon".

long-standing ideological distortion of history. They identified the existence of divergent historical interpretations as "a factor of division". The most divisive topics to emerge at the summit included issues related to "ethnic" identities and the 1959 "Hutu Revolution".[461] Once again, a recommendation was formulated, which called for a need to write and teach a new history of Rwanda with a view to promoting unity and reconciliation. More specifically, the summit's recommendations articulated the urgency to: "[w]rite the history of the country on the basis of extensive research so that Rwandans can learn the truth about their history; [t]each history so that Rwandans can be reconciled on the basis of a true unity; [a]void generalisation in the analysis of history; [and to t]each history in all schools as soon as possible".[462] On this occasion, former President Bizimungu underlined the importance of national ownership of such endeavours. He emphasised that "[t]he history of Rwanda concerns primarily the Rwandese".[463] In 2006, the government report on *Genocide Ideology and Strategies for Its Eradication* again described the "restoration of historical truth" and its transmission as being among the main challenges and necessities in post-genocide Rwanda.[464] The document affirmed that "[i]t is imperative […] to rewrite and teach the country's correct history, based on genuine facts, to current and future generations through schools".[465]

In response to the many recommendations voiced since the second half of the 1990s, a group of NUR academics was hired by NURC's Civic Education Department in 2006 on behalf of the President's Office and with the financial support of the European Union to write a new history of Rwanda. At the time of writing in 2014, their historiographical work, dated 2011 and titled *Histoire du Rwanda: Des Origines à la Fin du XXe Siècle* [History of Rwanda. From the Origins until the End of the 20th Century], is still in draft form and available to

461 Following wide consultations, history and its role in conflict and reconciliation in Rwanda was a theme that was selected for discussions during the 2000 National Summit. Other themes included security, justice, and poverty. NURC, *Rapport sur le Sommet National d'Unité et de Réconciliation*, Kigali 2000.

462 Ibid., 46–47. Other recommendations called for the integration of unity and reconciliation and patriotism programmes into the education system, the promotion of a culture of peace, including positive Rwandan values, and for the elderly to be encouraged to teach the younger generation about the ancient unity of Rwandans and of its distruction by the colonisers. 41. Eight years later, in an interview given to IRIN in August 2008, the then Secretary General of NURC, Fatuma Ndangiza, reiterated the continuing challenge posed by history to reconciliation and the "need to rewrite history so that its teaching is not manipulative but rather serves as a lesson". "RWANDA: Sustainable Peace Key to Post-Genocide Reconciliation", in: *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN),* Kigali (26/08/2008), www.irinnews.org:80/report.aspx?ReportID=79996 [last accessed on 15/06/2014].

463 Ibid., 62.

464 RoR – Senate, *Genocide Ideology*, 209.

465 Ibid., 293.

download in French from the NURC's website.[466] In its introductory chapters, the authors present the book as the fulfilment of a "hard task" and a timely response to an urgent social demand to address a history long "manipulated or invented for ideological purposes" and to a "fundamental need to be correctly informed about the past to better face the challenges of the present and of the future". In particular, this historical synthesis, "written by and for Rwandans" and aiming towards "the search of the truth and the promotion of a critical esprit", is described as "an important step in the ongoing process of reconstruction of the Rwandan nation" and as constituting a key resource for the development of pedagogical tools to be used in Rwandan schools for the purpose of improving the historical knowledge and understanding of younger generations.[467] The publication promises to fill a dangerous gap in knowledge brought about by a lack of scientific resources, which risks leaving young Rwandans defenceless in the face of "myths and lies which have destroyed the Rwandan social tissue" and of "partial vision[s] of the past, nurtured by emotional or popular accounts gleaned from parents, friends, newspapers and other writings, or simply on the street".[468]

Despite its stated intentions, the overall analysis presented in *Histoire du Rwanda* largely echoes the official discourse while countering alleged historical misconceptions by Western academics and general criticism expressed by scholars and human rights activists against the current regime and its governance. Specifically, the book upholds the government's contested view on Rwandans' pre-colonial unity and social cohesion and refutes the understanding of "Hutu" and "Tutsi" as distinct and inimical ethnic groups before colonisation.[469] In line with the official history, it blames rising internecine tensions on colonial rulers, who distorted existing structures and identities, and on Hutu elites, who aggravated such tensions by perverting Hutu-Tutsi relations. The publication also goes to great lengths to justify the controversial intentions and political and military actions of the RPF before, during, and after the "genocide against the Tutsi". The volume highlights the harm caused by "bad governance" and "genocide ideology" said to characterise the former regimes,[470] and em-

466 D. Byanafashe and P. Rutayisire (eds.), *Histoire du Rwanda: Des Origines à la Fin du XXe Siècle*, Kigali: NURC/ NUR 2011. The topics covered in this volume are the sources of Rwandan history, prehistory and settlement, the Rwandan Kingdom from its origins until the 19th century, Rwanda under German and Belgian colonisation, Rwanda under the First and Second Republics, the Tutsi Genocide, and Rwanda during the transition (from 1994 until 2003).

467 S. Lwakabamba, "Preface", 5–6; and Byanafashe and Rutayisire, "Introduction", 11.

468 Byanafashe and Rutayisire, "Introduction", 11–12.

469 Ibid., 172.

470 In relation to the mismanagement of the "refugee problem" which set the stage for the RPF

phasises and extols the value and success of the efforts and achievements of the incumbent leadership, most notably its restoration of order, security, national unity, and reconciliation, and its fight against "negationism" and "revisionism". With the exception of a few remarks admitting the possibility of individual crimes perpetrated by a minority of undisciplined RPF soldiers seeking revenge in the midst of, and after, the genocide in 1994,[471] the book generally omits, denies, or partly excuses alleged offenses by the movement and instead denounces existing reprovals of Rwanda's reportedly selective approach to justice.[472]

In addition to the official projects outlined above, noteworthy historiographical initiatives were launched in the last decade by the local NGO Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP). In 2003, broad popular consultations organised by IRDP were followed by renewed calls to scientifically investigate the past and to solve existing controversies.[473] The historical topics identified as being the most contested in Rwanda included the themes of migrations and settlement, the political events of 1950–1962, and the war and the genocide of 1990–1994. In order to shed light on such issues, IRDP commissioned a group of historians to conduct research into Rwandan history.[474] Their work resulted in three main publications, namely *Histoire et Conflits au Rwanda* (2005), the *Rwandan Tutsi Genocide* (2005), and *Changements Sociaux et Politiques de 1946 à 1962* (2008).[475] The official endorsement of these publications is demonstrated today by their inclusion as key bibliographic references in the newly designed national curriculum and in the first official teacher's guide for Rwandan history to be produced since the end of the genocide. As will be discussed below, the materials are the long-awaited products of parallel initiatives undertaken in the field of history curriculum and textbook revision alongside historiographical investigation.

war in 1990, the book states that "Kigali wanted them to die in extreme poverty and disappear completely". Ibid., 473.

471 Ibid., 574.

472 Ibid., 603–604.

473 The role of historical controversies in Rwanda's conflict was one of the four priority issues identified during consultations, besides the genocide, economic development, and the rule of law and justice.

474 A working group of about thirty people was formed. Three historians (Paul Rutayisire, Gamaliel Mbonimana, and Augustin Gatera) eventually took the lead in carrying out the research.

475 Institute of Research and dialogue for Peace (IRDP), *Histoire et Conflits au Rwanda*, Kigali 2005; IRDP, *Rwandan Tutsi Genocide: Causes, Implementation and Memory*, Kigali 2005; and IRDP, *Histoire et Conflits au Rwanda: Changements Sociaux et Politiques de 1946 à1962*, Kigali 2008.

Curriculum and textbook revision process: lifting the moratorium

In the wake of the genocide, the teaching of Rwandan history in schools was suspended at primary school level, while it was made optional at secondary level. This decision was taken promptly, at the National Conference on Education Policy and Planning in 1995. The understanding reached at the conference was that:

> The greatest weakness of Rwandan education thus was its content […]. History and civics schoolbooks at all levels of education tried to justify a discriminatory policy […] instead of eradicating ignorance among the population, a system of propaganda and of incitement to ethnic and regional hatred was put in place by skilfully exploiting the ignorance of the population.[476]

The conference participants concluded that:

> Education has failed to prevent or avoid the war, the massacres, and the genocide in our country. There is therefore no doubt that the contents of education, curricula, and teaching materials must be revised.[477]

The conference determined that the necessary process of curriculum reform would have to take into account the imperative need to promote an "education for justice, peace and human rights" and to advance national reconciliation.[478] With specific regard to history education, participants recommended that

> as soon as possible, pedagogical offices, the Institute of Scientific and Technological Research and the National University of Rwanda collaborate to publish a handbook on the history of Rwanda which allows to rehabilitate certain historical truths that have been sacrificed in favour of ideological manipulations.[479]

Despite the clearly articulated urgency behind these needs, the revision process was marred by considerable delays, which were caused by a lack of consensus on what to teach and how.[480]

476 RoR – MINEPRISEC/ MINPRISUPRES, *La Politique et la Planification de l'Education au Rwanda*, Kigali 1995, 16.

477 Ibid., 44.

478 RoR – MIJESCAFOP, *Shared Values*, 22–23. See also G. Murekumbanze, "La Contribution de l'Histoire à la Culture de la Paix, à la Tolérance, à la Démocratie et aux Droits de l'Homme", in: RoR – Ministry of Education, Rwandan National Commission for UNESCO (CNRU), *Rapport Général du Séminaire-Atelier de Formation des Coordinateurs des Ecoles Associées de l'UNESCO au Rwanda*, Kigali, 31 May – 1 June 2001, 12.

479 Ibid.

480 In a report on the 2002 national curriculum conference, MINEDUC recommended starting to reform history teaching by incorporating into the curriculum those themes on which consensus could be reached, while temporarily suspending the teaching of particularly sensitive and controversial topics. *Rapport sur la Conference Nationale du Curriculum du 14 au 15 Mai 2002*, cited in Gasanabo, *Mémoires*, 79. The aim, according to the Ministry's *Education Sector Policy*, was to eventually teach "the *true* history of Rwanda". 4.

The first step towards reintroducing the teaching of national history in Rwandan schools was the publication of revised curricula in 1996 and again in 1998.[481] At this stage, curricula consisted of simple lists of topics devoid of detailed contents and guidelines. The topics listed in the newly designed course demonstrated a great divergence from pre-genocide curricula, especially at secondary school level. Firstly, all references to ethnicity and to the supposed successive migration waves of Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi were removed from the section dealing with Rwanda's pre-colonial history. Secondly, the new curriculum introduced the topics of forced labour and taxes when dealing with the period of colonisation. It thereby emphasised colonial responsibility in creating inequalities and social discontent in Rwandan traditional society. Thirdly, the new curriculum no longer gave prominence to the "revolution", the Bahutu Manifesto, and the victory of Parmehutu when addressing the period from 1959 to 1962. It instead focussed on the violence, the socio-political troubles, the illegal dismissal of UNAR's Tutsi and Hutu authorities, and the crisis of national unity that had marked these watershed years. Fourthly, instead of glorifying the First and Second Republics established after the country's independence, the syllabus included references to the dictatorship of the *partis uniques* Parmehutu and MRND. It highlighted their practices of ethnism, regionalism, exclusion, and impunity as well as the mismanagement of an unresolved refugee problem. Finally, the curriculum added references to the more recent violent past. It mentioned the 1990–1994 war, including its causes and course, the Arusha Accords, Habyarimana's death as well as the genocide, and more specifically its preparation, progression, and consequences. It further mentioned the government of national unity that was installed after the end of the genocide, and the necessity to restore unity in Rwandan society and to promote international relations.[482] The 1996 and 1998 curricula contained three noteworthy recommendations which confirmed the challenges of teaching national history in Rwandan schools. The authors advised Rwandan educators to "teach only established facts and discard hypotheses e. g. African migrations before 1000 AD". They also stressed the need to form "a team of experts to review the existing

481 RoR – Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education/ Direction of Studies and Pedagogical Research, *History Teaching Programme: Humanities Section*, Kigali 1996; and RoR – Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education/ Direction of Studies and Pedagogical Research, *Ordinary Level History Programme*, Kigali 1998 [henceforth abbreviated as 1996 curriculum and 1998 curriculum]. Civic and political education programmes were also revised in the second half of the 1990s. This reform followed a series of seminars that were held on the revision and harmonisation of secondary and primary school curricula in 1996. United Nations, *Rwanda*.

482 See also Gasanabo, *Mémoires*, 80–83.

books and correct the history of Rwanda" as well as to "organise urgently seminars on the history of Rwanda for all history teachers in the country".[483]

The revision of official curricula notwithstanding, a virtual moratorium on history teaching was apparently maintained in Rwandan classrooms for over a decade after their release. Faced with a lack of adequate references, training, and guidance, teachers had reportedly been reluctant to take it upon themselves to decide what to teach about the country's past. Evidence suggests that, after the genocide, Rwandan teachers commonly avoided addressing highly sensitive issues. They instead tended to either focus on aspects of Rwandan history which were "safer ground" or to omit the topic altogether by exclusively addressing world history.[484] In 2001, African Rights reported that similar challenges were encountered when teaching the newly introduced courses of civics and political education, two subjects which too were meant to cover such delicate topics as ethnic divisionism and genocide.[485] In 2004, Freedman et al. observed persisting discomfort in addressing controversial aspects of Rwandan history in the classroom, especially in relation to issues of origins and ethnicity.[486] Teachers were found to "want facts" and to feel a "strong need for 'truth' about any narratives that entered the classroom".[487] In interviews held in 2008 within the framework of the present study, several teachers and school directors demonstrated unresolved feelings of distress and unease towards the still largely unsettled issue of history teaching. The director of a secondary school in Kigali outlined the difficulties encountered by teachers prior to the awaited release of new didactic materials. He explained that, in the absence of official schoolbooks on Rwanda's history, "teachers must manage with whatever they find, including curricula, articles, books, their personal experience, and what they might recall from their own school time".[488] The testimony of a primary school principal in Kigali is particularly telling of the challenges related to teaching the sensitive national history. He recounted that:

> We try to teach it, although there are some teachers that abstain from addressing some chapters of the history of Rwanda because of the difficulties attached to it. The issue of ethnicity is for instance a matter of great controversy. I was once asked by a teacher in my school to give a class on this chapter because she did not know how to approach the

483 1996 curriculum, 50; and 1998 curriculum, 28.

484 Obura, *Never Again*, 3, 18, 99–106; and Weinstein et al., "School Voices", 56.

485 African Rights, *The Heart*, 40.

486 The authors reported great disagreement among Rwandan teachers as to whether the topic of ethnicity should be ignored or addressed in the schools. Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008), 678–679.

487 Ibid., 677.

488 Personal communication, director of a secondary school in Nyarugenge district, Kigali, 29/08/08.

> subject. Although I am not proficient in history, I have done my own research on the issue. I found that some people think Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are ethnic groups, but that in reality they were just social classes and it was especially the Belgians that transformed them into ethnic groups.[489]

Against this backdrop, IRDP reported the dissatisfaction of several pupils, including genocide survivors and returnees, with a situation whereby national history had been insufficiently taught or not taught at all in schools. According to its findings, for the survivors, "the absence of information on the genocide is an insult"; for the returnees, the failure of schools to adequately address Rwandan history had deprived them of an opportunity to learn about a homeland their parents had longed to return to for many years.[490] During field research, this dissatisfaction was reiterated by numerous pupils, who articulated a widespread wish to learn the "true" history of Rwanda, including both its "positive and negative sides". One pupil in Kigali pleaded for a more in-depth study of Rwandan history, and in particular of the genocide, "because I lost a big part of my family and I am suffering its consequences". Two other pupils, who instead had no direct experience of the tragic events, respectively affirmed to want to learn this history "because I wasn't yet born" and "because I was born abroad and I only heard some few stories about it". The importance of being aware of this part of the recent past was often explicitly related to a desire to learn how to prevent the "return of this bad side of history" by understanding and addressing its causes. It was, however, also coupled with expressions of wariness about the risks of upsetting and traumatising young people.

A noteworthy step towards addressing the challenges of teaching Rwandan history in schools was made in 2003 through the launch of a history resources development project titled "Education for Reconciliation", the aim of which was to assist in the process of developing an effective curriculum. The project was the outcome of a partnership between Berkeley University's Human Rights Center, the American NGO Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO),[491] the Rwandan

489 Personal communication, director of a primary school in Nyamirambo, Nyarugenge district, Kigali, 22/08/08.

490 IRDP, "The Issue of Teaching History", in: *Histoire et Conflits*, 347. IRDP also reported that, according to teachers' testimonies, ethnicity was a determinant factor of pupils' interests. The authors suggested that "Hutus will ask more questions about the reasons why kings were always Tutsis. Tutsis will show more interest on [sic] the causes of exile of king Kigeli V Ndahindurwa, [and] the death of king Mutara III Rudahigwa". African Rights, *The Heart*, 23–24, cited in IRDP, *Histoire et Conflits*, 348. See also J.-D. Gasanabo, "L'Histoire à l'Ecole au Rwanda Post-Génocide: Défis et Perspectives", in: *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 24 (2002), 81.

491 FHAO is an NGO which provides "support to educators and students […] in a critical examination of history, with particular focus on genocide and mass violence", www.fa

National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC),[492] and several prominent scholars associated with the National University of Rwanda (NUR). The initiative was prompted by a study by Berkeley, which revealed increasing impatience with the government's failure to effectively lift the moratorium despite the widely acknowledged potential for history teaching to promote social reconstruction in Rwanda.[493] The project brought together a group of over forty teachers, historians, and government officials, under the leadership of the distinguished Rwandan historian Byanafashe. Their collaborative work resulted in the publication of a history resource book for secondary school teachers, titled *The Teaching of History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach.*[494] This reference work includes materials and sample lessons on four controversial historical topics, the design of which was based on critical democratic pedagogy, which sees learning as an (inter)active and dialectic process encouraging critical and reflective inquiry and open and democratic exchanges in the classroom. In addition, guidelines were developed and teacher seminars organised on participatory and democratic teaching methods.[495] In a recent report, the American partners who had been involved in the project documented the challenges faced during its implementation. They reported that introducing democratic pedagogy and a critical methodology that would encourage open debate and multiperspectivity in history had encountered significant resistance in post-genocide Rwanda.[496]

Practical constraints, including large classes, scarce teaching materials, and traditional examinations, were not the only factors hindering the application of democratic teaching methods in Rwanda. Reportedly, their implementation was also obstructed by Rwandan teachers, who were afraid to embrace the new

cinghistory.org/campus/reslib.nsf/sub/ aboutus/historymission [last accessed on 23/07/2014].

492 In 2011, the NCDC was subsumed into a new entity within the Ministry of Education, namely the Rwanda Education Board (REB), together with the National Examination Council and the Teacher Services Commission among others.

493 Freedman et al., "Confronting"; and Weinstein et al., "School Voices".

494 RoR – MINEDUC/NCDC and The Regents of the University of California, *The Teaching of History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach. For Secondary Schools in Rwanda: A Reference Book for the Teacher*, Kigali 2006.

495 S. Freedman, H. Weinstein, and T. Longman, "Education for Reconciliation: Creating a History Curriculum after Genocide". Final Narrative and Financial Report, Berkeley 2007, 14–18. By 2008, 250 teachers had been involved in the project. In a context in which "honest and direct discussion of Rwandan history was potentially fraught with danger" (682), teachers were introduced to a technique of "distancing" as an entry-point to "discussing personally highly emotional and controversial topics through the lens of distanced material". The authors explain that "[b]y talking through a fable or a poem or another history, we then moved toward making connections to Rwanda". Ibid., 680.

496 Freedman et al., "Education"; Freedman et al., "Confronting"; Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008); and Weinstein et al., "School Voices".

methodology, especially when dealing with sensitive issues such as ethnicity. Interviews held during field research for this study confirmed the concerns held by teachers about the possibility that applying these methods could provoke tensions and possibly lead to renewed violence. They likewise appeared wary of the risk of being accused of harbouring and propagating "genocide ideology" and of endangering Rwanda's national unity. Circumspection among school personnel heightened following the release, in 2007, of the results of a parliamentary investigation which claimed to have found evidence of alarming levels of "genocide ideology" in secondary schools around the country. During the enquiry, several teachers were found guilty of using old history and language textbooks which were believed to incite divisionism and hatred among Rwanda's young generation. The condemned books were subsequently confiscated by the Ministry of Education for supposedly conveying the extremist discourse associated with the former regimes.[497] The "genocide ideology" law introduced around the same time, in 2008, increased teachers' concerns. Legislation specifically targeted educators. It prescribed that "in case it is evident that the parent […], the guardian, the tutor, the teacher or the school headmaster of [a] child participated in inoculating the 'genocide ideology', they shall be sentenced to an imprisonment of fifteen (15) years to twenty five (25) years". It further added

497 The enquiry found also evidence of anonymous hate letters and cases of physical violence. The then Minister of Education subsequently faced accusations of harbouring "genocide ideology" due to her passivity in the face of the alarming situation. "Genocide Ideology? Lawmakers Form Another Ad-Hoc Commission", in: *The New Times* (21/03/2008), www.newtimes.co.rw/news/views/article_print.php?i=1385&a=3106&icon=Print [last accessed on 01/07/2014]. See also BBC News, "Rwanda 'Still Teaching Genocide'" (17/01/2008), www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7194827.stm [last accessed on 05/07/2014]; M. Bineta, "La Lutte contre l'Idéologie Génocidaire Paralyse les Enseignants", in: *Syfia Grands Lacs* (27/03/2008), www.syfia-grands-lacs.info/index.php5?view=articles&action=voir&idArticle=935 [last accessed on 24/05/2010]; and L. Waldorf, "Instrumentalizing Genocide. The RPF's Campaign against 'Genocide Ideology'", in: Straus and Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda*, 48–66. In an informal conversation held in Kigali in 2008, a NURC staff member explained that "the genocide ideology was found everywhere in the country, including among both teachers and students". According to the interlocutor, "students tend to get the ideology from the school, their parents or their community". Based on the understanding of the primary role of educators in transmitting this ideology, NURC decided to specifically target teachers as a strategy to fight against it. Another staff member recounted that, "during the NURC sessions, teachers seemed not to know many historical facts, especially the pre-colonial history of unity. They only knew what the colonial historiography propagated, which focused on ethnic differences, different origins, while they were not aware of our similarities. We bring them some historical facts. We went to schools around the country to teach about Rwandan unity, reconciliation, and government policies". In answer to a question about how the sensitive issue of ethnicity was being addressed, this informant stated that "personally I don't tell them to forget they are Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, but we make them understand that such an attitude will not help them, that it is much more beneficial to see themselves as Rwandans". Personal communication, Kigali, 18/08/08.

that "[a] teacher or a director referred to in the preceeding [*sic*] paragraph cannot be reintegrated into his teaching career".[498] The law extends to young people themselves: minors between twelve and eighteen years old are liable to half of the stipulated penalty if found guilty of harbouring "genocide ideology"; under twelve, children can be sentenced to a maximum of one year in a rehabilitation centre.[499] In an environment where zero-tolerance towards the circulation of illegitimate narratives in educational institutions was intensifying, the American partners reported having been faced with "increasing narrowness of perspectives" among the project participants, who now openly viewed "ethnicity and stories of origin [as] a 'taboo subject'".[500] They also expressed their dismay that the government, which they depicted as increasingly authoritarian and repressive, eventually failed to endorse the outcome of the initiative, and instead began its own.[501] In 2008, they commented that "[t]he inability to discuss issues of identity, the distortions of a history that the government wishes to tell, the constraints against teaching students how to be critical thinkers, and, above all, the fear of productive conflict have profound implications for the establishment of a healthy democracy" and of "sustainable, positive peace" in Rwanda.[502] Speaking of an inevitably "flawed" history teaching, Freedman et al. lamented the dangerous continuation of a tradition of "unquestioning acceptance of common lessons" in a setting in which there was "no room for multiple points of view".[503]

It is against this background that official guidelines for teaching Rwandan history in schools have been standardized. In 2008, the Ministry of Education adopted a social studies curriculum for primary schools, which integrated the subject of history.[504] The first series of commercial social studies textbooks for both pupils and teachers were published in 2006 and again in 2010, notably by Macmillan, Longhorn, and Fountain Publishers.[505] In 2008 and 2010, new history

498 Republic of Rwanda, *Law N.18/2008 of 23/07/2008. Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology, Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda N.20,* art. 11.

499 Ibid., art. 9.

500 Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008), 685, 679.

501 Ibid., 685–686.

502 Ibid., 684–685. The authors suggest that, "[i]n Rwanda, the policy of denying the reality of ethnicity and the inability to discuss ethnicity comfortably make it hard for everyday citizens to process what happened during the genocide and to talk about lingering fears and dangers. Unless that policy is addressed and remedied, the teaching of Rwanda's history will be flawed, and the potential for further destructive conflict will remain a concern". Ibid., 685.

503 Ibid. 685.

504 RoR – Ministry of Education/NCDC, *Social Studies Curriculum, Grade 1–6* [henceforth abbreviated as social studies curriculum].

505 On Rwanda's national history, see in particular E. Bamusananire et al., *Primary Social Studies. Pupil's Book 6*, and E. Bamusananire et al., *Teacher's Book 6*, Kigali: Macmillan

curricula were also adopted for junior and senior secondary school levels, thus replacing the curricula of 1996 and 1998.[506] Didactic materials were produced for these levels too. In 2010, the Ministry of Education released the first official post-genocide teacher's guide on Rwandan history, *The History of Rwanda. A Participatory Approach* (henceforth abbreviated as TG), the title of which is reminiscent of the American-sponsored resource book mentioned above. The guide has been supplemented by a series of three commercial history textbooks for both teachers and pupils, namely *New Junior Secondary History Book 1*, *2*, and *3*, produced by the Ugandan NetMedia Publishers, and by *History of Africa for Rwanda Secondary Schools* for senior level issued by Fountain Publishers, also from Uganda.[507] Another key reference today is the official teacher reference guide *Political Education for Secondary Schools* which was published by the Ministry of Education in 2008 to supplement the 2008 political education curriculum for the junior level.[508]

The section below presents an analysis of Rwanda's new educational materials. Its aim is to shed light on the most prominent changes that have been introduced since the 1990s, especially at secondary school level. The analysis explores and compares issues related to the authorship, structure, and organisation of these documents as well as the pedagogic approaches, aims, and contents which they outline. It subsequently examines in more detail the representation of Rwanda's national history as presented in post-genocide curricula

Rwanda 2006, with new edition published by Moran Publishers as E. Bamusananire et al., *Primary Social Studies: Pupil's Book 6*, Nairobi: Moran Publishers 2013; J. Hakorimana et al., *Comprehensive Social Studies 6*, Nairobi: Longhorn Publishers 2010; and F. Ajuru et al., *Social Studies for Rwanda Primary Schools. Pupil's Book 6. Our Country Rwanda*, Kigali: Fountain Publishers Rwanda 2010 [revised edition 2011]. See also Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research/ NCDC, *Guide d'Education Civique. Compétences de Vie pour les Ecoles Primaires du Rwanda, Second Cycle, 4e-5e-6e Années*, Kigali 2004.

506 RoR – NDCD, *History Program for Ordinary Level*, Kigali 2008; and RoR – NDCD, *History Program for Advanced Level. Secondary School*, Kigali 2010 [henceforth abbreviated as 2008 curriculum and 2010 curriculum]. They were implemented in 2009 and in 2011 respectively.

507 E. Bamusananire and D. Ntege, *New Junior Secondary History Book 1, 2, 3*, Kampala: NetMedia Publishers Ltd (undated [2010]); and E. Bamusananire, *History of Africa for Rwanda Secondary Schools. Advanced Level*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers 2012.

508 RoR – NDCD, *Political Education for Secondary Schools. A Guide to Political Education. Daily Life Skills for Secondary Schools in Rwanda*, Kigali 2008 (reprinted in 2009), *Book 1* (for junior secondary) and *Book 2* (for senior secondary). The guide was developed by the NCDC in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Over forty participants were involved in the project. They included more than twenty curriculum developers as well as members of higher education institutes, ministries, national commissions, religious denominations, international organisations, and teachers. See also RoR – Ministry of Education/NCDC, *Political Education Curriculum for Secondary Schools*, Kigali 2008 [henceforth abbreviated as political education curriculum].

and textbooks. Particular attention is thereby paid to investigating current approaches to teaching some of the more controversial and sensitive topics in Rwandan history.

A comparative analysis of post-genocide curricula and textbooks

General remarks

i. Authorship, structure, and organisation of the documents

A cursory review of Rwanda's post-genocide history curricula reveals a number of differences between the versions released in 1996 and 1998 and the current versions released in 2008 and 2010. The first difference concerns authorship. The newest curricula are more transparent regarding the identity of their authors and include a larger and more varied range of contributors. The earliest curriculum from 1996 contains no information regarding its authors; the 1998 version merely indicates its development by a six-member commission chaired by the Rwandan historian Mbonimana.[509] The curricula of 2008 and 2010 document having been designed by teams of eighteen and thirteen members respectively. They encompassed supervisors, curriculum developers, teachers, and academic consultants, including two NUR historians, among them Professor Byanafashe. For the most part, these are the same authors who participated in the writing of the 2010 teacher's guide *The History of Rwanda.*

The latest versions of these documents also present a more comprehensive and detailed structure. They go beyond simply specifying selected topics and objectives.[510] The current curricula include the following features:

- an outline of general aims and orientations and general objectives for each year;
- various chapters and topics and relative time allocation;
- a three-column chart detailing specific objectives, content, and teaching and learning activities (TLAs);
- a list of methodological notes, including teaching and learning aids, and a description of the evaluation and assessment approaches to be adopted; and, finally,
- bibliographic references.

509 1998 curriculum, 29.

510 The 1996 curriculum, in particular, failed to specify general objectives per class, time allocation, number of chapters, or teaching and learning activities. In addition, the document contained typographical errors and a largely illogical structure. Spelling mistakes aside, the 1998 curriculum appears to be written in better English than the 1996 document.

A review of the bibliographic references reveals substantial changes to the selected literature. Of the 26 publications referenced in the 1996 curricula and the 11 referenced in the 1998 curricula, none concerns national history.[511] Of the approximately 50 references that are listed in the latest curricula, nearly half address Rwandan history. The large majority of these publications cover the pre-colonial and colonial periods and almost all of them were published several decades ago.[512] Works on the country's more recent history, however, continue to be largely absent. Apart from two historical syntheses released in the 1970s and 1990s,[513] only three titles listed in the 2008 bibliography are concerned with the post-colonial era. The focus is primarily on the genocide, and, more specifically, on the hate media and the negative role played by the international community.[514] With regard to Rwanda's controversial past, the 2010 curriculum adds IRDP's three recent publications on the Rwandan conflict, the 1946–1962 events, and the genocide.[515]

The current official teacher's guide from 2010 constitutes an additional, if not *the* main, key resource for teachers. The study of Rwandan history, as proposed in the guide, is organised around seven themes, each of which is sub-divided into several units. Together, they cover the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. Each unit outlines a series of objectives, methodological notes, and contents, and includes an evaluation section with the correct answers. A number of complementary notes as well as colour maps, pictures, and tables are provided to supplement the written text. The document ends with a list of as many as 168 suggested publications for further reading. While extensive, this list does not include any works that are critical of the government and the historical narrative it promotes.[516]

511 In 1996, bibliographic references included 16 publications on world or European history and ten on African history; in 1998, this was three and eight repectively. 1996 curriculum, 60–63; 1998 curriculum, 29.

512 On pre-colonial Rwanda, references include colonial literature by Kagame, Maquet, D'Hertefelt, de Heusch, and Coupez, all published mainly in Brussels and Tervuren in the 1950s–1970s. The most recent work mentioned in the 2008 curriculum is Muzungu's *Histoire du Rwanda Pré-Colonial*, Paris 2003. On Rwanda's colonial history, the works mentioned are mostly publications from the 1970s.

513 A. Kagame, *Un Abrégé de l'Histoire du Rwanda de 1853 à 1972*, Butare 1975; and B. Lugan, *Histoire du Rwanda. De la Préhistoire à Nos Jours*, Vitry Bartillat 1997.

514 Chrétien et al., *Rwanda: Les Médias*; Dallaire, *Shake Hands*; and J.-C. Willame, *Aux Sources de l'Hécatombe Rwandaise*, Paris 1995.

515 IRDP, *History and Conflicts*; *Amatekan'Amakimbirane*; and *Genocide of the Tutsi.* Another addition to the bibliographic list included in the 2010 curriculum is the work by Kanimba Misago and Van Pee on *Rwanda, Its Cultural Heritage, Past and Present*, Kigali: Institute of National Museums of Rwanda 2008.

516 Bibliographic references in commercial textbooks are more varied. The *New Junior Secondary History Book 1*, for instance, includes a couple of more critical publications in its

ii. Pedagogic approach and stated aims of history teaching

The latest curricula embrace a more learner-centred and participatory pedagogic approach than their predecessors. They claim to nurture pupils' critical thinking skills based on the understanding that "history is not an evangelical speech".[517] The newly introduced teaching and learning activities encourage individual research projects, group work, class discussions, and field trips.[518] Learners are expected to actively participate in the teaching and learning process under the guidance of the teacher. They are required not only to describe given facts, but also to observe, compare, analyse, and synthesise as well as to brainstorm and debate in the classroom with their peers.[519] A strong emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to analyse causes, consequences, changes, advantages and disadvantages, and achievements and failures. In order to support this more active and critical approach to history education, teachers are urged to employ a variety of teaching aids, including written documents, photos, pictures, maps, films, and the internet. Educators are likewise advised to organise visits to places of historical significance, such as the national museum and historical, archaeological, and memorial sites. In addition to a participatory methodology, the new curricula adopt a competence-based approach which promotes not only knowledge, but also skills, values, and attitudes.[520]

Although the objectives and activities stated in the curriculum appear to advocate an active learning process, the nature of the assessment favoured in this subject is not reflective of an adherence to the professed participatory and critical methodology. The evaluation questions presented in the teacher's guide, in particular, as well as in commercial textbooks, are primarily focused on facts. Contrary to what is widely understood to be good practice, the emphasis in history teaching in Rwanda apparently continues to be on testing absorbed knowledge rather than on nurturing pupils' critical thinking and analytical skills. Classroom practices observed in several schools during field research as well as a review of exam questions confirmed a common adoption of predominantly expository methods, inducing passive memorisation of prescribed

bibliography, most notably Pottier's *Re-imagining Rwanda* and Prunier's second edition of *The Rwanda Crisis*.

517 2008 curriculum, 73. A similar claim can be found in 2010 curriculum, 60.

518 Ibid., 18–20.

519 The instructions presented in one activity suggested in the political education textbook are worth mentioning here. In proposing a discussion on "national unity and reconciliation", the textbook explicitly instructs pupils to "[l]isten to others and allow them to give their points of view","[h]ave mutual respect, [and] do not worry if a person does not agree with others". RoR – NCDC, *Political Education*, 178.

520 In the social studies course, competences are sub-divided into learning to know (knowledge), learning to do (skills), learning to be (values), and learning to live together (attitudes towards others). Social studies curriculum, 21–22.

narratives as opposed to active and enquiry-based approaches geared towards stimulating critical reflection. Overall, pupils were primarily expected to mechanically reproduce the state-approved script that was dictated by the teacher and copied into their notebooks.

Similar inconsistencies can be found in the general aims of history education prescribed in present-day Rwanda. On the one hand, history teaching is required to promote pupils' independent and critical thinking skills and encourage them to respect differences. On the other, it is expected to transmit undisputed knowledge and sacrosanct norms and values.

A review of both the previous post-genocide curricula and the current ones reveals a strong understanding of history teaching as being geared towards the development of civic and social attitudes. Two of the four general objectives that are outlined in the latest history curricula fall under this particular category of aims. They appear to be greatly concerned with promoting unity, peace, and good citizenship. The first stated aim is "[t]o live in harmony with others without ethnic distinction, religious distinction or other form [sic] of discrimination and exclusion that have caused problems in society like Tutsi genocide of 1994 [sic]". The second is "[t]o promote the culture of peace, tolerance, reconciliation and patriotism among students in order to transform them in to [sic] good citizens".[521] The two remaining objectives concern the development of general skills and the acquisition of substantive knowledge and disciplinary dispositions. They include a capacity to "work with critical thinking" and "[t]o discover various human experiences". Similar concerns were shown in the 1996 and 1998 curricula. The latter includes the objective of teaching pupils to "be historically educated and be able to discern the truth from lies and know the reality of man's past".[522]

The aims and objectives of history education as understood by the Ministry of Education are elucidated in the teacher's guide as well. In a section on "The importance of learning history", the social and civic relevance of this school subject is again emphasised. According to its authors, learning history "helps know the past, understand the present, and prepare for a better future"; at the same time, it "sharpens our critical sense". The guide argues that history allows society to "understand the nature of […] problems" and to "avoid any errors" of the past.[523] Furthermore, the study of history is deemed by the authors to pro-

521 2008 curriculum, 6; and 2010 curriculum, 3, 5.

522 Other aims included in the 1998 document were "[t]o help the student know the past to understand the present", and "[appreciate] the importance of safe guarding [sic] historical data, sites and monuments", 3. See also 1996 curriculum, 2.

523 Similar social and civic aims of history are stated in commercial textbooks. The *New Junior Secondary History Book 1*, for instance, sees the study of history as an opportunity to also "understand the present so as to improve the future". More specifically, the authors deem

mote moral values and justice as well as "mutual understanding, tolerance and peaceful co-existence" by educating pupils about the history, culture, and values of different peoples.[524] The guide additionally underlines the importance of studying history on account of its capacity to stimulate young people's patriotism and nationalism. It does so, however, in a questionable manner by promoting a militant patriotism. It prompts young people's readiness to defend the nation by emulating the controversial historical figure of King Rwabugiri and his aggressive acts of territorial expansion. In its words, the study of history

> instils in us a patriotic and nationalistic spirit. This spirit develops as we learn about our heroes and their heroic acts. We can quote here an example of King KIGELI IV RWABUGILI who is responsible for the expansion of Rwanda's frontiers. This will prompt pupils to emulate such examples in the defense of their country.[525]

The largely civic and nationalist aims of history teaching in post-genocide Rwanda are echoed in the political education curriculum. One of the fourteen general objectives of this course is "[t]o understand the political history of Rwanda and the need to defend the national independence".[526] Extensively covered in the second year of junior secondary education, the study of Rwanda's political history through this subject is furthermore primarily concerned with comparing issues of governance and human rights in a historical perspective, notably before and after the genocide. Its overall intention is to educate young people about the importance of such values as good governance, unity, patriotism, and human rights as well as to sensitise them to their civic responsibility to actively contribute to the triumph of these values within society. A similar focus on the civic aims of history teaching characterises the primary school subject of social studies. In relation to Rwanda's national history, which is taught in the sixth and final year of primary school, the social studies curriculum specifies the core competences "Learning to know", "Learning to do", and "Learning to be". At this school level, learning history combines such requirements as substantive knowledge of the effects of colonisation and the genocide with the requirement to both understand and demonstrate leadership qualities.[527]

history to be a subject which "helps learners to become good citizens" and to "make informed choices in order to contribute constructively to society and to promote good leadership". Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 1*, 3.

524 TG, 6–7.

525 Ibid., 6. The name of this king is more frequently spelled "Rwabugiri". In Kinyarwanda, the letters "l" and "r" are often used interchangeably.

526 Political education curriculum, 4.

527 Social studies curriculum, pages?

iii. Main topics and their organisation

The recent history curriculum reform introduced radical changes to teaching content and its organisation.

At primary school level, history is no longer taught as a stand-alone subject. As mentioned earlier, since the 2008–2009 academic year, Rwandan primary school children have learnt about their country's history through the subject of social studies. The course is organised around the central theme of "Unity, co-operation and development". This theme is addressed in each of the six grades at progressively larger geographical levels – respectively, the home and the village, the school and the community, the sector, the district, the province, and the country. Particularly in the sixth, and final, year, this course offers an introduction to the study of Rwandan history from ancient times to the post-genocide era.[528] At secondary school level, a geographical approach which previously dealt with the history of Rwanda, Africa, and the world in that order has now been replaced with a more chronological and cross-regional approach. Until the adoption of the new curricula, the study of Rwanda's national history had been condensed into the first year of junior secondary level (year 1) and was subsequently recapped in the last year of senior level (year 6). Today, the study of Rwandan history is spread across two three-year blocks, one for junior and one for senior level: Rwanda's pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras are taught in the first, second, and third year respectively at both levels, alongside key concomitant events in African and world history (see tables 1 and 2 below).[529]

Table 1: Summary of topics in Rwanda's post-genocide history curricula

Level	Old curriculum (1996 and 1998)	New curriculum (2008 and 2010)
Year 1	*Rwandan history:* pre-colonial, colonial and independent Rwanda	*Pre-colonial Rwandan history* and Africa until the 18th century: prehistory, ancient civilisations, and states and empires
Year 2	African history until the 1950s: pre-history, ancient civilisations, states and empires, the slave trade, and the 19th and 20th centuries	African and *Rwandan history* in the 19th and 20th centuries (*colonial time*), and Western history in the 19th century

528 History-related topics that are covered by the social studies course include Rwanda's pre-colonial organisation; the origins, causes, and impact of German and Belgian colonisation; acts of anti-colonial resistance; the course of, and roles in, the decolonisation process and the achievement of independence; Kayibanda's First Republic; the meaning, causes, consequences, and end of the genocide; its aftermath (with a focus on the reconciliation process "based on justice") as well as a comparison with other instances of mass violence.

529 At senior level, the study of colonial Rwanda is covered both in Year 5, in relation to the German administration, and in Year 6, in relation to the Belgian administration.

((Continued))

Level	Old curriculum (1996 and 1998)	New curriculum (2008 and 2010)
Year 3	World history in the 19th and 20th centuries, ending with the region's history of decolonisation	Asian history in the 1850s, and world history in the 18th century: World Wars, decolonisation, and *independent Rwanda*
	Humanities sections	Humanities sections
Year 4	World history and African history until early colonisation	Ancient times, Middle Ages, and modern history *until the 19th century* (European/world, African and *Rwandan*)
Year 5	World history between 1789–1945 and Africa's colonial history between 1884–1960, including *several Rwandan topics*	World history in the 19th and 20th centuries, up until early colonisation
Year 6	World history post 1945 and *Rwandan history* between 1800–1994	Africa's and *Rwanda's colonization (Belgian), decolonisation, and post-colonial history*

Table 2: Rwanda's national history in post-genocide curricula and teacher's guide

Rwanda's national history in post-genocide curricula and teacher's guide (secondary education)	
Pre-colonial Rwanda Teacher's guide (TG): "Formation of the kingdom of Rwanda" (20pp), and "Civilisation of ancient Rwanda" (20pp): total 40pp (preceded by a general introduction to the discipline, 14pp)	* Sources of Rwandan history * Pre-history and ancient population/ settlement * Origins, formation and expansion of the Kingdom of Rwanda until the 19th century * The civilisation of ancient Rwanda: social, cultural, political, military, and economic organisation
Colonial Rwanda TG: "Rwanda under German colonization 1897–1916" (20pp), and "Rwanda under Belgian administration 1916–1962" (33pp): total 53pp	* Rwanda during German colonisation: Rwanda's contact with the outside world, German occupation and administration, the coming of missionaries, the First World War in Rwanda, and assessment of German colonisation * Rwanda under Belgian colonisation: Belgian military occupation, mandate and trusteeship, colonial reforms and transformations, steps in the decolonisation including the 1959 events, and assessment of Belgian colonisation

((Continued))

Rwanda's national history in post-genocide curricula and teacher's guide (secondary education)	
Independent Rwanda TG: "The First Republic (1962–1973)" (15pp), and "The Second Republic (1973–1994)" (12pp): total 27pp; "The Liberation War 1990–1994 and Genocide against the Tutsi'" (16pp, of which 4pp are on the war, 3pp on the genocide, and 8pp on the "Achievements of the Government of Rwanda after Genocide")	* The First Republic: political, economic and socio-cultural change, and assessment of achievements and failures * The Second Republic: political, economic, and socio-cultural change and assessment of achievements and failures * The war and the genocide: causes, course, and consequences, and efforts of the Government of National Unity

As a result of this re-organisation, more time is now allocated to the study of Rwanda's past. At junior level, where history is a compulsory subject and taught for two hours a week, the time suggested for teaching about the country's past has increased from 54 hours a year in 1998 to 77 in 2008.[530] While the time allocated to studying the pre-colonial period has been reduced by one third (from 32 to 23 hours a year), the hours dedicated to the colonial and post-colonial eras have more than doubled (from 12 to 30 hours and from 10 to 24 hours[531] respectively). As for senior level, where history is taught only in the humanities sections for seven hours a week (notably in the "History-Economics-Geography" section), it is not possible to draw a comparison due to the lack of a specified time allocation in the 1996 curricula document.[532]

At secondary level, basic information on Rwandan history is conveyed through other school subjects as well, thus adding to the hours allocated to its study in the history curriculum. As mentioned earlier, the political education course, which is taught for one hour a week at junior level and which is not examined, covers Rwanda's political history from ancient times until the present day.[533] Elements of Rwandan history are also taught through the geography

530 An "hour" refers to the duration of one lesson, which comprises 50 minutes.

531 Of the 24 hours dedicated to the study of the history of independent Rwanda, 14 cover the time of the two republics and 10 the war, the genocide, and their aftermath.

532 In the humanities sections at senior level, 20 hours are dedicated to pre-colonial Rwanda, 50 to Rwanda under colonial rule (of which 20 hours are supposed to cover German colonisation and 30 Belgian colonisation and Rwanda's decolonisation), and 53 to independent Rwanda (of which 14 hours cover the First Republic, 25 the Second Republic, and 14 the war, the genocide and their aftermath).

533 While mainly taught in year 2 of secondary level, Rwanda's history is also taught in year 1 in a section on Rwanda's traditional society, and more specifically on its founders, administrative and political organisation, and positive traditional values. Additionally, in a module on human rights and international humanitarian law, one TLA requires students "to identify some cases of violation of HR [human rights] and IHL [international humanitarian

course, specifically in a lesson covering historical sites. Finally, historical topics are likely to be addressed in the "general paper" too, a subject which was introduced in 2011 for two hours a week with the aim of strengthening pupils' English proficiency at senior level. This course is supposed to stimulate discussions on selected political and socio-economic topics, possibly touching upon history.[534]Having provided a general overview of the main topics of study prescribed in Rwandan schools in relation to history, the next sections present an in-depth analysis of the content of Rwanda's current curricula and textbooks specific to the country's past, investigating key themes in the narratives reproduced and the significance, interpretations and meanings attributed to particular facts and events. The analysis successively examines how curricula and textbooks respectively depict the pre-colonial and colonial eras, decolonisation and the events of 1959, the time of the two Republics, and the war, the genocide, and their aftermath. The investigation thereby explores the extent to which school history in post-genocide Rwanda conforms to the official discourse propagated by the state.

The pre-colonial era: celebrating the nation's cohesion and militant patriotism

Rwanda's pre-colonial past has been comprehensively addressed by post-genocide history curricula and textbooks. The current curriculum proposes that this subject be covered principally in the first year of junior secondary school and allows a total of 23 hours for its study. Up to 40 pages, comprising one quarter of the official history teacher's guide, are dedicated to this period. They address the country's pre-history and early human settlement, the origins, formation, and expansion of the kingdom, and the civilisation of ancient Rwanda.

In line with the current official discourse, school history presents an idyllic image of pre-colonial times. It conveys a belief in the ancient unity and harmony of a strong and proud Rwandan nation while negating claims about past divisions and tensions between Hutu and Tutsi. It thereby appears to be primarily

law] in the history of Rwanda or elsewhere in the world". 8. Several topics, such as Rwanda's decolonisation and liberation war, are likewise presented in year 5.

534 Although the study of Rwandan history has received more prominent attention since the last reform, the overall place and status of history in the school curriculum in Rwanda has been significantly reduced in recent years in favour of science and technology. Rwandan authorities have, for example, limited opportunities for humanities students to gain government university scholarships. At the time of the author's field trip in 2011, the large majority of secondary school students at senior level were enrolled either in vocational schools (38 %) or in science sections (37 %). The remaining pupils studied humanities (16 %), languages (6 %) or were in teacher training colleges (3 %). RoR – MINEDUC, *Rwanda Education Statistics*, 25.

geared towards instilling a sense of nostalgia towards an ideal ancient order that was once lost and that is now being gradually restored.

The course's idyllic representation of ancient Rwanda places a strong emphasis on illustrating and celebrating the greatness and power of the old Rwandan Kingdom. Particular attention is paid to outlining the territorial expansion of ancient Rwanda. As many as four maps are reproduced in the TG, including one on the book cover, showing the extent and stages of the kingdom's expansionist process.[535] Two kings are especially exalted in this context: Ruganzu Ndori, described as the "founder of national unity",[536] and Kigeli Rwabugiri, depicted as "a great administrator" and "a great conqueror", who managed to expand the kingdom well beyond the country's present-day borders.[537] Besides praising Rwanda's monarchs, the history course glorifies the kingdom's army for its "bravery and patriotism in different wars of conquest".[538] According to the guide, "[t]he army is one of the factors that made Rwandans a formidable people, feared and respected by her neighbours". The authors proudly explain that "[t]he Rwandan army was organised in such a way that it could not be defeated".[539] Post-genocide curricula and textbooks make no allusion to instances of internal conflict or tensions within Rwandan society, with the exception of the occurrence of factional conflict, notably the "sad events" and "coup d'état" of Rucunshu.[540] In describing ancient social relations, the didactic materials emphasise old practices and traditions which supposedly demonstrated the cohesion, solidarity, and symbiosis characterising Rwandan society.[541] Placed within this context, the controversial *ubuhake* system, de-

535 The map on the book cover depicts the situation in 1896. It shows "the greatest extent of Rwanda" compared to present-day boundaries. TG, 58.

536 Ibid., 32–33.

537 Ruganzu's successor Rwabugiri is reported to have "exercised his authority over the whole Rwandan territory" and to have expanded the kingdom "as far as Lake Edward", on the border between present-day DR Congo and Uganda, as well as to have successfully resolved issues related to internal opposition. Ibid., 34. In the commercial history textbook *New Junior Secondary History Book 1*, Rwabugiri is portrayed as a brave and loving king, and his reign as an extraordinary period representing the apex of Rwanda's ancient past. Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 1*, 29–31. According to the authors, "[h]e was continually at war with his neighbours. He led the Banyarwanda almost everywhere, providing them with unparalleled opportunities to acquire abundant loot". Ibid., 31. With regard to the controversial figure of Rwabugiri, their second volume contradicts the authors' statements on this king's magnanimity as they explain that certain sources consider his reign as "the most oppressive" in Rwanda's pre-colonial history. Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 1*, 72.

538 2008 curriculum, 18; and TG, 31.

539 TG, 50.

540 Ibid., 35, 63.

541 One of the objectives listed in the 2008 curriculum is to "show the elements which prove the existence of social cohesion". 11. In a section on Rwanda's traditional society, the political education curriculum emphasises Rwanda's traditional positive values, including justice

scribed in pre-genocide textbooks as an ancient instrument of Tutsi domination, is presented in a predominantly positive light. The official teacher's guide underscores the "non-obligatory" nature of this form of "social, political and economic dependence", and stresses its foundation "on the principle of individual liberty". It also underlines the cohesive function of this practice arguing that *ubuhake* "quite often generated special relations and sentiments of affection, faithfulness and respect between the patron and the client". A negative side of the *ubuhake* contract is recognised only in relation to its termination or breach. In the guide's words, "Ubuhake had its own inconveniences because once the patron-client contract was broken the client could be a victim of injustice and violence from the patron".[542]

In the various curricula and textbooks, references to social differences in pre-colonial Rwanda are minimised. The contentious Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi identities, in particular, and the pre-colonial relationships between them, are only vaguely addressed. In post-genocide curricula, references to the social organisation of traditional Rwanda are centred on the concepts of family, lineage, and clan rather than ethnicity; all allusion to Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi is omitted. In the official history teacher's guide, these identities are also largely ignored: the three labels are explicitly mentioned only once across its chapters on ancient times in Rwanda. Its authors define them as "Rwandan social classes", "social categories", and "so-called ethnic groups".[543] While the material fails to further elaborate on the nature or meaning of these identity groups, its authors ensure that any doubts concerning the controversial topics of their origins and settlement on Rwandan territory are dispersed by their affirmation of the fallacy of old colonial hypotheses, which had been embraced before the genocide. In the guide, Western theories on the successive migrations of Twa, Bantu, and Hamitic peoples are discarded as "invented" and "erroneous".[544]

Compared to the official history guide, the commercial history and social studies books, as well as the official political education textbook, are more explicative of the nature and relations characterising the three groups. These materials emphasise the supposed fluidity and common social mobility peculiar to what are again defined as "social classes", which shared "[o]ne language. One culture. One God", as well as one king.[545] They also stress the equality of all

and reconciliation, unity and patriotism, moral integrity (*ubugabo, ubupfura*), and peaceful resolution of conflicts. 7. In this regard, the history teacher's guide exalts the "traditional school" *itorero*, an institution where young Rwandans "learnt and practiced [sic] such values". TG, 51.

542 TG, 55–56.

543 Ibid., 51.

544 Ibid., 26.

545 Social studies curriculum, 78. According to the document, social classes in traditional Rwanda "were grouped according to their occupation, e.g. agriculturalist, cattle keepers,

Rwandans in front of a common and almighty but approachable king, who, while originally belonging to "a Tutsi royal lineage",[546] was considered by all "as a factor of unification, a source of fruitfulness, fertility and prosperity" in pre-colonial Rwanda.[547]

The colonial era: mourning the foreign destruction of an exceptional nation

The colonial era is the period of Rwandan history most extensively covered by the current history course. The 2008 curriculum prescribes 30 hours to its study in the second year of junior level.[548] The emphasis is on describing and assessing the political, economic, social, and cultural transformations that occurred during the different phases of German and Belgian colonisation. In one teaching and learning activity suggested in the curriculum, a nuanced approach is encouraged by prompting an analysis of both the positive and negative effects of European colonisation on Rwanda's traditional society. The curriculum advises teachers to "[o]rganise a debate showing the good things and bad things that were done by the colonialists".[549] Overall, however, the assessment of this period put forward by post-genocide curricula and textbooks appears to be predominantly negative, especially in relation to Belgian colonial rule in Rwanda. The current history course offers a mixed assessment of German colonisation in Rwanda. The teacher's guide cites several positive contributions made by the colonisers to the country's infrastructure and economy and to its social and cultural development.[550] At the same time, the guide draws attention to a number of misdeeds perpetrated by the colonisers against the local population. The book refers to the brutal and indiscriminate military campaigns of the "pacification of the North" as well as to the introduction of forced labour. According to the TG, during their campaigns the Germans "went burning anything they met. The

handcraft". Ibid. The political education guide describes these categories as "dynamic social classes because a Hutu who acquired wealth could become a Tutsi and a Tutsi who was impoverished could become a Hutu", thus implying both the existence of social mobility and the inherent inequality and the inferior status of Hutu vis-à-vis Tutsi in pre-colonial Rwanda. RoR – NCDC, *Political Education*, 153. See also Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 1*, 92.

546 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 1*, 17.

547 The political education guide states that, "[o]nce installed, [the king] was no longer regarded as Tutsi but rather as the Supreme Guardian of the people. The Hutus, Tutsis as well as the Twas could approach him without considering their social origins, their social status or their physical features". RoR – NCDC, *Political Education*, 152. In a similar vein, in a section on *itorero*, the history teacher's guide underscores that this school "was not a monopoly of any single social class", as opposed to beliefs purported before the genocide. TG, 51.

548 The TG dedicates to it 53 of its 168 pages.

549 2008 curriculum, 43.

550 TG, 71–73. The TG speaks of missionaries' achievements in the fields of education, culture, health, and agriculture. 69–70.

result was massive famine which […] aggravated the situation for survivors of the German repression". The guide adds that, "[a]t that time, [people] were also being obliged to provide food for them [the colonisers]".[551] In addition to such abuses, the text underscores the kingdom's considerable territorial loss, "equal to one half of its actual size", and the dispersal of its population that had resulted from externally imposed border demarcations that disregarded local realities.[552]

The TG hints at the controversial issue of local collaboration with the colonial masters, yet it omits any reference to instances of anti-colonial resistance. The text traces the origins of colonial rule to King Musinga's consent to relinquish the kingdom's sovereignty by signing a "pact" that placed Rwanda under German protectorate. Within a context in which the ancient monarchy is typically exalted, the guide does not explain the circumstances or motives behind the King's decision, which leaves unanswered many questions related to why Musinga accepted submission to foreign rule.[553] While the TG appears ambiguous towards the king's role in the onset of European colonisation, its authors acknowledge the collaborative position taken by opportunistic local chiefs who wished to preserve their position of power.[554] In contrast to the nationalistic tone that characterises much of the guide's narrative, however, it falls short of criticising such collaboration. Instead, the booklet highlights the limited role played by the local authorities, compared with "the white men", who bore the primary responsibility for imposing an abusive system of indirect rule. "In most cases", according to the authors, "the locals were given implementing roles while the decision making was basically reserved for the Whites".[555] Indigenous chiefs appear therefore to be largely exculpated of any responsibility on account of their subaltern position of power vis-à-vis the dominant foreigners.

Transformations introduced during the Belgian mandate period are covered more extensively and in more detail by Rwanda's current history course. The materials recognise the socio-economic progress that was promoted by the Belgians. They mention the construction of schools, churches, and hospitals, and the introduction of technical improvements in agriculture. At the same time, the TG, in particular, refrains from giving the colonisers any credit for the externally driven advancement. In the guide, positive colonial achievements in Rwanda are downplayed by underscoring their "accidental" and "limited" na-

551 Ibid., 66.

552 Ibid., 71, and 66. The social studies curriculum similarly stresses that European colonisation had "[e]nded Rwandan territory [sic] expansion". 78.

553 The TG simply states that "Captain Ramsay managed to make King Musinga agree to cede the sovereignty of Rwanda to the Germans". 63–64.

554 In the authors' words, "traditional chiefs who were happy to be retained in their authority collaborated with the colonial authorities to strengthen colonial power". Ibid., 67.

555 Ibid., 71.

ture as well as their reliance on local as opposed to Belgian resources. Furthermore, the document stresses that the guiding motives behind colonial actions were primarily selfish and could not be considered altruistic. According to the authors, "Belgium did all to favour the interest of the Coloniser at the expense of the colonised country".[556] The tone of the 2008 curriculum is less critical. The curriculum expects pupils to learn that "the Belgian programs had good intentions or objectives but it was different in practice".[557]

Political transformations are portrayed in a particularly negative light. The course highlights Belgium's interference in Rwanda's internal affairs and the consequent "slow destruction" of this once powerful kingdom. The extent of foreign meddling in Rwandan affairs is illustrated by alluding to the colonial dethronement of the unruly Musinga, the abolition of traditional institutions, and the further alteration to the country's boundaries.[558] The course draws particular attention to the colonial policies of "divide and rule" and of "Tutsisation", and to the adverse effects these policies had on Rwanda's unity.[559]

The didactic materials currently in use in the country echo the official argument, which describes how the Belgian administration had weakened and destabilised the kingdom through manipulation and discrimination, and thereby created divisions in an otherwise harmonious society. The *New Junior History Book 2* unequivocally declares that "[i]t is true to say, therefore, that the twisted views of the West on Rwanda distorted realities and relations of the people of Rwanda" and "led to the break-up of an alliance that was as old as Rwanda's hills and history".[560] The 2008 curriculum further explains that the socio-political order that was imposed by the Belgian administration "favour [ed] some groups more than the others" and thereby "laid a basis for Genocide in Rwanda".[561] The TG elaborates on the identity of those who had either been favoured or marginalised by colonial reforms. In contrast to formerly dominant arguments, the guide does not generalise such roles along "ethnic" lines. The authors distance themselves from theories which describe the Tutsi as being collectively privileged by the Belgian administration, hence debunking the "erroneous" theory of "a Tutsi monopoly of power" and thus of an exclusive condition of Hutu marginalisation. The guide instead alludes to privileges granted along social lines and to an imposed marginalisation that cut across the three identity groups out of which Rwandan society was composed. The authors

556 Ibid., 109.
557 2008 curriculum, 45.
558 In relation to King Musinga, the 2008 curriculum expects teachers to "[j]ustify the passive resistance of Musinga" when faced with a "slow destruction of the Kingdom". Ibid., 40.
559 Ibid., 41.
560 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 2*, 92.
561 2008 curriculum, 41.

explain that colonial policies "excluded the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa of modest background in favour of the Tutsi from well to do families"; they had in so doing "contributed to the destruction of unity among Rwandans and provoked frustration in a big part of the population which had lost hope of holding administrative positions".[562]

Besides circumscribing local power to a restricted circle of wealthy Tutsi individuals, the guide downplays the role and power of local authorities within the new system of indirect rule. Its authors argue that "the traditional chiefs lost their power because they now performed their duties under duress of being dismissed if they performed poorly". According to the book, "[t]hey became pure and simple agents of the Belgian colonial administration".[563] Once again, the authors stress the involuntary and subordinate nature of the role of traditional authorities, exempting them from any responsibility for actions undertaken in the service of their masters' interests. The guide's exculpatory undertone emerges in a passage that refers to the implementation of exploitative colonial practices, including forced labour (*uburetwa*) and compulsory crops and taxes, which had taken place under the supervision of local chiefs. The TG alludes to the exploitation of both the chiefs and the population by the colonisers, who had thereby sown division and tension in society. According to the guide, the pre-colonial practice of *uburetwa,* which had become increasingly oppressive under colonial rule, eventually compromised "traditionally good relations" between the local chiefs, who had been "used" by the colonisers, and the popular masses, who had been intolerably exploited.[564] The *New Junior History Book 2* also elaborates on the "cruel" and "brutal" colonial practice of forced labour, described as "the most hated aspect of Belgian rule". The authors start with the assumption that, "[d]uring Belgian colonial rule, the White man was the absolute master and the Black man was the slave and servant".[565] Here too, disempowered Tutsi chiefs are said to have been manipulated and exploited by the Belgian colonisers. In a more polarising tone as compared to the TG, the commercial textbook suggests that colonial labour policies "sharpened the disagreements between the Hutu and the Tutsi because the Tutsi were the overseers and in a system of Indirect Rule they were forced to be brutal towards the Hutu". The authors explain that, "[w]henever the Hutu failed to meet their targets, they had to be whipped by the Tutsi chiefs who wanted to save their own skins".[566]

Whilst the official teacher's guide fails to critically analyse the responsibility

562 TG, 88.
563 Ibid., 86.
564 Ibid., 92–93.
565 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 2*, 87.
566 Ibid., 88–89.

of local authorities in the abuses sponsored by the colonisers, it does underline the role played by Rwanda's monarchy in attempting to counteract the divisive effects of Belgian practices. The TG underlines the prominent role of Rwanda's king in the process that led to the abrogation of the abusive and destabilising practice of *ubuhake*. The guide explains that, during the colonial period, the traditionally cohesive *ubuhake* "was likely to become a major source of social disturbances" and was therefore abolished by King Rudahigwa, "while Belgium was still hesitant".[567] The king is also praised in the TG for his efforts "to resolve the ethnic problem which had arisen owing to Belgian manipulation". Rudahigwa's actions towards this goal included the creation of a "Committee to study the Mututsi-Muhutu social problem".[568] The guide does not further clarify how this measure was supposed to contribute to the resolution of the externally provoked "ethnic problem".

Overall, the evaluation of Belgian rule as propagated by current state-sanctioned didactic materials lays the blame for many of the internal troubles experienced in Rwanda since the late 1950s firmly at the door of the former colonial power. Indeed, the teacher's guide argues, Belgian actions directly led to "the first upheaval in Rwanda in 1959" and ultimately to "the genocide against the Tutsi" in 1994.[569]

The 1959 watershed and the process of decolonisation: tracing the roots of an externally orchestrated national crisis

The official history teacher's guide presents a sombre image of the events leading up to the country's independence. Pupils today are expected "to find out that Rwanda's independence was achieved with pain and difficulties". They are also required to know that "decolonisation in Rwanda exacerbated ethnic divisions originally initiated by Belgian colonizers".[570]

In the current history curricula, the events of 1959 occupy a central place in the narrative of Rwanda's decolonisation process. Different expressions, all with negative connotations, are used to refer to the controversial occurrences that marked this turbulent period. Post-genocide curricula variously speak of these occurrences in terms of "[s]ocio-political troubles", "political violence", a "Rwandan crisis", or, more vaguely, of "[u]nusual things that happened in 1959" – a curious expression to describe this conspicuous watershed in Rwandan history.[571] They thus distance themselves from a depiction of the 1959 events as a

567 TG, 100, 104.
568 Ibid., 106.
569 The TG also speaks of a "quasi-refusal [by Belgium] to prepare Rwandans for political internal self rule [sic]". TG, 109.
570 Ibid., 103.
571 These expressions are found, respectively, in the 1996, 1998, 2010, and 2008 curricula.

triumphant social or Hutu "revolution". Discussions are included on the causes, course, and consequences of the events. Responsibility for the violence is clearly apportioned: in accordance with the official view, the source of what is now portrayed as a time of distress is traced to the divisionism that had been promoted by colonial and post-colonial political entrepreneurs. The 2008 curriculum points at colonial manipulations and "political leaders [who] divided people according to ethnic differences".[572]

The approved textbooks reflect the views expressed in the curricula. Textbooks published since the genocide distance themselves from previous official interpretations of the 1959 events as a legitimate and genuinely popular uprising that had spontaneously taken place against an oppressive Tutsi oligarchy. Their portrayal of this period now reproduces the current government's argument concerning the externally orchestrated nature of an unjustified violent revolution born of a conspiracy between the former colonisers and corrupt and power-thirsty local politicians.

The *New Junior History Book 2* attributes the violent events to "extremist politicians and their Belgian counterparts who conspired to divide the masses" and who "were bent on bringing conflicts and disunity among the population for their own selfish ends".[573] The official history teacher's guide similarly blames the 1959 troubles on the Belgian authorities and their local allies. The guide outlines a situation of shifting alliances in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict that had been engendered by the colonisers through their constant interference in the country's internal affairs. The authors suggest that "the colonial administration decided to switch sides and join the ranks of the Hutu",[574] and thereby "encouraged the Hutu to turn against the Tutsi".[575] This generalising comment, which implies the colonisers' previous alliance with "the Tutsi" as opposed to "the Hutu", appears to contradict the guide's earlier cautious suggestion of connivance between the colonial masters and a small privileged group of wealthy Tutsi. In line with the current state rhetoric, the guide highlights the role of the Belgians in mobilising the Hutu elite to write what "they" called the "Hutu Manifesto" and to protest against a supposed Tutsi monopoly on power. The authors depict this as a

572 2008 curriculum, 44.

573 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 2*, 105.

574 Ibid., 104. The 2010 curriculum refers to a "[t]ransfer of allegiance from the Tutsi to the Hutu. A myth or a reality?", 53.

575 Ibid., 146. The commercial history textbook adds that "[t]he colonialists used part of Rwandan society to execute their policies and were thus able to attribute their atrocities to that section of the population". Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 2*, 95. Similar claims can be found in social studies textbooks, according to which, after having "encouraged Hutu and Tutsi to think of themselves as different races […t]he Belgians had helped the Hutu to turn against the Tutsi". Bamusananire et al., *Pupil's Book 6*, 59.

shrewd colonial strategy that was meant to counter the local (Tutsi) authorities' demands for independence.

Parmehutu, the party of Rwanda's first president Kayibanda, features prominently in the guide as the Belgians' new local ally. The movement, which is disapprovingly described by the authors as an "ethnically formed" and "highly partisan" party, is depicted as "the darling child of the Belgian Trusteeship". Parmehutu is set against the Tutsi-dominated UNAR, which, in contrast, is portrayed as a nationalist party that "was feared by the colonial administration".[576] Besides underlining the connivance between Parmehutu and the colonisers, the TG undermines the image of this party by explicitly blaming it for the "devastating" 1959 events. The guide traces the origins of this period's troubles back to the violent incidents, or "planned revolution", which had been sparked by members of the Hutu-dominated parties Parmehutu and APROSOMA. Their actions are said to have been directed "against the Tutsi and members of UNAR", among whom were also several Hutu. According to the TG, these provocations had led to a violent reaction, or a failed "counter-revolution", by UNAR's members "against the principal leaders of Parmehutu and Aprosoma". This representation of events appears to contrast the wider and more indiscriminate violence of Parmehutu and APROSOMA, defined as "pogroms and massacres",[577] with UNAR's more targeted and restricted actions against the leaders of the rival parties.

Once again, the guide stresses the negative meddling of the former colonial power in the unfortunate events that besieged Rwanda on the eve of independence. The authors explain that it was "with the complicity of the Belgian power", and "assisted by Colonel Logiest",[578] that the "Coup de Gitarama" eventually took place, leading to the abolition of the monarchy and a rapid transfer of power to Hutu leaders. The central role of the colonial administration in the coup and in the accompanying violence is vividly expressed in *New Junior History Book 2*. Its authors speak of acts of violence "masterminded" and actively supported by the colonial rulers. They recount that "[b]ands of young Hutu were organized by Belgian paracommandos, given matches and led to villages with orders to kill the Tutsi and burn their huts";[579] as a result, according to the authors, "for the first time in [Rwanda's] history, hundreds of thousands of its people were exiled from their motherland".[580]

576 TG, 104–105.
577 Ibid., 146.
578 Ibid., 104–106.
579 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 2*, 106.
580 Ibid., 95. Similarly, one social studies textbook states that at that time "[a] Belgian colonel and his commandos led a group of Hutu to kill thousands of Tutsi". Bamusananire et al., *Pupil's Book 6*, 60.

Across the board, the coup that brought Parmehutu to power on the eve of Rwanda's independence is thus utterly condemned in current curricula and textbooks. The coup is presented as an illegitimate and deplorable act through which Rwanda's local authorities had been forcedly dismissed. It is also presented as the catalyst for unprecedented and spiralling internecine violence among "people, who had lived in peace for centuries".[581] The authors of the teacher's guide, in particular, show a firm belief that the 1959 events were a fatal watershed moment which inaugurated three decades of division and tension. They suggest that, "[s]ince that time, ethnic division had continued to ravage the country wich [sic] culminated into genocide [sic] against the Tutsi of April-July 1994".[582]

The two republics: denouncing state terrorism and the mismanagement of a pressing refugee crisis

In the current history course, the detailed examination of the critical transformations that took place in the colonial era is followed by a less extensive description and assessment of the period of the First and the Second Republics. The 2008 curriculum prescribes only 14 hours to its study in the third year of junior level, as opposed to a total of 53 hours dedicated to the study of the previous eras.[583] The course outlines the political, economic, and socio-cultural change experienced in Rwanda under the two regimes of former presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana. In doing so, it draws attention to both the achievements and the failures and challenges that marked their rule.

The course recognises a number of positive developments that took place at the infrastructural, institutional, socio-economic, and diplomatic levels in the wake of independence. Despite this acknowledgment, the topics mentioned in the curricula point to a predominantly negative assessment of this historical chapter. In Rwandan schools today, the post-colonial era, under the successive rule of Parmehutu and the MRND, is portrayed as a period characterised by "bad leadership" and "poor governance".[584] This era is associated with the rise of a single-party system and dictatorship, and with the institutionalisation of ethnic and regional discrimination. The official history teacher's guide explains that the "ethnicism" and "regionalism" that had characterised this period were manifest in a "flawed" quota system which was based on "injustice and in-

581 Ibid., 105.

582 Ibid.

583 The TG dedicates 27 of its 168 pages to this period.

584 Ibid., 146. A curiously positive remark is included in the TG. In one passage, the MRND is depicted as "a 'party State' whose objective was to unify, stimulate and intensify all efforts of all Rwandan people with a view to enhancing economic, social and cultural development in an atmosphere of national peace and unity". Ibid., 128.

competence" – a system celebrated as a guarantee for social justice and equality in pre-genocide textbooks.[585] The guide draws a direct link between such policies and the genocide. The authors argue that the "deplorable exclusion" of the Tutsi and of Hutu from the South during the Second Republic not only "constituted a serious violation of human rights"; it also "went a long way into preparing for the culmination into genocide in 1994".[586]

The post-genocide history course emphasises the instability and the widespread violence and impunity that had marred the two republics. The curricula mention the "[p]hysical elimination of internal opposition",[587] notably of UNAR and RADER leaders in the 1960s. They also cite the perpetration of "Tutsi massacres".[588] The guide accuses Kayibanda's regime of having resorted to unrestrained "State terrorism against the entire BaTutsi" in retaliation for a series of cross-border attacks, which are described as the expression of an unresolved refugee crisis.[589] The TG thus distances itself from the pre-genocide materials, in which accusations of terrorism had instead been levelled against the *Inyenzi* rebels. The guide further underscores the long-standing genocidal practices that had targeted the Tutsi community. In line with the official discourse, the TG associates the massacres committed under the First Republic with "[t]he beginning of Genocide against the Tutsi". The authors explain that the worst of such instances of state violence occurred during 1963 and 1964, when "systematic horendous [sic] massacre[s]", "genocide", and "ethnic cleansing were perpetrated against BaTutsi". According to the guide, "[m]ore than 10,000 people were massacred in cold blood".[590] The authors further describe the new wave of "ethnic cleansing" in 1973 as a divertive strategy that was meant, in vain, "to hide the divisions" existing between "[t]he Bahutu of the North" and "the Bahutu of the Central part of the country".[591]

585 The TG includes extensive tables on post-colonial discrimination in schools and in other sectors. TG, 116, 135–138.

586 TG, 134. See also 2008 curriculum, 64–65. In an evaluation question that is quite exceptional in its eliciting of students' personal opinions, the TG asks, although in rather evasive terms: "[a]ccording to you, what kind of feelings could such criteria provoke in some categories of Rwandans?", 133.

587 1996 curriculum, 52. The TG further explains that the opposition was eliminated through "intimidation, arbitrary arrests, [and] physical violence". TG, 114.

588 2010 curriculum, 56.

589 The guide explains that, "[a]fter every 'Inyenzi' attack, Tutsi inside the country would be killed. Those who would survive would seek asylum outside the country". It further highlights the impunity with which these terrorist attacks were carried out by the state. In its words, "[t]hese crimes had emanated from the top ranks of the State and so nothing was done to bring the culprits to book". TG, 116–117.

590 Ibid, 115. The 1996 curriculum speaks of the "bloody repression" perpetrated in Gikongoro and Bugesera in particular. 51.

591 TG, 117.

The predominantly negative portrayal of the post-colonial period is reiterated in the *New Junior History Book 3*. In the textbook, Kayibanda's First Republic is associated with "dictatorship" and "ethnic terror"[592] and with "stagnation and failures" and is described as "a time of crisis, ineptitude and factional government, and mounting social and economic problems".[593] Its demise, according to the authors, was marked by the rise to power of a weak, selfish, and greedy and tyrannical leadership, who presided over "two decades of murder, mayhem and economic ruin".[594] The authors draw particular attention to the ordeal of Tutsi refugees forced into exile and their subsequent desperation. They affirm that, "[i]n the diaspora, there were cries from a people locked out of his [sic] home, condemned to being told by elders what it meant to be home".[595]

The war, the genocide, and their aftermath: hailing a just struggle between good and evil

Today, the highly sensitive and controversial topics of Rwanda's recent war and genocide are addressed in the history course, although rather cursorily. The 2008 curriculum prescribes only 10 hours to the study of the period since 1990, and this in the third year of junior level.[596] The representation of this period in post-genocide educational materials broadly reflects the government narrative.

The terminology used to refer to the tragic events that mark Rwanda's recent past varies across the curricula, although this variation is less pronounced with regard to the 1990–1994 war. All documents present the RPF military campaign as a "liberation war". The only exception can be found in the 2008 curriculum, which simply refers to "the war".[597] As for the 1994 mass violence, the curricula of the late 1990s speak of "Genocide and Massacres" or simply of "the Genocide".[598] In accordance with the government's current discourse and the changed official terminology, the newest curricula speak more specifically of "the Tutsi Genocide of 1994" or "[t]he 1994 genocide against Tutsi".[599]

In dealing with the war, the school curricula address its causes, course, and

592 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 3*, 77.
593 Ibid., 86.
594 Ibid., 87.
595 Ibid., 102.
596 The TG dedicates 16 of its 168 pages to it, of which only 7 pages address the war and the genocide. The TG dedicates 4 pages to the war, 3 to the genocide, and 8 to the "achievements" of the post-genocide government. In the current curricula, one methodological note specifies that "[f]or some historical themes, for example 'genocide' it is better not to treat such a subject during national mourning period i. e. during April – July so that learners will not be traumatised". 2008 curriculum, 76, and 2010 curriculum, 62.
597 1996 (p. 54), 1998 (p. 10), 2008 (p. 70), and 2010 (p. 58) curricula.
598 1996 (p. 54) and 1998 (p. 10) curricula, respectively. The social studies curriculum similarly speaks of "the Genocide of 1994" (p. 81).
599 2008 (p. 70) and 2010 (p. 58) curricula.

consequences. Its causes are primarily traced back to Habyarimana's bad governance. The curricula point the finger at the government's mismanagement of a pressing refugee question. In an apparent bid to explain and justify the RPF invasion of 1990, the course emphasises the refugees' hardship in exile and their rejection by both their country of origin and countries of asylum. The curricula also stress a situation of ever harsher dictatorship and discrimination which was manifest in the violent state repression of all political opposition "through imprisonment, assassination, and torture".[600] According to the authors, the regrettable situation urged action "to safeguard the rights to life and freedom".[601]

In a flagrant justification of the RPF war, one methodological note in the official teacher's guide encourages general attitudes of understanding, approval, and appreciation towards a military response to injustice. The note invites teachers to "prompt students to understand the fondamental [*sic*] essence of taking up arms to fight for the respect of the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedomds [sic], the right to develop as well as the right to the mother land [*sic*]".[602] After placing the invasion in the context of intolerable injustice, the guide explicitly affirms the righteousness of the RPF's motives for starting the war, namely a commitment towards unity, democracy, and human rights. The TG explains that under the leadership of the "National Hero" Rwigema,[603] "[t]he RPF wished to re-establish national unity in Rwanda, establish true democracy and put an end to the question of refugees and dictatorship which characterised the 1st and 2nd republics".[604]

The *New Junior History Book 3* similarly legitimises the RPF's "Liberation struggle" by stressing the image of a population in despair, both within Rwanda and among the Rwandan diaspora abroad.[605] The book extols the RPF's war as "a fight for noble values and worthy ends", as "a product of inexorable historical forces", and as "an illuminating picture of man's desire for freedom, dignity and right to a home".[606] In particular, the book highlights the legality, legitimacy, and moral virtue of the RPF's fight for the refugees who were denied the right to return to their homeland. The currently incumbent RPF is described as "a legitimate political authority", which "possessed both the moral and international right to repatriate by peaceful or forceful means the millions of refugees

600 TG, 140.
601 2008 curriculum, 70.
602 TG, 139. That being said, one of the objectives reported in the 2008 curriculum in Year 3, which also deals with the two World Wars, is "[t]o show the disadvantages of the war and interest of future preventions of war". 52.
603 TG, 139.
604 Ibid., 141.
605 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 3*, 89.
606 Ibid., 105–106.

who had been denied their natural right to live in their country".[607] Its authors recognise the RPF's military solution to the refugee problem as a response of last resort to the dire circumstances imposed by an uncompromising regime. In their words, "[t]he Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) decided to take up arms as the only remaining possible alternative, as desperate situations call for desperate solutions. This was because force was the only thing the Kigali regime could understand".[608]

In their defence and exaltation of the aims and goals of the military intervention, the authors of the teaching materials appear careful not to tarnish the image of the incumbent RPF. Their brief portrayal of war conduct at the time highlights the seemingly one-sided violence by a genocidal regime eager to obstruct the peace while omitting any allusion to the widely reported civilian losses from the RPF's military campaigns. In the description of the events presented in the teacher's guide, Habyarimana's regime is attributed full responsibility both for the outbreak of the war and for its perpetuation. The TG blames the former regime for constantly violating the Arusha peace process and for ultimately bringing about its failure. According to the guide, after signing the Arusha accord, Habyarimana declared the latter to be a "mere piece of paper rubbish". The authors go on to directly implicate the then president in the violence that had been perpetrated against the Tutsi before the actual start of the genocide, arguing that, in defiance of the peace pledges made at the negotiation table, Habyarimana had "openly expressed congratulations to the Interahamwe killer militia of his MRND Party on the massacres they had just committed".[609]

In relation to the genocide, a review of the state-sanctioned educational materials developed over the last two decades reveals a significant change and expansion of the content. The curricula of the 1990s merely included a discussion on the definition and the consequences of the genocide. The latest versions instead provide a more extensive and detailed coverage of this part of the country's recent past. The history lessons dedicated to this topic today encompass the following elements:

– a definition of "genocide" as opposed, for example, to "massacres"[610] and a comparison with other instances of genocide around the world;

607 Ibid., 97.

608 Ibid., 102.

609 TG, 142–143. The 2008 curriculum mentions specifically the massacres in Bigogwe, Ngororero, and Bugesera. 71. Similar statements on Habyarimana's violation of the peace terms can be found in Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 3*, 110–111, which deplores the then president's "empty rhetoric" and "desire to fight the war to the end".

610 2008 curriculum, 71; political education curriculum, 11; and social studies curriculum, 81. The TG defines the concept of genocide as "a deliberate, systematic extermination of a human group for diverse reasons: ethnic, religious, regional, social and political". 144.

- an analysis of its causes, with a focus on divisive "genocide ideology",[611] and its continued threat in the form of negationism and revisionism;[612]
- a description of its stages, namely the "planning and execution of extermination of Tutsi and Hutu that opposed to [sic] the genocide ideology";[613]
- an overview of the roles and responsibilities of various actors in the genocide, including the state, the international community, religious confessions, the media, and the local population;[614]
- an assessment of its political, economic, social, and cultural consequences.[615]

Teaching pupils about the genocide in present-day Rwanda appears to be primarily geared towards the prevention of a recurrence of the violence. Its aim, as defined in a TLA reported in the 2008 curriculum, is to "tell [children] that it should never happen again".[616]

To this end, the representations of the history of the conflict and of the genocide as they are found in post-1994 educational materials conform on the whole to the rather simplistic discourse of the new political leadership. The official view appears particularly evident in the history teacher's guide. In a paragraph on the distant causes of the genocide, the guide, whose narration of the genocide is limited to only three pages, essentially reiterates some of the main arguments already outlined in its preceding chapters. The recounted narrative traces the roots of the Tutsi genocide back to the Belgian policy of "divide and rule" and to the former regimes who had further "promoted divisionism created by colonialists [*sic*]". In accordance with the focus presented in the curriculum, previous regimes are denounced, more specifically, for having orchestrated the "indoctrination of part of the population with extremist, genocidal ideology", notably through media which "preached ethnic hatred".[617] The TG summarises its view on the root causes of Rwanda's troubled history with these words:

> Rwanda has had a troubled past caused by internal divisions. It all began when the colonial administration divided the society along ethnic lines in order to weaken it and

611 2008 curriculum, 71–72.
612 The 2010 curriculum advises the teacher to "guide[s] learners to identify the manifestations of negationism of genocide ideology in their community". 58–59.
613 The TG presents a brief chronology of the genocide. 145–146.
614 2008 curriculum, 72, and TG, 144.
615 Films and pictures of genocide memorials are among the teaching aids recommended for this lesson. TG 139. In year 2 at junior secondary level, the political education course also addresses the genocide, including its "Definition, Preparation (roles of the media), Execution, Stopping genocide and the liberation of Rwandan people, and Consequences". 10–11.
616 2008 curriculum, 72.
617 TG, 146.

> thereby make its dominance possible. The post-colonial Kayibanda and Habyarimana administrations intensified this policy of divide and rule, and devised policies to marginalize and disenfranchise large sections of the community […] it can be firmly said that the distant causes of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi were: ethnic and regionalism policy, bad governance coupled with indoctrination of the population and the bad role played by an irresponsible press in the hands of power brokers.[618]

Habyarimana's assassination is recognised as a key event which defined the immediate circumstances of the violence.[619] This incident, according to the guide, "marked the beginning of the long planned genocide in which over one million souls perished".[620] Responsibility for this still controversial assassination is assigned to Hutu extremists, notably the President's own entourage.[621] To support this argument, the authors refer to a contested official investigation into the unresolved murder. "This information", the guide explains, "was unearthed by the Mutsinzo led [*sic*] commission of inquiry".[622] Unsurprisingly, no mention is made of the controversies surrounding this critical event and the related inquiries.

The history course clearly assigns and delineates roles of responsibility, victimhood, and heroism during the mass violence. Blame is apportioned to "the media and genocide planners", who incited the violence, and to "soldiers of the presidential guards and Interahamwe militias", who carried out the "systematic" killings. Only very few culprits are named in the guide. Accusations are levelled at Habyarimana's MRND government for having planned and executed the massacres.[623] Its authors specifically name such high-level officials as former Prime Minister Jean Kambanda and interim President Théodore Sindikubwabo for having incited hatred and having called for a "final solution" – a euphemistic expression borrowed from the Nazi vocabulary used during World War 2 to refer to the plan to exterminate Europe's Jews.[624] The naming of these two prominent political figures as key culprits by the TG is not unfounded: Kambanda was tried and found guilty by the ICTR; Sindikubwabo is thought to have died in exile without any ICTR indictment having been filed against him, although his name appears in numerous arraignments.

With regard to the issue of victimhood, as mentioned earlier, the newest educational materials emphasise a condition of Tutsi victimhood by speaking

618 Ibid., 151. The social studies curriculum mentions such causes as bad leadership and the impact of colonisation, 81.
619 Ibid., 149.
620 Ibid., 145.
621 According to the guide, Habyarimana's henchmen were "led by Colonel Bagosora". Ibid., 142.
622 Ibid.
623 Ibid., 149.
624 Ibid., 144–145.

first of all of "Tutsi genocide". They nonetheless recognise both the Tutsi population and "moderate Hutu" who opposed the "genocide ideology" as the victims of state repression.[625] While acknowledging a case of Hutu victimhood, the TG clearly distinguishes what it refers to as "genocide against the Tutsi" and "the *killing* of *some* Hutu [emphasis added] who did not approve the government's political extremism"[626] – later in the text specified as "Hutu Political's [*sic*] figures in opposition [*sic*]".[627] By confining the group of Hutu up-standers and victims to "moderate" public figures, this statement does little justice to the many, and largely forgotten, ordinary Hutu who lost or risked their lives while resisting orders to kill their neighbours.

The official *Guide to Civic Education* for primary schools stands out in this respect, in that it briefly explains the risks involved in trying to rescue Tutsi during the genocide and the difficult choices Hutu were confronted with in cases in which their acts of resistance were discovered. In its words, "[a] Hutu deemed a traitor – for having hidden one or several Tutsi – was forced by the killers to kill them himself. When he did not do so, he was killed along with the members of his family".[628] This comment gives a sense of the complexity of the dynamics characterising the events of 1994, thus challenging Manichean understandings of the violence; it however remains at a rather abstract level, failing to both convey the widespread nature of Hutu acts of resistance and give a human face to the rescuers, as well as to the victims and the perpetrators – a failure that is further reflected in the textbooks' general lack of references to personal stories and personal testimonies when addressing this period of violence.

Although the history course circumscribes the direct victims of the 1994 massacres to a restricted group within society, the material conveys a sense of collective victimhood when describing the consequences of the genocide. In the history teacher's guide, the Rwandan nation as a whole is depicted as the victim of this "human disaster" that had been caused by the *génocidaires*. The authors point out that "[a]lmost the entire population was either internally displaced or had been forced to flee to neighbouring countries by the perpetrators of the genocide".[629] No reference is made to the many Hutu who voluntarily fled Rwanda in 1994 out of fear of the advancing – and ultimately victorious – RPF.

625 The 2008 curriculum speaks of "extermination of Tutsi and Hutu opposition to the Genocide ideology", 71–72. References to the killing of "moderate Hutu" can be found in RoR, *Guide d'Education Civique*, 36; and Bamusanire et al., *Primary Social Studies 6: Pupil's Book*, 62.

626 TG, 142.

627 Ibid., 145.

628 RoR, *Guide d'Education Civique*, 36.

629 TG, 149. The TG further mentions such consequences of the genocide as: numerous cases of mutilations, HIV/AIDS, traumatism; considerable numbers of widows, orphans, and pri-

Placed within the context of a struggle between good and evil, the role played by the RPF is ascribed unambiguously heroic attributes. With a celebratory undertone, the official teacher's guide recounts that the RPF soldiers "stopped the genocide everywhere they scored victory over the genocidal forces".[630]

The heroic role of the RPF in fighting against injustice and mass murder is set against the passive, irresponsible, and even complicit role of the international community in the violence. Further, the authors of the guide go beyond the statement of a commercial textbook for primary level, according to which "[a]t the height of the 1994 genocide, the UN withdrew its forces and Rwandans were left to kill each other" – "hacked to death by their own neighbours" and "raped and tortured".[631] They suggest that some humanitarian NGOs not only "were not really interested in the moral and political rehabilitation work"; according to the guide, they had in fact also "mingled themselves into the unfortunate events of the time".[632]

Following a description of Rwanda's recent troubled history, the materials proceed to outline and praise the efforts and achievements made by the post-genocide government in rehabilitating a destroyed country and a "scarred nation".[633] They mention the promotion of good governance, democracy, national security, unity, reconciliation and justice, economic and social development, gender equality, and international understanding and cooperation. The history teacher's guide highlights the overall success of the government's policies by suggesting that the Rwandan people today "live together in greater harmony and mutual respect than ever before".[634] The *New Junior History Book 3* also conveys an image of the miraculous resurrection of "a country left in pieces" which was finally lifted "out of its ruins".[635] It describes how, following the RPF's victory and take-over, Rwanda, "[a] nation that had seemed on the verge of consuming itself in spasms of violence was now showing signs of returning to normalcy as peace, tranquillity, security, and the economy started to flourish. General harmony among the Rwandans reigned", the authors affirm, "and the country was now bright with hope".[636] The authors underscore the astounding progress made

soners; extensive infrastructural and environmental destruction and economic decline; and a tarnished national image.

630 Ibid., 146.

631 Bamusananire et al., *Pupil's Book 6*, 62.

632 TG, 148.

633 In a methodological note, the TG requires students "to list down all the achievements of the Government of National Unity". 139; 149.

634 The TG explains that, based on the understanding that "there can be no reconciliation without justice", efforts by the government in this field had been "among its highest priorities". 151.

635 Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 3*, 128.

636 Ibid., 125.

in Rwanda since the early recovery from war and mass violence. They declare that today, "with the people's good will behind it"[637] and "[u]nder the dynamic leadership of the government of national unity, the entire world is witnessing the unfolding of a very strong democratization process in Rwanda. […] Today", they continue, "under the dynamic leadership of the RPF, Rwanda has miraculously recovered from the trauma of genocide and has gained high economic performance".[638]

With regard to the issue of national security, the history teacher's guide includes a few observations concerning the much criticised military campaigns that were conducted by the RPF in the immediate aftermath of the genocide. The guide refers to the security threat posed by "[r]emnants of the murderous Interahamwe and ex-FAR" who had been destabilising and terrorising the country by "looting property and harassing, raping and killing survivors of the genocide". The authors highlight the particularly serious menace posed by militant *génocidaires* who were harboured in refugee camps in eastern Congo. The seriousness of this threat is emphasised by pointing out that cross-border attacks into Rwanda used to occur "on a daily basis". In line with a tendency to justify the government's actions, the TG appears to legitimise and commend Rwanda's widely condemned military intervention in neighbouring Congo. In the authors' words, "[w]hen the refugee settlements were dismantled the security situation improved slightly. However, it was only when the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA), now RDF [Rwanda Defence Forces] began operations to seek and destroy Interahamwe and ex-FAR bases in the DRC in 1998 that peace and security were fully restored". The guide omits all reference to human rights violations and crimes that were reportedly committed by RPA/RDF soldiers during these operations. On the contrary, its authors comment that "[t]he RDF maintained a high standard of discipline".[639]

In the three preceding chapters, this study has illustrated the evolution of official discourse on history and identity in Rwanda over the course of the last few decades. It has also demonstrated the impact of the long-standing politicisation of history and identity on the country's education system, and by extension, on its youth. Conforming to past practices, it appears that schools today are still purposely employed by the elites in power to shape the collective consciousness of the country's younger generation by teaching a conveniently se-

637 Ibid., 128.
638 Ibid., 134.
639 Ibid., 150. Similar statements can be found in commercial textbooks. One social studies textbook, for instance, refers to the new government "defend[ing] Rwanda against militiamen" based in neighbouring DR Congo. Bamusananire et al., *Pupil's Book 6*, 64. See also Bamusananire and Ntege, *Book 3*, 131.

lective, simplistic, and Manichean national history aimed to support a political agenda.

In sum, the didactic material developed for use in Rwandan classrooms promotes nostalgia of a pre-colonial golden age, supposedly characterised by national unity, solidarity, and patriotism under the leadership of great kings and a courageous army. It thereby minimises references to social differences and conflict in ancient Rwanda, and only vaguely addresses the contentious Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi identities and the nature of their relations. It further presents an overwhelmingly negative assessment of colonial and post-colonial rule, downplaying their positive achievements and emphasising their role in the destruction of national unity and "the genocide against the Tutsi" by manipulating and indoctrinating the population with "divisionism" and "genocide ideology". The material's narrative culminates in a legitimation of the incumbent leadership by defending and exalting the righteousness, legitimacy, and virtue of RPF's military actions against a dictatorial and genocidal regime and its subsequent efforts and achievements in rehabilitating a destroyed country. In doing so, it expediently omits all allusion to aspects that would tarnish its image, notably the suffering, abuses, and crimes related to its various military campaigns and attributed to its governance by numerous critics.

The next chapter in this study seeks to assess the impact of such teachings on Rwanda's younger generations by analysing pupils' representations of Rwanda's past and present and their reception and appropriation of, or their resistance to, the views and visions promoted by the current government. It reports some of the main findings of a survey that was conducted among approximately one thousand secondary school pupils and recent school leavers in Rwanda between 2008 and 2011, the results of which were supplemented with data from interviews held with young people in April 2014.

6. School voices: Young people's narratives of Rwanda's past and present

This chapter investigates patterns of historical representation and interpretation among young people in post-genocide Rwanda. It analyses hundreds of narratives that were recorded in the field in order "to examine what is taken to be the truth […], and why".[640]

Walter S. Wurzburger once observed that "history teaches only the lessons that people choose to learn".[641] One of the core questions that this chapter seeks to answer is "what are the lessons that young people in contemporary Rwanda have drawn from history?" In the exploration of this question, the chapter analyses "school voices" with the intention of investigating the level of acceptance or rejection of dominant official narratives as they are generally reproduced in school history lessons. As several authors have pointed out, despite the power of the textbook, what pupils actually come to learn and believe might differ from what is prescribed by the state, and may instead owe more to unofficial and conflicting stories.[642] The analysis further explores the extent to which historical understandings (and misunderstandings) may have shaped present identities and attitudes, and aspirations for the future among the country's younger generations. It thereby investigates beliefs, norms, values, and worldviews implicitly or explicitly expressed by young Rwandans through historical narratives.

The chapter takes the school as the primary locus of investigation. The school, understood here as a key agent of socialisation, is not only one of the main sources of what is considered to be legitimate knowledge in contemporary

640 Malkki, *Purity*, 104.

641 W.S. Wurzburger, "The Holocaust Meaning or Impact", in: *Shoa* 2(1) (1980), 15.

642 M. Apple, "Culture and Commerce of the Textbook", in: M. Apple and L. Christian-Smith (eds.), *The Politics*, 22–40; Foster and Crawford, *What Shall We Tell the Children?*; D. Porat, "'It's Not Written Here, But This Is What Happened': Students' Cultural Comprehension of Textbook Narratives on the Israeli-Arab Conflict", in: *American Educational Research Journal* 41 (2004), 963–996; and J.V. Wertsch and M. Rozin, "The Russian Revolution: Official and Unofficial Accounts", in: J. Voss and M. Carretero (eds.), *International Review of History Education, Vol. 2: Learning and Reasoning in History* (1998), 39–60.

Rwanda; it is also a meeting place for young people from a variety of backgrounds. The school represents a microcosm which reflects the complex social reality that characterises post-genocide Rwanda. A single classroom would contain Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. It would bring together children of genocide survivors, of genocide and war-related victims, of convicted or suspected genocide perpetrators, and of returnees and former refugees who lived in disparate places in the region and beyond. The plurality of life experiences and of personal and familial historical trajectories characterising Rwanda's school population presupposes the parallel existence of a multitude of convergent and divergent memories and histories, and of related representations of the past and of the present. It presumes the circulation of a myriad of stories brought to the classroom by both pupils and teachers, which must coexist with the official history prescribed by the authorities. This study thus starts with the assumption that "[c]hildren do not come to the classroom as blank slates".[643] It is also based on an understanding of young people as agents acting in a specific social, political and cultural context, which inevitably influences individuals' narratives and sets the boundaries of what is permissible.

This chapter aspires to provoke reflection on a number of questions that are crucial to understanding Rwanda's post-genocide society and politics through the views shared by the educated youth. The study is guided by such questions as: to what extent are young people's narratives reflective of the heterogeneity and plurality characterising Rwanda's contemporary society? To what extent are they thereby revealing of an ethnic divide, or of any other divide in society? And, if it is true that a multitude of stories circulate in society, how do young people negotiate their way through the multiple and possibly conflicting narratives originating from the school, the home, the community? More specifically, how do they deal with the supposed schism between public and private "truths" in present-day Rwanda, between the "speakable" and the "unspeakable"? Do their narratives reveal "a tension between national rhetoric and local, lived experience" observed by some authors?[644] This study thereby complements previous exercises in collecting (historical) narratives among young Rwandans. Several of them, such as the study by Longman and Rutagengwa of 2004, posited the existence of Hutu or Tutsi meta-narratives which seemed to be revealing of a persistent ethnic divide in post-genocide Rwanda. More recent research by Lindsay McLean Hilker and King, among others, discovered a greater diversity of memories and narratives among young people and a predominance of more

643 Bush and Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education*, 3.
644 Pells, "Building a Rwanda 'Fit for Children'", 79.

mixed, contradictory, and nuanced accounts of the past as opposed to a significant "'ethnic' patterning to young people's narratives".[645]

Before analysing young people's narratives, this chapter clarifies the methodology of the field research process used to record those narratives. This first section outlines how the pool of respondents was selected and describes the research instrument that was developed for the purpose of this study. It subsequently summarises several prominent logistical and ethical issues that marked research in the field.

The field research process

The field research process entailed three main stages, namely the preparation, implementation, and analysis of the survey.[646] A pilot survey was conducted in August and September 2008. The exercise was repeated with some adjustments on two further occasions: in December 2009, and in May and June 2011. The survey was complemented by the observation of several history lessons. Additionally, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations were held with a number of local stakeholders during fieldwork in order to gather data which could both inform the organisation of the survey and substantiate the findings and conclusions of the research. Among those consulted during the various fieldtrips, the latest of which was conducted in April 2014, were prominent historians and education officials, including curriculum planners, school inspectors, school headmasters, and history teachers as well as pupils.

The sample

The survey primarily targeted secondary school pupils across Rwanda. It further included an additional group of secondary school graduates from various areas of Rwanda who, at the time of the research, were participating in a three-week *ingando* programme at the Nkumba Peace and Leadership Centre in Ruhengeri, in the Northern Province.

The choice for this particular educational level was determined by the assumption that, compared to younger pupils, secondary school pupils were likely to have a better understanding of the topics learned in and out of school. They were also likely to possess a stronger ability to form and clearly articulate their

645 McLean Hilker, "Young Rwandans' Narratives", 317.

646 In a follow-up project, focus group discussions will be carried out in order to explore in more depth key issues that had emerged from the survey.

personal views and to be willing and able to engage in critical reflection, especially in relation to sensitive and controversial issues. This educational level spans important formative years, throughout which young people gradually develop their understanding of "the self", "the other", and of society in general. Furthermore, by targeting this group, which represents only a small percentage of the overall population in Rwanda, the survey had a chance to gather the perceptions of the group from which tomorrow's leaders will ultimately be drawn.[647]

The research employed heterogeneity sampling in order to ensure the participation of a diverse population within the predefined target group. The aim was not to make generalisations based on a representative sample, but to capture a broad spectrum of views among young, educated people. A purposive sample was chosen to involve a cross-section of young people from a mixture of geographical locations and residential areas, types of school, ages and educational levels, classes and specialisations, socio-economic backgrounds, and from a range of different identity-groups, e. g. "ethnic" and religious.

Respondents were drawn from a total of nine schools from across the country, in addition to the *ingando* centre.[648] The educational institutions selected were drawn from various provinces and localities and were situated in the interior and in border towns, in urban and semi-urban areas, in more prosperous and poorer neighbourhoods as well as in regions with different local dynamics and exposure to violence and insecurity. Special care was also taken to sample schools in localities of particular historical significance.

Schools were drawn from each of the country's five provinces, namely Kigali City, and the Southern (S), Northern (N), Eastern (E), and Western (W) Provinces. In each province, one major town was sampled, with the exception of the Western Province, where two localities were chosen due to their particularly strategic location and historical significance. The selected localities comprise Kigali City, Butare (S), Gisenyi and Cyangugu (W), Byumba (N), and Rwamagana (E).[649] There were distinct reasons for sampling each location.

647 During field research, conducted between 2008 and 2011, gross enrolment rates at secondary school level oscillated between approximately 20 % and 35 %. RoR – MINEDUC, *Rwanda Education Statistics*. In 2008, a document drafted by the Ministry of Education reported that "[t]wo-thirds of the population completes some primary education, but only 3.5 % and 0.4 % complete secondary or higher education respectively". RoR – MINEDUC, *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy in Rwanda*, Kigali 2008, 2.

648 The sample included schools involved in the Schools of Debate programme run by IRDP, with which I was affiliated during field research in 2008. This programme entailed the monthly organisation of youth debate forums in schools, covering issues of national interest, especially related to democracy and the rule of law. IRDP, *Schools of Debate, Annual Report 2007*, Kigali 2008.

649 Recent administrative reforms resulted in a change of the names of many localities in

Kigali was chosen because of its status as the country's political and economic capital and largest town. Three schools were selected in Nyarugenge District, in the city's heart. The second town, Butare, was chosen on account of being Rwanda's former colonial capital and current cultural and intellectual centre. The town houses the National University, the National Museum as well as Rwanda's oldest and most renowned school: the former Astrida College. Furthermore, located in "the heart of the old kingdom",[650] Butare is close to the country's most important historical sites, notably the royal palace in Rwanda's traditional capital Nyanza. Both Kigali and Butare are also significant because their surrounding areas were, prior to the genocide, historically home to Rwanda's largest Tutsi population. The "ethnic" heterogeneity of the two towns is mirrored by the situation in the northern regions, such as Gisenyi and Byumba, where the population was almost exclusively Hutu prior to the genocide.[651] Gisenyi has an especially significant place in Rwanda's history. In contrast to the southern area of Butare, in particular, which is known for its long history of peaceful Hutu-Tutsi co-existence and for its "tolerance and moderation",[652] the Gisenyi area is notorious for having been the cradle of Hutu extremism and the bastion of the radical Hutu regime during the war and the genocide.[653]

The various localities from which sample respondents were gathered for the survey were also chosen on account of their diverse experience with the recent violence. While the entire country was exposed to massive death and displacement, each location felt the impact of that period of violence differently.[654] Among the regions selected were areas that had been particularly affected by the 1990–1993 civil war, such as the northern and eastern areas of Byumba and Rwamagana.[655] The selection likewise included regions that had been among the

Rwanda. Butare, Gisenyi, Cyangugu, Byumba, and Ruhengeri were respectively renamed Huye, Rubavu, Rusizi, Gicumbi, and Musanze.

650 Des Forges, *Leave None*, 496.

651 According to the last ethnic census in 1991, out of a total population of 7.148.000, the *préfectures* with the lowest percentage of Tutsi (0,5–3 %) were those of Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Byumba; those with the highest were Butare and Kigali town (17–17,9 %). F. Imbs, F. Bart, and A. Bart, "Le Rwanda: Les Données Socio-Géographiques", in : *Hérodote* 72–73 (1994), 246–269.

652 Des Forges, *Leave None*, 277, 337. The Butare area had long been a safe-haven for Tutsi seeking refuge from persecution during the genocide. The area was governed by the country's only Tutsi prefect at that time.

653 The north-western area was also historically the last one to fall under the control of the central kingdom in the early 20th century.

654 P. Justino and P. Verwimp, *Poverty Dynamics, Violent Conflict and Convergence in Rwanda.* MICROCON Research Working Paper 4, Brighton 2008, 11–13, www.microconflict.eu/publications/RWP4_PJ_PV.pdf [last accessed on 07/05/2014].

655 Byumba, especially, was severely affected by the civil war. Being the first area to be invaded by the Uganda-based RPF during the 1990–1993 civil war, Byumba was reportedly the scene

hardest-hit during the 1994 genocide, such as the southern and western areas of Butare and Cyangugu.[656] Finally, some were regions that had been among the most severely affected by cross-border refugee movements and insurgency in the post-1994 period, such as the western border towns of Gisenyi and Cyangugu, which are contiguous with Goma and Bukavu, respective provincial capitals of North and South Kivu in the DR Congo.

With an eye to respecting diversity, the survey was conducted in institutions comprising all three types of schools currently in existence in Rwanda, which follow the national curriculum and guidelines prescribed by the state.[657] The sample included government schools managed by the state, government schools managed by religious denominations (e. g. Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic), and private schools. Among them were schools of disparate reputation and performance. Special care was taken to include some of Rwanda's most prestigious educational institutions, renowned for offering the best academic preparation in the country and for hosting the best performing pupils.[658] The sample further included boarding schools, which host pupils from around the country, and day schools, generally attended by youngsters living in the surrounding area.

In each school, a pre-determined number of volunteers were chosen from each of the six grades that comprise the secondary school system in present-day Rwanda. The number of respondents was based on a non-proportional quota which aspired to be as inclusive and balanced as possible as far as pupils' age, gender, and academic interests were concerned. The selected sample in each school aimed to include ten respondents from every grade at junior level, and five respondents from each type of specialisation within the more diverse senior level, with the goal of a 1:1 gender ratio. At senior level, pupils were drawn from a variety of specialisations, namely sciences, humanities, pedagogy, as well as technical and professional branches.

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of massive displacement and alleged massacres of the (overwhelmingly) Hutu population at the hand of the advancing rebel army.

656 According to government statistics, the former *préfecture* of Butare had the highest number of recorded genocide victims. RoR – Ministry for Local Government, Department for Information and Social Affairs, *The Counting*. Also, according to a 2007 NURC report, compared to other areas, the Southern Province, where Butare is located, experienced "lower levels of interpersonal trust and a perceived lower ability to work together among citizens". F. Ndangiza, *Social Cohesion in Rwanda: An Opinion Survey*, Kigali: NURC 2007, 4. Cyangugu, together with Gikongoro and Kibuye, was the last area to be "liberated" by the RPF. Until May 1994, the French-led *Operation Turquoise* had prevented the RPF from entering the region.

657 International schools were excluded from the sample as they have their own curricula.

658 Every year, the Ministry of Education drafts a national school ranking based on students' performance in national exams. Among the selected schools were the *Groupe Scolaire de Butare* (formerly known as Astrida College), Rwanda's most well-respected school.

The research instrument

The survey relied on an appositely designed standardised questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of five sections comprising a mixture of twenty-five open- and closed-ended questions. In the introductory section, pupils were asked to provide biographical information, including their gender, the year and place of their birth, the place where they grew up, their experience with displacement and return, and their parents' professions. "Ethnic" affiliation was purposely not requested. Although it might have been compelling from a researcher's perspective to determine degrees of similarities and differences of views based on pupils' "ethnic" affiliation, such questions could not be explicitly addressed due to the politically and socially sensitive context in which the research was conducted. The second part, the results of which are at the core of this chapter, consisted in an essay-question inviting pupils to summarise the history of their country "from the origins until today". The subsequent three sections of the survey investigated issues that go beyond the purpose of this study and which will be explored in separate publications. The third and fourth parts requested pupils to reflect on their interest in, and knowledge of, the subject of history, to indicate the main sources of their historical knowledge as well as to assess the current state of history education in Rwanda and to advance suggestions on how to improve the teaching of national history on the basis of their personal experiences. The fifth, and last, section expanded the scope of the second part of the survey by inviting pupils to summarise and reflect on the history of the wider region.[659]

The decision to conduct the survey using a written questionnaire, as opposed to relying primarily on interviews or focus groups, was determined by the wish to include a relatively large number of respondents in the limited time available and with the exiguous resources at our disposal. The intention behind this choice was also to allow pupils more freedom and privacy to reflect on the proposed issues and to express their thoughts and opinions without interference or objection. The questionnaire deliberately favoured open-ended questions in order to increase the pupils' leeway to express their thoughts. It thereby sought to avoid asking invasive questions or imposing categories or multiple-choice answers that would be revealing of the preoccupations of the researcher and that could risk closing down potential answers. The very broad and open nature of the essay-question in particular, which focused on the overall evolution of

659 One product of this part of the survey is the "Report Brief. Assessing History Education in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Young People's Experiences, Views and Suggestions" (Kigali, unpublished) written in July 2014 in preparation of a project on history education in Africa conducted by the author of this study in cooperation with UNESCO with the aim of supporting history curriculum revision processes on the continent.

Rwanda's national history rather than solely addressing the country's recent violence, permitted the exploration of pupils' views on what *they* regarded as being most significant. In so doing, the research aimed to build directly on the respondents' ideas and to reflect *their* understandings as opposed to those of the researcher.

The survey instrument was designed in the language of instruction. A bilingual questionnaire was prepared in English and French, with the additional option of responding in Kinyarwanda. The preferred use of international rather than local languages was primarily intended to avoid relying on translators. This would have resulted in a costlier and lengthier process, and would have added a secondary layer of interference. Based on local advice and on lessons learned during the process of implementation and analysis, the questionnaire was refined several times in order to improve its relevance and clarity.

The logistics of the survey

Logistically, the survey was organised with the support of local assistants. In the absence of the author, they would act as her substitutes and representatives in the field. Their assistance proved crucial during the preparatory and implementation phases of the survey. The assistants provided critical information and advice which helped compile a preliminary selection of schools to be contacted. They also provided invaluable help in approaching the schools and in distributing and collecting the questionnaires.[660]

The first visit to the schools entailed making contact with the school authorities and explaining the purpose and scope of the study and the content of the questionnaire. All contact persons eventually confirmed their interest in taking part in the project, although reservations were voiced in several schools, predominantly in relation to a fear of overloading pupils with additional work. An official letter of approval from the Ministry of Education was possibly instrumental in securing the cooperation of school headmasters.[661]

The logistics and timetable of the distribution and collection of the questionnaires were subsequently determined in consultation with the prefects and

660 In order to facilitate the assistants' work in the field, written guidelines and explanations were provided on how to proceed. Regular contact was also maintained with the assistants throughout the process in order to coordinate and monitor their activities. The assistants were requested to regularly report back to the researcher as they travelled to the various schools.

661 In Rwanda, permission from the relevant authorities is required to conduct research in the field. For the *ingando* programme, authorisation was instead sought from NURC's Secretary-General.

the teachers. A degree of flexibility and attentiveness to their preferences and suggestions was thereby maintained. The questionnaires were distributed in selected classes either on the initial day of contact with the school or a couple of days later, with participants randomly selected among volunteers while ensuring a gender balance. According to the preferences expressed by the respective school authorities, the questionnaires were filled out at school, either during school hours or before or after class, or, alternatively, outside school in the afternoon or at the weekend. Those forms completed in school were filled out under the supervision of the author, an assistant, a teacher or a prefect. In the schools in which the process occurred in the presence of the author and/or a research assistant, the questionnaires were collected directly at the end of the exercise. Conversely, in the schools in which the author or her assistants had been obliged to leave the papers to be filled out in their absence, multiple visits were often necessary in order to gather as many forms as possible.

The analysis of the survey results

The data collection phase was followed by a time-consuming stage of data digitalisation and analysis.[662] The data, which for the most part consisted of pupils' statements and arguments, was the object of a qualitative content and narrative analysis. The aim was to gain an overall appreciation of the perceptions, understandings, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes of young Rwandans. The collected data was not subjected to a quantitative content analysis; although undoubtedly interesting, exposing statistical differences among the responses provided by various groups was not a primary aim of this study.

The analysis of the pupils' historical narratives was guided by an appositely developed analytical framework, similar to the framework used in the previous chapters to examine discourses that have been circulating in Rwanda since the colonial period and until the present day. A number of general items were identified as being especially useful when investigating how respondents framed and understood the nation and its historical trajectory. The analysis examined the expository, explanatory, and argumentative content of the narratives and the linguistic and discourse strategies adopted by the pupils in expressing statements of fact, points of view, interpretations, assessments, and personal value judgements. Special consideration was given to exploring the pupils' recognition

662 The database that was used for this purpose was Microsoft Access 2007. Through this programme, one master table was created to store and organise the data that had been collected in the country. After inserting the responses from each student into a numbered table, sets of queries were produced from the master table in order to analyse the data.

of historical significance, trends and patterns, continuity and change, causes and effects, agency and structure, and links between past and present. The research examined the lessons they drew from history and the moral underpinning and implications of such lessons, i. e. what has been and what should be. In addition a second level of analysis was applied to examine the pupils' conceptualisation of history, and, in particular, their level of openness to alternative narratives.

Guided by such general questions, the analysis investigated pupils' specific narratives to discover basic plots and patterns of thinking as well as their relation to dominant and alternative storylines. The examination of young people's answers sought first of all to identify main narrative structures and the most frequently recurring topics, i. e. what pupils chose to tell and to emphasize. The copious amount of data was subsequently organised around two main thematic clusters, each composed of various topics and sub-topics. The most relevant analytical categories were not pre-defined, but gradually identified through an empirical and practical approach which relied on inductive analysis. The first main thematic cluster concerns the representation of identity and diversity in the context of the nation. Its main sub-topics regard the categorisation and characterisation of the country's inhabitants. The second and more substantial thematic cluster concerns the representation of the evolution of Rwanda's national history and of internal social and political relations, including the events, processes and actors related to the pre-colonial and colonial eras, decolonisation and the events of 1959, the time of the two republics, and the war, the genocide, and their aftermath. This cluster covers the following topics and sub-topics:

- social life and relations in ancient times;
- change in the colonial era, and its immediate and long-term effects;
- processes and actors marking decolonisation and the transition to independence;
- key political developments in the post-colonial period, with a focus on the recent war and mass violence and on pupils' analysis of their nature, origins and causes, circumstances and dynamics, actors involved and their role, and general consequences;
- present achievements and challenges and their relation to the past;
- the way forward, i. e. young people's views and attitudes towards the future, including their concerns and priorities, and their prospects and expectations.

Limitations of the survey

Several limitations affected the survey and its results. The analysis found that the quality of the contributions varied significantly among the individual respondents. Many among them clearly made an effort to fill out the questionnaire

to the best of their abilities and thereby provided insights of tremendous value to the research. Some contributions instead proved remarkably poor, especially in the lower grades. A number of respondents limited themselves to presenting lists of topics or a chronology.[663] Others reproduced whole chunks of chapters they had dealt with in history class. Their responses sometimes patently resembled each other. Where the questionnaires had been left at the school to be filled out, the answers were probably either copied from the pupils' notebooks or directly dictated by the teacher. These answers unfortunately failed to convey the respondents' personal understandings and views. They were nonetheless valuable for two main reasons. Firstly, they provided important information on the actual content taught by history teachers in the classroom. Secondly, they demonstrated a generalised adoption of a traditional teacher-centred pedagogy and of a presentation of events as *faits accomplis*. While it is possible that the genuineness of the views conveyed by the pupils might thus have been compromised by the influence exercised by the teacher, one has to consider the likelihood that young people's openness and honesty in sharing their insights may have been further hampered by the constraining cultural and political setting in which the survey was conducted. The prefect of a government school in Kigali hinted at such obstacles when discussing the issue of anonymity of the proposed questionnaire. The prefect suggested that, regardless of a principle of anonymity, doubts should be raised about the genuineness of pupils' responses since, in her words, "people here will say what they think you want to hear because telling what one really thinks is not in Rwandan culture".[664] A recent study underlines the restrictions to research in present-day Rwanda, observing that the cautious attitudes often associated with the local culture were cemented after "the 1994 genocide, in which trust (within families, between families, within communities and toward those in positions of authority) was thoroughly undermined". According to the author, "[t]his legacy of mistrust has implications for the detail, openness and reliability of interviews, especially on sensitive topics". He pointed to the "respondents' concerns about the possible risks associated with expressions of opinion, let alone critical opinion".[665]

The low quality of some contributions is also likely to have stemmed from the nature of the survey instrument. First of all, its formulation in an international language, while advantageous on one hand as outlined earlier, had the negative effect of resulting in poorly written answers by young people whose language skills proved rather weak. Pupils often showed limited language proficiency as a

663 Such lists were often introduced by sentences such as "I know…" or "I have studied…".
664 Interview, Kigali, 26 August, 2008.
665 Minerva Research and Communications, "Learning from the Past, Building for the Future." Follow-up Evaluation of Aegis Rwanda, Kigali Genocide Memorial Education Program, 2012, 16.

result of the abrupt switch at primary school level from a local to an international language of instruction. This was manifest in significant deficiencies in expression and in considerable errors in syntax, grammar, and spelling.[666] Due to their limited language skills, the younger respondents in particular, as well as pupils in schools that scored poorly in national exams, seemed to have difficulties in understanding some of the questions and in formulating their answers. Occasionally, answers had to be discarded altogether from the analysis due to their irrelevant, incoherent, and sometimes fully illegible content.[667] A second possible reason for the pupils' poor contributions relates to the considerable length of the questionnaire and to the level of concentration and critical thinking it required. Several respondents only partly filled out the questionnaires. Their answers were sometimes limited to the first couple of pages or to the closed-ended and shorter questions. Another factor that might have affected the quality of the responses is the timing of the survey. Due to logistical problems, fieldwork in Rwanda was, for the most part, only possible during busy times of preparation for tests and exams, with which pupils and teachers were understandably preoccupied.

Ethical issues

This study's methodological section must contain reference to important issues related to the ethics of conducting research in fragile environments. The survey was carried out with full awareness of the highly sensitive and delicate context in which it took place. Due regard was given to the reality that the society from which the respondents were drawn had been severely affected by recent conflict and mass violence, by the acute experience of loss and grief, and, to a large extent, by continuing suffering and severe trauma as well as by fear, mistrust, and resentment. Present-day Rwandan society comprises survivors, perpetrators, widows and widowers, formerly displaced people and returned refugees, prisoners, ex-prisoners, and ex-combatants as well as orphans and vulnerable children.

Great sensitivity is imperative when doing research in such settings, especially when children and young people are directly involved. In order to mini-

666 The option of responding in Kinyarwanda, a language many pupils might have been more comfortable with, was rarely made use of. Possibly, the pupils may have felt compelled by the school or by my being a foreigner to respond in an international language (and their language of instruction) as a sign of openness or a proof of language skills.

667 During class observations, Kinyarwanda was found to be used often by the teachers when addressing the class or giving explanations. In 2011, teachers themselves seemed to be struggling to communicate in English.

mize the risk of causing harm, the survey was designed to meet the highest applicable ethical standards.[668] Special care was taken not to distress the young respondents whilst encouraging them to think and write about a highly sensitive and controversial history, of which many had had personal experience and endured its dramatic consequences. In an attempt to reduce the risk of upsetting the respondents, a conscious choice was made to design the questionnaire so as to avoid directly and explicitly confronting the pupils with questions about the recent violence, which they might have found uncomfortable. As outlined above, queries about Rwanda's national history were formulated in broad terms, leaving it to the respondents to decide what to tell and how to convey their thoughts. By inquiring about "the history of Rwanda and of its inhabitants from the origins until today", the essay-question, in particular, was however phrased with an eye to prompting the pupils to address controversial issues related to the issue of identity and the recent troubles. Despite the care with which the questions were formulated, the author recognised the potential for any reference to Rwandan history to cause traumatic events to be recollected and distressing emotions to be relived. With this in mind, the author and her assistants consulted local parties, including the school authorities, in order to identify and assess any concerns in relation to the questionnaire as well as to gain feedback on the feasibility of conducting the proposed survey without causing harm to the young respondents. Besides seeking the full support of the (school) authorities, measures were taken to make sure that the survey was carried out with the informed consent and willing participation of the pupils. Before distributing the questionnaires, each selected class was provided with basic explanations on the identity of the researcher and her assistant(s), and on the nature, scope, purpose, and intended use of the survey and of the overall research. The pupils were reassured that their answers would be anonymous and would only be used for private research purposes that were unrelated to the government or the school.[669]

Ultimately, the study went some way to empower young Rwandans by offering them an opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions. The respondents were recognised and appreciated as valuable informants, and were assured that their voices would be carefully listened to and acknowledged by the author through conveying them in the final work. While careful not to raise unrealistic expectations, the author made clear to the pupils that one main

668 On ethical issues in research with vulnerable children, see, among others, J. Gabarino, F. Stott, and Faculty of Erikson Institute, *What Children Can Tell Us: Eliciting, Interpreting and Evaluating Information from Children*, San Francisco/Oxford 1990, and V. Morrow and M. Richards, "The Ethics of Social Research with Children: An Overview", in: *Children & Society* 10 (1996), 90–105.

669 In order to ensure the respondents' anonymity, all reference to their identity is avoided in the analysis of the survey and in reporting young people's quotes.

ambition of her work was to draw attention to their insights and to thereby serve the interests of the new generation of Rwandans.

Analysis of the survey

This section documents and analyses the narratives of a total of 1,001 young people who participated in the survey.[670] 814 were secondary school pupils: of them 304 were enrolled in junior level and 510 in senior level. Most were born between 1988 and 1995 and were aged between 13 and 20 at the time of the survey.[671] The remaining 187 *ingando* participants were all born before 1994, mostly between 1984 and 1988. At the time of the survey they were, on average, aged between 21 and 25.[672] A large number of respondents reported that they or their family had experienced forced displacement, either before, during or after the genocide.[673] On average, approximately one in every six respondents was born abroad as a result of displacement. Returnees, mainly from neighbouring Uganda, Burundi, and the DR Congo, accounted for 16 % of all respondents.[674] While many respondents had personally experienced violence and/or displacement, others had experienced the tragedy in a more indirect manner as the offspring of parents who had been affected by the conflict and the violence in one way or the other.

Against the backdrop of their varied experiences, young people's recollection and interpretation of the events were expected to differ widely from one another. Yet contrary to such expectations, the collected narratives, as will be illustrated in the following passages, revealed the existence of rather homogeneous views of the country's past and present among Rwanda's young generation.

670 Participants included 495 boys and 474 girls. 32 respondents did not specify their gender.

671 Due to the considerable age disparities that characterise Rwandan classrooms today, among the participants were also a few students as young as 11 and as old as 34. Overall, respondents were born between 1976 and 1999. Age differences in the classroom varied from a minimum of three years to a maximum of thirteen years. According to older students, poverty was a major cause of their delayed education.

672 Their years of birth varied from 1963 to 1993.

673 Those who had been displaced before the genocide were most probably mainly Tutsi. Those displaced after the genocide, especially to the DR Congo, were most probably mainly Hutu.

674 5 % of the respondents were born in Uganda, another 5 % in Burundi, and 4 % in the DR Congo. Other countries that were mentioned were Tanzania, Kenya, Guinea, Togo, South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, and the USA. 77 % were born in Rwanda, mostly in Kigali. The remaining 7 % did not specify their place of birth. The percentage of pupils born abroad was particularly high among respondents surveyed in schools in Kigali in 2008. Here, as many as 20 % were born in neighbouring countries; of the remaining respondents, about 57 % were born in Kigali city and about 18.5 % outside the capital city.

Structure and content of the narratives

Young people's representations of Rwandan history showed great homogeneity in their general structure and content.

The pupils' structuring of Rwandan history was generally centred on the country's experience of colonisation: their accounts were characterised by a nearly unanimous acceptance of a temporal division into pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial times.[675] To a large extent, the country's historical trajectory was also clearly seen as consisting of a pre-genocide and a post-genocide period, hence pointing to the centrality of this tragic event in the historical consciousness of Rwanda's new generation. Consistently, two dates in particular recurred in Rwandan essays: 1962, the year of independence, and 1994, the year that marked the unfolding of the genocide. Occasionally, the narratives were normatively structured into a "good" history, coinciding with the pre-colonial and the post-genocide periods, and a "bad" history, spanning the time from European colonisation to 1994.

In terms of their specific content, young people's narratives did not generally consist of detailed lists of historical facts, dates, and personalities.[676] The narrativisation of events mainly sought to explain the origins of the genocide and to demonstrate the current break with a "bad" past. The collected accounts usually started by mentioning the foundation of the kingdom by the cultural hero Gihanga and its subsequent territorial expansion by Rwanda's "many" kings.[677]

675 This temporal structure was occasionally replaced by a division into ancient and modern Rwanda, or, alternatively, into Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Modern and Contemporary Times.

676 With the notable exception of 1962 and 1994, historical dates that marked key political transitions in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras were cited very rarely. Students seldom mentioned the stages of German and Belgian colonisation and key dates during this period. Only a few respondents cited the Berlin Conference, the arrival of European explorers and missionaries, the German military and later civil administration, the Belgian occupation during WWI, and the time of the mandate and the trusteeship. Similarly, prominent historical personalities, such as Rwandan kings and presidents, featured as mere footnotes in the overall tale of the nation. Students sometimes included a list of successive presidents, i. e. Mbonuymutwa, Kayibanda, Habyarimana, Sindibubwabo, Muzungu, and Kagame. Students' limited consideration for the context in which historical events took place was accompanied by common chronological confusion and inconsistencies. A recurring mistake consisted in stating that the Belgians had replaced the Germans as the new colonial authorities in Rwanda after WWII rather than during WWI. In addition, in a number of questionnaires, Belgium was mentioned before Germany when listing Rwanda's former colonisers. Several other respondents mentioned either only Belgium or, more rarely, only Germany in their accounts of colonisation. A couple of students also confused the Belgian colonisers with the French.

677 Only a handful of students specified that Rwanda had known thirty-two kings. With the notable exception of the kingdom's founder, and, to a lesser extent, of the most recent

Much attention was paid to describing the kingdom's political, economic, and socio-cultural organisation and to outlining the primarily negative changes that had been introduced by the "*blancs*" during colonisation. The subsequent process of decolonisation and the period between 1962 and 1994 did not figure prominently in the pupils' accounts. This historical juncture was mainly presented as an appendix to the "bad" colonial time. Various essays completely omitted any reference to this part of Rwanda's history: they jumped from the period of colonisation to the genocide, in the process often drawing a direct causal relationship between the two phenomena. Finally, almost without exception, the narratives ended with an overly positive depiction of the post-genocide era and of the country's process of recovery.

Overall, young people's accounts appeared to overlap strikingly with the government's interpretation of events. Alternative narratives were rarely articulated, hence indicating the success of the state in transmitting its official memory to the new generation and in eradicating the dominant narrative of former regimes from people's consciousness. While a certain version of the national past seemed to be broadly accepted among young Rwandans, a degree of uncertainty was found on a number of sensitive and controversial issues in Rwandan history, most notably in relation to identity and ethnicity and the conflict and the genocide.

Constructing identities: nationhood and the banality of ethnicity

Questions of identity and ethnicity, as we have seen, are much contested yet not openly or critically debated in present-day Rwanda. Young people's historical narratives typically included references to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Very few pupils airbrushed these identities from history by omitting all allusion to them. Several respondents, however, while acknowledging the existence of these identities, revealed their clear discomfort in talking about an issue which is largely considered taboo in contemporary Rwanda. In two essays, this discomfort patently manifested itself in a refusal to articulate these terms. Instead, three blank spaces were left, which, in the specific context of the narration, undoubtedly referred to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.

A wide array of concepts was used to define these groups. Rwandan pupils variously spoke of social classes, races, ethnic groups, socio-economic ethnic groups, tribes, clans, political identities, or, more generally, of parts, categories, and species. Occasionally, these groups were referred to by the Kinyarwanda

monarchs (Rwabugiri, Musinga, and Rudahigwa), the names of Rwanda's "many" kings and their accomplishments were rarely cited.

word *amoko*, a term which in Rwanda's local language designates any kind of "category", and which, while traditionally employed to refer to Rwandan clans, since the colonial time has also been used as an appellation for ethnic groups and races, thus adding to the semantic confusion. The multitude of terms employed to refer to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa is revealing of an apparent uncertainty when defining these identities. This uncertainty was most evident in a number of essays in which initial definitions were later erased or replaced with different terms. The presence of such widespread hesitation in Rwandan classrooms is not surprising in a context in which open discussion on identity has been discouraged by the people in power. It was presumably a manifestation on the part of the pupils, and possibly of the teachers, of a sense of wariness in relation to what is permitted today in the public sphere.

Young people's accounts also disclosed considerable confusion and disagreement about the meaning of these controversial identities throughout Rwandan history. The more detailed accounts differed in their explanation of the origins and nature of these identities and in their understanding of the factors that had historically determined group affiliation. Several pupils acknowledged the pre-colonial existence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa and their fundamental transformation under colonial rule. Many others instead rejected such identities as a pure colonial invention. The different views expressed by the respondents often depended on the school they attended or the class they were in, hence suggesting a significant role of formal education in shaping young people's knowledge and understanding of historical events and processes.

As a general rule, pupils' accounts of Rwanda's ancient past omitted references to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Pupils often explicitly underscored the homogeneity that supposedly used to characterise Rwanda's traditional society. According to two respondents, in this period "Rwandans were all the same"; "[they] belonged to the same Rwandan *ethnie*". The existence of social differences other than ethnicity was occasionally emphasised. Rwanda's traditional society was said by some to have encompassed various clans, such as the Abanyiginya and the Abasinga. Showing once again widespread terminological confusion, these identities were sometimes erroneously referred to as tribes, races or social classes.[678] More often, ancient Rwanda was also described as being inhabited by three socio-economic groups: "the farmers, the herders, and the potters" – occupations typically associated to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa respectively.

The pre-colonial existence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa was explicitly acknowledged in only a small minority of accounts. Irrespective of the terminology they employed to define the three identities, these narratives generally explained that

678 According to one student, while clans used to be important identities in the past, they had been forgotten by Rwandans after independence.

group affiliation used to be determined by occupation, notably agriculture, cattle-breeding, and pottery-making, as well as by level of wealth, traditionally measured by the number of cows owned. Ownership of ten cows was typically specified to be the benchmark for belonging to the Tutsi category. These respondents underscored the fluidity of such identities and the possibility of social mobility depending on accrued or lost fortune. They also emphasised that, despite the existence of internal differences, unity and peace used to prevail in Rwandan society. One pupil explained that, in the ancient times, "we were the same: even if the *ethnies* existed before colonialism, it was not a problem to any Rwandan because they felt the same and all loved each other". Another respondent similarly argued that "these categories didn't matter because they helped each other without division and conflict".

In relation to the issue of identity, the historical narratives recounted by pupils in Rwanda demonstrated the large success of the current government in eradicating "erroneous" colonial beliefs from the memory and historical consciousness of Rwandan people. Only two young respondents, both attending junior level in low-performing schools, reproduced the now rejected theories on the different origins and successive settlement of Twa, Hutu, and Tutsi on Rwandan territory, thus suggesting these pupils had not (yet) fully socialised in the hegemonic order and social norms established by the authorities. In the words of one of those pupils, "Rwanda has been occupied by inhabitants of different origins: history begins with the potter-hunters Twa, secondly the Hutu farmers and thirdly the Tutsi herders". The contested issue of Rwanda's settlement was otherwise widely omitted in young people's accounts. Several pupils clearly distanced themselves from what they perceived to be "false" hypotheses and pure "lies". They rejected these theories by insisting on the common origins of the Rwandan people.[679] Some mentioned Rwandans' common Bantu identity, the origins of which were said to lay in West Africa. Others highlighted Rwandans' shared descent from the common ancestor Gihanga, "founder" of the nation, or from Kanyarwanda, son of Gihanga. One respondent explained that, "[f]rom the origins, Rwanda was a peaceful country of a thousand hills with its united population coming from a single father Gihanga, who created Rwanda".

In line with the official discourse, the vast majority of the pupils emphasised the crucial role of the colonisers in transforming Rwandan traditional society. Depending on whether the respondent recognised the existence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in the pre-colonial period, perceptions seemed however to differ as to the extent of colonial transformations. The pupils' uncertainty in this regard patently emerged from a number of inconsistent and contradictory statements.

679 One student declared, "I don't know the origins of Rwandan people because there is no proof, but I consider these ideas to be lies, and that we have the same origins".

The account reported below is particularly illustrative of young people's confusion with regard to these identities. The narrative stated that

> in the pre-colonial period there were three ethnic groups; the king was Tutsi, but these ethnic groups were brought by the colonisers. During colonisation there was the beginning of the knowledge on ethnicity and on the origin of the Rwandese, which are false teachings.

Rwandan pupils again employed a multitude of terms to describe the nature of colonial classifications through which "the whites" had imposed a separation of Rwandan people "into three". Once again, irrespective of their lexical choices, respondents generally cited economic occupation and level of wealth as the main criteria on which colonial categorisations had been based. One pupil explained that, during colonisation, "[a]ll farmers (*abahinzi*) were labelled as Hutu, all cattle-breeders (*aborozi*) as Tutsi, and all potters and hunters (*abahigi*) as Twa". Another pupil explained that "the Tutsi were those rich, with many cows; the Hutu were at the second place, they only farmed or had few cows; and, finally, the Twa constituted the 'third state', a neglected population, who did not have any cows". The few essays that acknowledged the pre-colonial existence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as socio-economic groups usually underscored the role of colonisation in transforming traditional social classes into ethnic groups, races (determined by physical appearance), or, more rarely, tribes.[680] Occasionally, these three terms and their relative adjectives ("ethnic", "racial", and "tribal") were used interchangeably by the respondents, thus blurring their semantic difference. Consequently, when referring to the divisionist ideology that had reportedly been at the base of communal violence in their country, Rwandan pupils respectively spoke of a problem of "ethnism", "racism", or "tribalism". As will be illustrated in the next section, irrespective of the students' understanding of the nature of the social transformation undergone under colonial rule, the imposed change was widely believed to have ultimately resulted in the destruction of Rwandans' ancient unity and in the division and polarisation of the nation.

The considerable confusion and disagreement evident in Rwandan classrooms regarding the meaning of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa throughout history was coupled with broad consensus on the irrelevance and banality of these identities

680 One student recounted that "these categories were classes and were transformed into *ethnies*", and another that "on the basis of their way of life, these categories were divided into ethnic groups, from where the birth of conflicts among them [sic]". According to another student, the colonisers "started calling Tutsi those who were very slender, and Hutu those who were big and strong". Yet another student explained that the colonisers "separated the Rwandese by measuring their noses". A singular account affirmed that "those considered more intelligent were called Tutsi and the least intelligent were called Twa".

in present-day Rwanda. Across the board, all members of the population were widely considered to be, and to have originally always been, *just* Rwandese. According to the dominant narrative recounted by the students, "Rwandans are one people: they share a common origin, language, culture, and religion". Many pointed out that Rwandans had lived side by side in harmony and solidarity for centuries before the arrival of the Europeans.

Accounting for violence: externalization of blame and the myth of national rebirth

The pre-colonial era: the Golden Age

Regardless of whether the ancient existence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa was denied or acknowledged in young people's essays, social relations in pre-colonial Rwanda were unanimously described as being characterised by such positive values as unity, harmony, solidarity, cooperation, and patriotism. One respondent explained that, "[b]efore, Rwandans had a good relationship and lived together without problems: they were united, they loved each other like brothers and sisters, and they worked and ate together in harmony".

In accordance with the dominant narrative conveyed through current curricula and textbooks, young people's representations of ancient Rwanda commonly emphasised social and cultural traditions which were deemed to demonstrate the solidarity that had existed before European colonisation. They cited practices such as traditional marriage as well as "gifts" of cows and land (an implicit reference to *ubuhake* and *ubukonde*) through which social bonds were created and strengthened.[681] No mention of the controversies surrounding some of these practices was made. Young Rwandans frequently cited wars with external enemies as occurrences further demonstrating the nation's social cohesion at the time. One respondent recounted that "Rwandans were one people working together for a common objective: to defend and enlarge the kingdom". Another pupil stated that "Rwanda always tried to invade other kingdoms and to expand its territory". This point was also raised by one respondent who reported the adage introduced by King Cyirima II Rujugira, according to which "Rwanda attacks but it is not attacked" (*u Rwanda ruratera ntiruterwa*). It was thanks to their sense of commonness and their patriotic spirit that Rwandans, led by valiant kings, had reportedly managed to turn what originally was a small kingdom into a large, powerful, and well-organised state. A few respondents

681 According to two pupils respectively, "Rwandans helped each other, for example, by giving a cow or a field to the poorer"; "the practices of *ubudehe* and *ubukonde* ensured solidarity among Rwandans".

mentioned King Rwabugiri in particular as a "famous hero" widely praised for his "great military force and intelligence". His supposedly exceptional skills were believed to have enabled him to "successfully expand the kingdom's borders to the west up to Goma in the DRC, and to the north up to Mbarara in Uganda". In line with the dominant textbook narrative, young Rwandans thus celebrated Rwanda's military history, taking pride in "national" victories achieved in old wars of expansionism and in territorial gains made by Rwandans at the expense of neighbouring kingdoms and peoples. Such attitudes starkly contrasted with the general minimisation and condemnation of internal divisions and tensions within Rwandan society expressed throughout young people's narratives in accordance with the official discourse also echoed in school curricula and textbooks.

In contrast to wars against neighbouring peoples, which were said to have been frequent, internal conflict was rarely acknowledged, and when it was, its frequency and gravity were typically downplayed. Incidents of factional conflict, notably the 1896 Rucunshu coup or "civil war", were either brushed over or portrayed as anomalies. In an attempt to further minimise the importance of societal disputes in pre-colonial Rwanda, a few pupils added that, in the event of a conflict within the community, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as the *gacaca* courts, were effectively used to prevent its escalation and to restore friendly relations.

While the ancient times were widely presented in idyllic terms, a minority of pupils drew attention to a number of more regrettable aspects of this historical period. They highlighted in particular the autocratic nature of the traditional political system., alluding to an absolute and hereditary rule of the king which clashed with democratic principles.[682] The corporate identity of the powerful Rwandan kings was thereby rarely indicated. Only a handful of respondents specified the kings' affiliation to the same "clan" or the "same rich family", more specifically, to the Nyiginya dynasty or the Tutsi category. In contrast to the pre-genocide hegemonic discourse, even when this rare acknowledgment was made it was never accompanied by an image of Tutsi domination and oppression predating colonisation. In addition to lamenting a lack of democratic rule at the time, several essays echoed a typical colonial discourse by derogatively referring to the pre-colonial period as a time marked by a condition of "ignorance", "inferior mentality", and "low civilisation".

682 In contrast, one student wrote that, "in Rwanda, there wasn't really an absolute power like in other countries. The king was assisted by others, such as the queen, the *abiru* [court ritualists], the *abatware* [chiefs] (of the army, cattle and land), and the military".

The colonial era: sowing the seeds of conflict

Colonisation occupied a central place in young people's historical narratives. Accounts of this period typically focused on outlining the radical political, economic, and socio-cultural transformations that had been introduced by "the whites". The changes brought by these "foreigners" were widely seen to have altered Rwandan society forever.

Numerous respondents drew attention to various benefits that were believed to have derived from the contact with Europeans at the time. Their arrival in Rwanda was in some cases associated with the advent of "progress" and "civilisation" as manifested in the construction of schools and hospitals and in infrastructural and technological advancement. The evangelisation efforts which had accompanied the Europeans' supposed "civilizational" mission were a subject of controversy. Several pupils referred to the expansion of Christianity in positive terms. According to one respondent, with the coming of the Europeans Rwandans "finally began to pray to the true god". Others instead spoke of a forceful imposition of the Christian faith by the newcomers and of their concomitant willing destruction of local traditions and customs.

Overall, however, the predominant tone of young people's accounts of this period was highly accusatory. Bad governance, bad leadership, dictatorship, injustice, and a loss of freedom were commonly said to have characterised this era. A number of examples were given to illustrate the "bad politics" of the colonisers.

Several respondents highlighted their forefathers' hardship as a result of forced labour and exploitation that had been imposed by the colonisers. One pupil reported that "the colonisers treated Rwanda as if it was their own country" and that [t]hose who did not comply with their orders were severely punished". Another respondent stated that through their exploitative practices "the colonisers exhausted our people and stole our wealth and destroyed our economy". The most critical narratives recounted how white people had "terrorised" their ancestors, treating them "like animals" and "slaves". They also stressed the extent of the humiliation imposed, reaching to the highest echelons of the local hierarchy. One pupil underscored the loss of authority suffered by the traditional leadership: he suggested that "even the king was dominated by the whites". Another respondent from the same school clarified that "the whites did not remove the king but they essentially governed the country". The extent of the monarchy's submission to the new "real" power-holders was exemplified by accounts which reported the resolution of the colonisers to depose authoritative figures who had shown an uncooperative stance. They mentioned the forced exile of King Musinga following "the terrorisation and intimidation by the whites". The latter were also blamed for the mysterious death of Musinga's

successor Rudahigwa on the eve of Rwanda's independence. Referring to King Rudahigwa – a monarch exalted in the textbooks as a champion of national unity against colonial divisionism – one respondent declared that "the colonisers killed the kings that fought against their divisionist ideologies". According to young people's essays, Rwanda's loss of autonomy and freedom was additionally demonstrated by a substantial reduction in its territory. One respondent explained that, "in order to punish Rwanda, which was strong and united, [the whites] made it very small".[683] For many, this unilateral act constituted an outrageous affront to Rwandan sovereignty as well as a gross injustice towards families who had been forcedly separated from their kin through border demarcations that were arbitrarily imposed upon the autochthonous population.

Young people's narratives appeared remarkably silent on the process that had led to the much-regretted loss of sovereignty at the time. Only three pupils identified King Musinga's acceptance of a treaty with the Germans as the act that had signalled the official beginning of colonisation. One of them highlighted Musinga's ignorance and naivety in signing a "deceitful pact of friendship" with the "cunning" Germans.[684] The other two instead stressed the king's vain resistance against a prevailing foreign army before being forced to give in to their demands.[685]

According to the dominant narrative articulated by the young respondents, divisive practices introduced by the colonisers brought about the most dramatic changes in Rwandan society. Their accounts emphasised the destruction by the colonisers of Rwandans' "astonishing" unity, a unity which for a long time had stood in the way of foreign domination. One respondent explained that

> Thanks to the ancient organisation, unity and military strength, no one could separate Rwandans, but little by little the Belgians divided us and destroyed our primordial unity and solidarity and our good culture and positive values by convincing them that they were not the same.[686]

The arrival of "the whites" was therefore believed to have marked a critical turning point in the country's historical trajectory.

The vast majority of respondents seemed to apprehend their country's recent violent history in ways that broadly coincide with the current official discourse.

683 The narratives mentioned the loss of Idjwi, Bwisha, Gishari, Ndorwa, Bufumbira, and Buha.

684 One pupil recounted that "the whites came with objects that the Rwandese did not know in order to create a deceitful friendship".

685 One of these two respondents stated that "Musinga tried to chase the colonisers but failed because his soldiers were too weak".

686 Another student explained that, "historically, it was very difficult to separate Rwandans. Thanks to the great organisation of the kingdom, the colonisers had taken a long time to colonise Rwanda".

Their narratives revealed a firm belief in the primary responsibility of the colonisers in sowing the seeds of conflict and hatred among Rwandans. Direct links were frequently drawn between the colonial policy of "divide and rule" and the genocide. The pupils' accounts typically portrayed the colonial introduction of ethnic or racial differentiation and segregation as the source and root cause of conflict and ultimately genocide in Rwanda. In their view, "the whites" had created internal division and tension mainly by spreading "false teachings". These fallacious beliefs were variously referred to as "bad ideology", "genocide ideology", "hypocrisy", and, more specifically, as "ethnism", "racism", or "tribalism".[687] As mentioned earlier, the pupils' understanding of the extent of the colonial transformation of local identities greatly varied. Accounts were however unanimous in highlighting the polarisation and antagonisation, or the "change of mentality", that had resulted from colonial actions. One of the most comprehensive narratives in this respect reported that:

> The whites, who wanted to take advantage of our national resources, began to separate the Rwandese and to plant conflicts and hatred in the population. They began to say that the Tutsi is taller and has a long nose, that he comes from Ethiopia, breeds cows and that it is only he who rules; they said that the Hutu are short, with short noses, that they come from Chad, and cultivate; and that the Twa are potters who live in the forest and come from the Congo. This is when Rwandans began to hate each other and to fight and kill their brothers and sisters. This is the source of the genocide.

While the emphasis was placed on the role of colonial fabrications in transforming local identities and relations, the discriminatory practices (against the Hutu in particular) which had accompanied divisive teachings were greatly ignored by the respondents. Only one pupil alluded to such practices. In her words, "some *ethnies* were favoured and others were excluded from economy, politics, and education". This particularly outspoken account, however, abstained from specifying the identities of those who had been privileged and those who had been discriminated against. The pupils' essays thus overlooked a situation of inequality, which was an important cause of the growing frustrations that eventually found expression in the violent events of 1959.

The survey exposed an additional shortcoming in young people's representations of the dramatic changes undergone by Rwanda after colonisation. While the blame for Rwanda's troubles was primarily externalised and apportioned to outsiders ("the colonisers", "the whites", or, more specifically, the Belgians), echoing the official discourse found in contemporary textbooks, pupils' narratives fell short of critically examining the role of Rwandan actors. Mention of local responsibility was either completely absent or significantly

687 One pupil, for instance, stated that "the hutu killed the tutsi because there was no love between them due to the fact that the colonisers had taught them bad things".

downplayed. For example, the objectionable actions of local agents were portrayed as the direct result of a colonial ploy, inducing fellow Rwandans to turn against each other. In the few cases in which a degree of local responsibility was recognised, pupils blamed the "ignorance" of local agents in their blind acceptance of malicious colonial schemes.[688] This belief is nowhere better illustrated than in the accounts of the violence that broke out on the eve of independence.

The 1959 watershed and the achievement of independence: the conflict turns violent

In the young people's accounts, the year 1959 was often presented as a key date in Rwandan history. It is at this historical juncture that the externally inculcated conflict was said to have turned violent for the first time.

This controversial period was defined by a wide range of terms across the individual narratives, all with negative connotations. The 1959 events were often described as a civil war or, more rarely, as a racial war. Several other respondents depicted the events as marking the beginning of a genocide which culminated in the 1994 tragedy. In the words of one pupil, "the genocide started in 1959 and continued up until 1994". References to the once much-celebrated "Hutu revolution of 1959" were largely absent: they were found in only two essays, nota bene, in quotation marks. In one account, the events were alternatively referred to with the metaphor of *muyaga* ("wind"), a euphemism used by Hutu politicians at the time of the 1959 massacres.

Notable differences were also found in delineating roles of victimhood and responsibility during the violence. The attribution of such roles by the respondents often depended on the school they attended or the class they were in, hence indicating, once again, the significant role of schooling in influencing young people's historical understandings. To some degree, it was also found to depend on the respondents' identity and background. Three main types of narratives were identified in this regard, a typology which to a large extent coincides with young people's different accounts of the violent events of 1994, as will be shown later in this chapter.

The first type of narratives of 1959 indistinctly referred to the participants in the violence as "Rwandans", thus pointing to these respondents' possibly conscious effort to avoid naming, blaming, and shaming in as politically sensitive a

688 According to one respondent, "Rwanda was a united country before the arrival of the whites. Because of this unity of Rwandans, the whites could not convince them to subjugate themselves to the newcomers, and decided to tell them to hate each other because they were different. Because of their ignorance, Rwandans believed it and started to hate each other. The hatred expanded and the Hutu started torturing and killing the Tutsi".

context as post-genocide Rwanda. The following comments were written by two pupils, both of whom were most likely of Hutu descent given their experiences as refugees in the DR Congo after the genocide in 1994 and 1995:

> In 1959 a group of Rwandan peoples started to chase away and kill the other [group].
>
> In 1959 many Rwandans were killed.

In the latter quotation, the use of the passive voice, a linguistic strategy often employed in the pupils' accounts of violent events in Rwandan history, adds to the ambiguous nature of such statements by further obscuring agency.

The second type of narratives about 1959 explicitly portrayed "the Tutsi" as the victims of persecution by parties whose identity was concealed, once again mostly through the use of passivisation. As articulated by one of these pupils:

> In 1959 the Tutsi were killed because of their ethnicity, while others [Tutsi] fled abroad.

In the third, and last, type roles of both victimhood and responsibility were unequivocally assigned along "ethnic" lines, frequently conveying generalisations. Two accounts, both told by (presumably Tutsi) survivors of the genocide, are illustrative of this view:

> In 1959, the Tutsi were massacred and chased away by the Hutu.
>
> In 1959, the Hutu prepared the ideology of genocide to kill all the Tutsi, but this objective was not totally achieved. The conflicts continued under Habyarimana, resulting in the genocide of 1994.

Regardless of whether the identity of the perpetrators was specified, the ultimate responsibility for the events was commonly apportioned to the colonisers. "The whites" were portrayed as the main instigators of the violence. They were accused of having incited the Hutu to turn against the Tutsi after having deliberately cast the latter in a bad light. A particularly detailed essay clearly summarises this view. In the words of this pupil:

> It is the colonisers who implanted the conflict between those whom they called Hutu and Tutsi. They taught divisionism and hatred to the Rwandan people by saying that the Tutsi came from somewhere else and that they had ruled the country and enslaved the Hutu for a long time although the Hutu were the majority. So in 1959 the Hutu, encouraged by the whites to fight against the Tutsi to rule themselves and to have their wealth, decided to hunt and kill the Tutsi. After independence, the Hutu revolted, they killed the Tutsi. Really it's a shame. Killings happened since 1959, again in 1973, and up until 1994 when there were more than one million people killed in the genocidal violence due to this ideology.

The extract above alludes to a conscious *decision* by the Hutu to persecute the Tutsi under the influence of colonial teachings, thus depicting the Hutu as willing executioners of malign colonial schemes. Another interesting account of

the 1959 events instead seems to partly excuse and limit the agency of the Hutu perpetrators by describing the violence as an action that had been committed under pressure by "the whites", who wished to retain power. This respondent explained that "[t]he Hutu who were subjected to the dominance of the whites began to massacre their Tutsi brothers because the whites did not want to see them reclaim their independence". By implying the existence of a colonial plan to obstruct Rwanda's decolonisation process, this statement further suggests political manoeuvring by the colonisers during the country's transition to independence, thus echoing the official narrative taught in schools.

Belgium's crucial involvement in this transition was underscored by one pupil in particular. This pupil stated that the Belgians had once again intervened in the kingdom's affairs "by removing the kings and by installing the president". This assertion suggests the exclusive responsibility of outsiders for the end of the monarchy and the instauration of the Republic. It thereby fails to recognise the role played by local stakeholders in the process that led to this critical political transition. A primary and active role was hardly ever attributed to "Rwandans" themselves. A notable exception was the account of one respondent, who recognised local agency in ending both the monarchy and colonisation. According to this pupil, "[t]he Rwandans eventually drove away the king and also the whites".

In line with the current official rhetoric, young people's accounts of this period refrained from celebrating Rwanda's anti-colonial struggle, their emphasis instead being on the regrettable internecine violence that had characterised the decolonisation process. A few exceptions spoke of a "revolt", a "fight" or a "war" against the colonisers as well as of independence heroes and independence movements. A handful of pupils mentioned the heroism of King Rudahigwa, who had called for independence and had fought against the imposed divisionist ideologies before being killed by the Belgians. Others referred to the role of Rwandan political parties in the independence struggle, notably UNAR, RADER and APROSOMA. One respondent ambiguously described the transition to independence as "a liberation given to those who didn't ask for it". This statement probably alluded to Hutu leaders (as opposed to nationalist parties), who had not been at the forefront of the independence movement but had instead coalesced with the Belgians.[689]

689 This student also stated that, despite this "liberation", "colonisation continued until the genocide". It is unclear here whether the respondent meant the perpetuation of a condition of dependence of Rwanda from the western world or the continuation of colonial practices and a state of Tutsi subjugation during the two Hutu Republics.

The two republics: prologue to catastrophe

The period between independence and the events of 1994 was much overlooked in young people's narratives. This neglect, possibly the result of an over-emphasis on tracing the roots of genocide to divisive colonial policies, was manifest in the infrequent references to key events such as the 1973 coup which ended the First Republic. When this period was addressed, the tone tended to be exclusively negative, the accent typically being on the adverse role played by the post-colonial regimes in the Rwandan conflict. In most cases, this role was portrayed as one of co-responsibility for fuelling internal conflict and hatred through the perpetuation of the "bad ideology" of "the whites". One pupil explained that those responsible are "not only the whites, but also the bad leaders who have followed the bad doctrine of the whites".[690]

Fingers were pointed primarily at former President Habyarimana, described by one pupil in exclusive terms as "the president of the Hutu". To a lesser extent, blame was likewise apportioned to Habyarimana's predecessor Kayibanda and his party MDR-Parmehutu. In line with the official discourse and the narrative taught in schools, their "wicked" governments were widely accused of bad governance and bad leadership. They were denounced for having promoted what one respondent defined as "*anti-valeurs*", comprising dictatorship and absolutism, selfishness, favouritism and nepotism, and regionalism and ethnism. The post-colonial regimes were especially condemned for having perpetuated colonial teachings and policies that had stressed differences among Rwandans. The promotion of regional differences by the former regimes was relatively neglected: only one pupil indicated the existence of a regional opposition between *abanyenduga* people from the South and *abakiga* people from the North. The essays more commonly highlighted a prevailing division and opposition between Hutu and Tutsi, occasionally described respectively as Rwanda's majority and minority groups.

Pupils' portrayals of post-colonial relations between the two groups often emphasised the discrimination to which the Tutsi had been subjected. This emphasis strongly contrasts with the earlier-mentioned silence with regard to the prevalent condition of Hutu marginalisation that had reportedly marked the period prior to independence. A few accounts referred to the curtailing of Tutsi's rights to education and employment, which had been practised through the implementation of an unfair quota system under the two republics. One respondent spoke of this system in terms of a "corrective democracy", which he unequivocally understood as a "bad democracy". More frequently, Rwandan

690 In a handful of cases, responsibility for the violence was attributed solely to the post-independence governments.

pupils mentioned a recurrent denial of Tutsi's "right to life". They also cited the state's rejection of the right to return claimed by Tutsi refugees who had fled persecution. Various respondents suggested that this situation of injustice had eventually created the conditions for the refugees' invasion of Rwanda and the consequent fall of Habyarimana's regime.[691]

The genocide: tragic climax of bad governance

The 1994 genocide is a topic that was almost ubiquitous in the pupils' accounts of Rwanda's recent past. This event typically functioned as the axis around which Rwandan narratives were constructed. The analysis of the pupils' representations of this sensitive period offers interesting insights into the way in which the violence is understood and made sense of by young Rwandans today.

i. Definitions and characterisations

The analysis of young people's narratives of Rwanda's recent past revealed a variety of ways in which they defined the violent events that occurred in 1994.

The vast majority of the pupils' essays referred to the violenceas "genocide". In t he rare cases in which the "G-word" was avoided, the events were variously defined as "massacre", "extermination", "war", or "conflict".[692] Occasionally, the words "genocide" and "war" were used interchangeably or simultaneously. A few pupils for instance spoke of a "war of genocide". The frequent association of the genocide with a war raises questions about young people's understanding of what in fact were two parallel events as opposed to one all-encompassing occurrence. In only a handful of essays was a clear distinction made between the war and the genocide. The clearest delineation of the sequence of these two distinct events was presented by one pupil, who explained that "[t]he Tutsi refugees in neighbouring countries organised themselves to return, resulting in another war. As they entered Rwanda, there was the organisation of the genocide by Habyarimana's regime to crush the Tutsi".

While most respondents referred to the 1994 violence in terms of "genocide", significant discrepancies were found among the various expressions that were used to further describe this occurrence. Numerous pupils highlighted the temporal dimension of the events by speaking of the "genocide of 1994". Others emphasised the geographical scope by referring to the "genocide of Rwanda" or the "Rwandan genocide". A third group of essays referred to those involved: they

691 According to one student, "Habyarimana's government fell because of its refusal to solve the problems of the refugees, of inequality and discrimination within the country".

692 In Kinyarwanda, these words respectively translate as *jenoside* (genocide), *itsembatsemba* (massacre), *itsembabwoko* (extermination), *intambara* (war/s), and *amakimbirane* (conflict).

spoke of "genocide of the Rwandans", "genocide between Tutsi and Hutu", or, more specifically, "genocide of the Tutsi". Some of the narratives that employed the expression "Tutsi genocide" reproduced the official discourse, according to which the genocide had started in, or had been planned since, 1959. These accounts alluded to either a prolonged genocide or a sequence of various genocides; they thereby portrayed the 1994 events as "the great genocide", "the final genocide", or "the last phase of Tutsi persecution". Remarkably, the survey found widespread use of expressions that presented the genocide more generically as a "Rwandan" event in which Rwandans had killed each other, although this appeared to decline over time. In the survey data collected in the first phase of the field research in 2008, this particular formulation was more frequently used than the current official expression of "Tutsi genocide", which clearly denotes the Tutsi as its sole victims. A comparison with data gathered a few years later, namely in 2011 and 2014, revealed an increased appropriation of the official choice of words by Rwanda's younger generations, hence providing evidence of an effective discursive shift among this section of the population. As will be illustrated later in this section, despite the terminological divergences most essays recognised the Tutsi as the primary victims of the genocide.

The above-mentioned characterisations of the 1994 events were occasionally complemented with various adjectives, all with negative connotations, which further qualified this time of violence. The event was described with words such as "unfortunate", "bad", "dreadful", "terrible", and "catastrophic". It was likewise portrayed as marking a period of "decadence" and "very high wickedness", thereby implying the moral destitution of people at the time.

Vivid depictions of the "terrible" nature of the violence were not generally found in the essays. Also, narratives recounting the respondents' personal experience during this period were extremely uncommon. This is surprising considering the startling scope of the violence and the pervasiveness of its consequences. This tendency to avoid telling one's own story could be a result of personal discomfort in recollecting the traumatic events. It could also be a reflection of the general lack of vivid, personalised, and humanised depictions of the genocide in school textbooks and their predominantly abstract and detached approach to dealing with this period. A handful of exceptions were found, however, two of which reported that

> In 1994 we experienced a bad time that I will never forget in my life because this is the first time that I saw a person kill another although they are both Rwandan.

> I remember many things. Even now we live with the people who killed my mother, but today we are already reconciled with my neighbour.

While exceptional in their provision of a personal testimony of the events, the two accounts both reproduce the official meta-narrative by respectively stressing its two core pillars of unity and reconciliation.

ii. Circumstances

Young people's accounts of the genocide strongly emphasised its root causes, namely the divisionist colonial ideology and its perpetuation by the two post-colonial regimes. Conversely, the more immediate, and particularly contested, circumstances of the genocide, notably the RPF war and the assassination of Habyarimana, were often neglected. The disregard for the immediate context of the genocide was manifest in the essays' frequent omission of the start and end dates of the civil war that set the scene for the genocide, namely 1 October 1990 and 4 July 1994. This is curious given the fact that these dates are today national holidays: Patriotism Day and Liberation Day.

The RPF war

The war that the RPF had launched from Uganda in 1990 was frequently overlooked in young people's narratives of Rwanda's recent history.[693] The conspicuous omission of this event, which is much-celebrated in present-day Rwanda, is surprising and requires explanation. Arguably, it might constitute a form of silent resistance to the official discourse celebrating what is a highly controversial military intervention, one which has been condemned by some critics as the trigger event that created the conditions conducive to genocide in 1994.

The RPF's military intervention, when mentioned, was commonly characterised as a righteous and heroic "liberation war". In accordance with the official discourse and the textbook narratives, the motives that were believed by most to have guided the refugees' decision to start a military campaign against Habyarimana's government revealed an overwhelmingly positive understanding of their intentions and ambitions. The refugees' invasion was justified by their wish to "return to their native country and to develop it after 30 years of forced exile due to bad politics by Hutu [sic]". It was also explained as a desire to "fight against the politics of divisionism and the genocide ideology", "to defend Rwandans and to stop the genocide", and, finally, "to restore good relations" and "to bring equality, democracy, and unity and reconciliation".

Heroic roles, marked by bravery, humanistic, and patriotic altruism and self-

693 One student mistakenly associated the RPF rebels, previously organised into the Rwandan Alliance of National Unity (RANU), with the monarchist UNAR party of the 1950s. In his words, "the refugees in Uganda, who formed a military group called UNAR directed by Rwigema, attacked Rwanda to halt the genocide".

sacrifice, were generally assigned to the RPF rebel movement as a whole. Only a handful of narratives specifically named the late leader of the rebellion, Fred Rwigema, Rwanda's most prominent national hero, whose image is typically represented in textbooks' sections on the "liberation struggle". In these few cases, Rwigema was depicted as a patriotic hero and his death on the frontline as an unfortunate event. The controversial circumstances surrounding his death, however, which some observers have attributed to a plot by RPF sub-commander(s) rather than to a battlefield incident, were never mentioned in the pupils' accounts – in the same way as these are greatly overlooked in school textbooks.

Habyarimana's assassination

The controversial assassination of former President Habyarimana similarly received little attention in the pupils' narratives despite its historical significance. The incident was recognised by only a fraction of the respondents as having signalled the beginning of the genocide.

Hardly any detail was provided on the unfolding of this crucial event – an omission which reflects the cursory coverage of this incident in school textbooks. Across the collected narratives, allusions to the issue of responsibility for this crime were practically non-existent, suggesting either a genuine lack of recognition of the significance of the event or, possibly, a sense of uncertainty and discomfort towards a violent act that some believe was in fact committed by the RPF, eventually triggering the genocide. In most cases in which the incident was mentioned, the respondents obscured agency by resorting to such linguistic strategies as nominalisation (speaking of assassination, murder or killing) or passivisation (referring to the fact that Habyarimana was killed or that his plane was shot down).

Two accounts stood out for their more extensive recounting of this incident as well as for their markedly divergent explanations of the president's murder and of its historical significance. The first of these accounts was collected from a pupil from Gisenyi, who had been a refugee in the DRC between 1994 and 2000. In accordance with the official narrative, this respondent legitimised the RPF's invasion and blamed "the Hutu" for Habyarimana's assassination. In his words,

> Tutsi refugees wanted to return, but Habyarimana said the country was full and that there was no space for them. So, they decided to enter by force attacking Byumba in 1990. Habyarimana went to Arusha to sign an agreement so that the refugees could return, but the Hutu were very angry about this decision and they shot down his plane while he was returning from Arusha. As they had prepared the genocide well in advance, they started killing the Tutsi.

The second account was exceptional in that it was the only narrative that starkly diverged from the government's storyline. This essay explained the violence that had been perpetrated against the Tutsi by highlighting the anger of "the Hutu" for the alleged killing of their president by the power-seeking Tutsi. In the words of this respondent:

> When one enters history, the Hutu say that the cause of the problem was the assassination of their President Habyarimana in the plane by the Tutsi who had killed him in order to govern the country. This is why the Hutu got mad at the Tutsi, killing them.

Remarkably, this narrative was not articulated by a Rwandan pupil; it was instead recounted by a Congolese pupil from Goma, close to the border, who, at the time of the survey, was living and studying in Gisenyi. As a foreigner who had only recently moved to Rwanda and who had therefore not been long socialised in the Rwandan context and its school system, this respondent appeared to be either not aware or not susceptible to the pressure to subscribe to the official discourse and policies and to the risks reportedly involved in failing to conform. His telling this particular version of events, by apparently reporting what he had heard "the Hutu say", can also be explained with the fact that this young Congolese from North Kivu grew up and was socialised in a border region inhabited by a large group of Congolese Hutu, where dissident perspectives on Rwandan history, which in present-day Rwanda qualify as "genocide ideology", have been found to be common and widespread, especially since the mass exodus of Rwandan Hutu to this area in 1994.[694]

iii. Actors and their roles: responsibility, victimhood, and heroism

The pupils' accounts of the genocide included discussions on the actors involved and their roles in the violence. They referred to the role of such agents as the general population, the state and its apparatus, the international community, and the RPF.

The general population: Rwandans and Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa

Similar to their descriptions of 1959, the pupils' narratives of the tragedy of 1994 varied in their degree of outspokenness on the roles of victims and perpetrators. In relation to this issue, six main types of accounts were identified, the first four being particularly common and relatively equally distributed.

694 D. Bentrovato, "Accounting for Violence in Eastern Congo: Young People's Narratives of War and Peace in North and South Kivu", in: *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 14(1) (2014), 9–35.

Unifying nationalisation of suffering

The first type of narrative described Rwandans in general as the principal actors in the violent events of 1994, thus resorting to what I call a unifying nationalisation of suffering. These accounts highlighted the internecine nature of the violence by referring to a "genocide between us" during which "Rwandans were killing each other". The choice to speak of "Rwandans" in general seemed to be primarily dictated by a wish to avoid admitting the existence of "ethnic" distinctions within Rwandan society, in accordance with the official discourse on national unity. This choice conveys a sense of unease with issues of identity, responsibility, and victimhood, which clearly emerged in narratives that vaguely hinted at the persecution of "one group by another group" without specifying the identity of the victimiser or the victimised. This apparent caution when addressing such controversial issues is indicative of great uncertainty among young people, possibly the result of ambiguous and contradictory discourses and policies concurrently negating and asserting societal distinctions within Rwandan society. A case in point is one pupil's account of what she described as a "genocide of the Rwandans against the other Rwandans". According to this pupil, in 1994, "the Rwandans have killed the other Rwandans, and a little bit later the other Rwandans stopped the killings".[695]

Illusion of Symmetrical Ethnic Warfare

The second type of narratives recognised Hutu and Tutsi as the main actors in the violence while avoiding the attribution of roles of victimhood and guilt to one or the other community. They often spoke of an "ethnic" or "racial war" between Hutu and Tutsi, whereby some "had tried to kill those who were not of the same race". Although more outspoken than the accounts in the first group, they, too, constitute cautious and ambiguous narratives in their acknowledging Hutu and Tutsi as opposing camps in the violence yet remaining vague enough to convey an erroneous image or illusion of symmetrical ethnic warfare, in which the two sides had perpetrated equal levels of violence.

Passivisation of collective victimisation

The third type of narratives was characterised by recognising the Tutsi as the victims of the violence yet omitting references to the identity of those responsible for the massacres. These narratives, which I classify as passivisation of collective victimisation, typically resorted to the passive voice as a common

695 One student included a reference to gender issues by stating that "men killed women and children, and women killed men and children". Whereas men and women are both recognised here as either perpetrators or victims, children are ascribed a sole role of innocent victims, thus overlooking the fact that children and young people too had participated in the violence.

linguistic strategy to mask agency. As reported in one account, "[i]n the genocide, one category (the Tutsi) was persecuted and killed". The described condition of Tutsi victimhood generally referred to the killings that took place within Rwanda. One narrative in particular also called attention to the plight of Tutsi refugees abroad. This respondent, whose family members had been refugees in Uganda since 1959 and who himself was born in Nyakivale refugee camp across the border, recounted that "[f]or a long time, one group (Tutsi) was displaced out of its country. Some were killed and other displaced in 1959. It took us 38 years to come back". This narrative constitutes an exceptional example of a personalised account. It contrasts with the respondents' commonly abstract narratives of Rwanda's recent past and their lack of explicit association to one particular group. What further stands out in this and the earlier quotations from examples of the third typology of essays is the curious use of brackets to specify the identity of the "group" or "category" that was targeted in the violence, as if this additional information was a detail of secondary importance. This appears to be yet another linguistic strategy adopted by young Rwandans to cautiously and timidly address the sensitive issue of identity. Elsewhere, the same strategy was used to specify the "group" that perpetrated the violence.

Polarizing explicitation of collective victimisation and blame

The fourth type of narratives, undoubtedly the largest, delineated roles of victimhood and responsibility along "ethnic" lines. These accounts, which resorted to what I call a polarising explication of collective victimisation and blame, unambiguously stated that "(the) Hutu killed (the) Tutsi". They often included generalising terms, thereby seemingly implicating the entire Hutu community in the perpetration of the "Tutsi genocide". These more outspoken accounts, separating the population into two opposing camps of Tutsi victims and Hutu perpetrators, are potentially problematic. They reflect simplistic and Manichean views and understandings, the existence of which is unlikely to support the much-needed process of national reconciliation.

Collectivisation of complicity

The fifth type of narratives, which included only a couple of essays, alluded to the role of the Twa in the genocide, a group with a marginal role in Rwanda's society and its history, which was generally omitted in the respondents' narratives. In the story told by young Rwandans, the Twa were either absent, as was the case in school textbooks, or ascribed a negative role. The accounts belonging to this fifth category, resorting to what I call collectivisation of complicity, portrayed the Twa as co-perpetrators of violent acts which had mainly been committed by Hutu against Tutsi. According to one respondent, "[a]fter the colonisers had created hatred between us, the Rwandans of one part of the Hutu killed the people of one

part of the Tutsi, and the Twa people helped the Hutu to kill the Tutsi". In no case was there a recognition of the plight of the Twa, considered in some reports as "the forgotten victims of the Rwandan war and genocide [...whose] suffering has gone largely unrecognised".[696] No mention was made of the thousands of Twa that were killed or were forced to flee Rwanda in 1994.

Nuanced diversification of war experiences

The sixth, and last, category consisted of rare narratives which presented a more complex picture of the 1994 events and which were characterised by what I call a nuanced diversification of war experiences. Among these essays were accounts which avoided generalising guilt by underscoring that (only) "some" Hutu had perpetrated the violence. This set of answers likewise contained a few individual narratives that alluded to victims other than Tutsi. One pupil, for instance, spoke of "many victims, especially among the Tutsi", thus implying that victims could be counted among other groups as well. A handful of respondents specifically mentioned "the Hutu of the opposition" or "the moderate Hutu" – understood as a group of politically engaged people – as having been among the victims of the massacres that took place in 1994.[697] Conversely, not a single essay referred to ordinary Hutu who had lost or risked their lives trying to save their neighbours, and, as stated earlier, no reference was made either to Twa victims. Overall, the collected essays showed a blatant disregard for Hutu as well as Twa victims: in particular, they exposed a remarkable silence in relation to Hutu civilians who had been killed during or after the war by RPF soldiers, or who had been forced to a life of misery in Congolese refugee camps. By masking the many cases of Hutu victimisation in Rwanda's recent history, young people's narratives obscured abuses and crimes committed by RPF members, thus abstaining from criticising or challenging the moral standing and legitimacy of the incumbent leadership.

In sum, young people's accounts of the genocide were rather simplistic and generally failed to reflect the variety of human experiences that characterised this period of violence. Although done in different ways, in most cases victims and perpetrators were lumped together into one or two indistinct, monolithic groups: either as Rwandans or as Tutsi and Hutu respectively. With regard to

696 Minority Rights, "Twa", World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, http://www.minorityrights.org/4952/rwanda/twa.html [last accessed on 27/02/2015].

697 The expression "the Hutu of the opposition" was used by one student in particular, whose essay stood out for its detailed nature and for mentioning topics that were neglected by other respondents. Among these topics were the death of Burundi's President Ntaryamira in Habyarimana's plane crash, the exile of many Rwandans after 1994 and their return in 1996–1997, the post-1994 infiltrations by DRC-based refugees/*génocidaires*, and the public execution of a number of top-*génocidaires* in 1998.

Hutu experiences in particular, young people's narratives, much reflecting the lessons taught in school, typically made no distinction between zealous *génocidaires*, motivated by hatred, ambition or greed; those who killed under duress or driven by fear; rescuers who actively resisted extremism and risked their lives to save their Tutsi neighbours; and innocent civilians who were forced into exile and who witnessed the violence committed by the advancing rebel army. No mention was made of the many ambiguous situations where perpetrators killed some while rescuing others and of the dilemmas and choices faced by individuals at that time, be they perpetrators, victims, or bystanders. It is exactly the exploration and understanding of this complexity and ambiguity and of different perspectives which, as will be suggested in the conclusion, have the potential to impart crucial lessons that could help society on its path to sustainable peace.

In broader terms, whether or not the pupil's narratives delineated the identity of the victims and the perpetrators of the violence, none included a thorough and critical examination of the role of the general population in the massacres or their motives. The emphasis, when explaining the conflict and the genocide, was predominantly placed on the role of the divisionist ideology, with only a handful of accounts mentioning such factors as people's greed, selfishness, poverty, and ignorance as reasons why the killings occurred. Conversely, a couple of pupils underscored the senseless nature of the violence, regretting that many had lost their lives "for no reason".

The criminal state and its apparatus

The post-colonial authorities, and especially Habyarimana and his government, were frequently portrayed as the organisers and instigators of the genocide, in line with the official discourse and the representations of the violence found in textbooks in use today. The former authorities were said to have prepared the genocide "little by little" since 1959, thus stressing the long-standing and meticulously orchestrated nature of the violence and conveying a sense of continuity of Tutsi suffering under the bad leadership of previous governments, which were reported to have either encouraged or forced the population to perpetrate mass killings by preaching divisionism and hatred. In the words of two respondents:

> After independence, the ideology introduced by the whites did not leave the memory of the Rwandese. The genocide against the Tutsi took place because other people (Hutu and Twa) were taught by their leaders to hate the Tutsi under the pretext that they are not Rwandans and that they are rich, so that they can have their wealth after killing them.

> After colonisation, the ones called Hutu continued to be taught that the Tutsi were their enemies, that they were not the same, and they accepted that.[698]

The pupils' accounts were largely silent with regard to the means used by former "bad leaders" to convey their "genocide ideology" and to instigate the killings. Only one pupil, for instance, alluded to the notorious role played by the extremist media, notably through the propagation of "Habyarimana's ten Hutu commandments". Another blatant omission in relation to the role played by the state apparatus in the organisation and implementation of the genocidal plans concerned the national army and its affiliated militias. One exception in this respect was a statement which referred to the "training and distribution of weapons among some political parties such as the Interahamwe". This oversight is surprising, considering the emphasis placed in the official discourse and in current textbooks on the role of such agents in the genocide. Their role appears of limited significance in the pupils' accounts of the genocide and its history, whose focus seems to rather lie on delegitimising "bad leaders" who were eventually removed from power.

An irresponsible international community: between passivity and complicity

Fiercely criticised by the current government, the role played by the international community was only sporadically addressed in the pupils' narratives. In line with the official discourse, these accounts took a negative view of the international community's role in the genocide. Several pupils lamented that the world had failed miserably to intervene to stop the violence. They recounted how people in the world had chosen to cowardly look away as the genocide was unfolding "in front of their eyes". Others stressed the complicit role of Western powers in encouraging the massacres, thus partly externalising blame for the events.

France was the most prominent target of such accusations. The surveyed youths echoed the official view expressed by the current Rwandan government, which was reiterated by president Kagame in his televised speech at Amahoro stadium on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in April 2014. Comments on the nature and the extent of France's presumed responsibility in the genocide, a matter that continues to be a source of controversy and a strain on diplomatic relations, varied across the pupils' narratives. France was variably described as an orchestrator or instigator of the violence or at least as having contributed to it. One pupil reported that the genocide had been prepared by France and executed by Rwandans. Another pupil stated that the violence had

698 Another student stated that, "in 1959 one part called Tutsis started to be hated by Hutus due to the bad politics of Kayibanda. In 1994 there was a genocide against the Tutsi due to the bad politics under the leadership of Habyarimana and of his part of the people, the Hutus".

been perpetrated by "the Hutu, with the help of France and even the UN". The extent of France's support in the preparation and perpetration of the genocide was specified further in one essay in particular, according to which "the French had also been the instigators of the genocide by distributing weapons to kill the Tutsi".[699] Not one essay expressed any appreciation of the controversial humanitarian operation conducted by French troops in the midst of the genocide, which has been highly praised by France, or of the equally controversial humanitarian assistance provided by the international community to Hutu refugees, notably in Congolese camps.

The RPF: the nation's hero and saviour

Across Rwanda, the surveyed youth appeared in no doubt about the heroic role of the RPF *Inkotanyi* in the country's recent history. Their essays commonly maintained that the genocide had come to an end thanks to the RPF's military intervention and victory. One pupil explained that, "with the help of our God, Kagame and Fred Gisa Rwigema (unfortunately dead) stopped the massacre and won the war against the state". Despite clearly recognising the historical significance of the event, surprisingly few pupils cited the date of this triumph, as mentioned earlier. In a few isolated cases, however, the way the genocide and the war had ended was omitted altogether, with these accounts moving directly to praising the government's post-genocide efforts.

These exceptions aside, the RPF was widely depicted as a saviour not only of the Tutsi, but of the entire Rwandan nation. Many pupils expressed indebtedness and great reverence towards the former rebels and current authorities, president Kagame in particular, in a manner emblematic of dictatorial and totalitarian political systems. One pupil expressed gratitude "because they are the ones who by arriving stopped the genocide in Rwanda and won the war against the state and in so doing saved the Tutsi and the Rwandans in general". In a somewhat more critical tone – in fact, *the* most critical tone found in any of the young people's narratives on the RPF and its role in the genocide, – another respondent stated that "[t]he RPF arrived a bit late, but eventually they managed to defeat the villains and imprisoned the *génocidaires*". Only a few pupils recounted that numerous *génocidaires*, notably the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe, had fled to neighbouring countries, especially to the DR Congo.[700] As mentioned earlier, unsurprisingly – given the overall positive depiction of the RPF – allusions to

699 One pupil reported, "I heard from adults that the genocide was caused by the French".

700 Generally overlooked in Rwandan narratives on national history, this fact was more often recounted in essays on the history of the wider region, the content of which I am currently analysing for the purpose of a separate study.

crimes reportedly committed by its soldiers in Rwanda and abroad were absent from the pupils' accounts of the recent past.

This section has documented a tendency among the surveyed youth to embrace the government's official discourse on the genocide. Several narratives distinguished themselves for their particularly comprehensive reproduction of the state-sanctioned view of the origins, causes, and nature of the violence as well as those involved. According to one such example:

> The killings of the Tutsi began in 1959, but in 1994 it was very unfortunate, catastrophic. The Hutu killed nearly 1 million Tutsi in a genocide that lasted 100 days, and this happened because of the bad government and of the racial segregation caused by the whites. Finally, the RPF came and fought against the genocide.

The aftermath of genocide: a nation reborn from the ashes

Young people's descriptions of the aftermath of 1994 often mentioned the "many" and "grave" consequences of the genocide for Rwandan society. While the Tutsi were at times depicted as the only victims of the genocidal violence, the consequences were widely believed to have affected all Rwandans. Narratives thus seemed to suggest a present sense of shared victimhood throughout the nation. As one pupil pointed out, "[a]t the moment, we have a lot of disadvantages of the genocide for all Rwandans".

The surveyed youth mostly alluded to the enormous human loss suffered during the genocide. In most cases, the respondents vaguely referred to the "many" deaths that had been caused by the violence. In a few essays, more exact figures were cited: they usually spoke of (approximately, nearly, or more than) one million victims, although higher estimates were also provided.[701] The victims were mainly referred to as "people" or "Rwandans". Several accounts also drew attention to the existence of large numbers of orphans, widows, displaced persons, and prisoners in post-genocide Rwanda. They likewise mentioned that trauma, HIV/AIDS, and poverty had all affected Rwandan society in the wake of the genocide. Additionally, young Rwandans showed grave concern for the damage done to their country's image abroad due to its association with the genocide.

Young people's observations of the catastrophic impact of the genocide on Rwandan society were generally accompanied by a great appreciation of the endeavours and the achievements of the RPF-led government in accordance with the dominant discourse. Almost without exception, the respondents lauded the success of the government's efforts to reconstruct the country and to promote peace and security, unity and reconciliation, democracy and social justice, and

701 Two students spoke of 1.5 million and over 2 million victims respectively.

development and prosperity. Young people's descriptions of the post-genocide era were dominated by praise and expressions of gratitude towards the new authorities. Their perceived commitment to good governance and good leadership was presented in stark contrast to the "bad" practices of the previous regimes. Pupils in Rwanda especially extolled President Kagame, the object of a pervasive cult of personality which seemed to find wide adherence among young Rwandans. He was depicted as a good, clever, and respected head of state. Kagame's re-election in 2010 was seen as being a clear expression of general feelings of satisfaction with his leadership and with his impressive record in instilling new life in the country. The renewal of Kagame's presidential mandate was expected by one hopeful respondent to "add even more beautiful things". Thanking the authorities, a rather unusual practice worldwide, was found to be common among young Rwandans, as a form of drill exercise that appeared to be a part of consistent attempts to show support for the current government. One respondent, for instance, declared that "today, the people of Rwanda are happy with the government. We thank the authorities for having governed us well".

A widespread belief in the radical and positive changes introduced by Kagame's government was revealed by the exceptionally optimistic depictions of the country's current situation. Present-day Rwanda was widely portrayed as a peaceful country. According to one respondent, "[t]oday, peace is everywhere in Rwanda". Another pupil added that his nation had come so far as to contribute to bringing peace and security to other African countries through its regular and commendable participation in peacekeeping missions. Rwanda was described not only as a peaceful and peace-loving country, but also as a united and reconciled nation, where people "live together without any problem" and with "no division or discrimination".[702] Young people's narratives thus contradicted analyses by critics who have depicted present-day Rwanda as a deeply divided society, where divisions, inequality, and tensions are prevalent and where ethnicity remains a burning issue. Drawing a comparison with the past, one pupil declared that,

> before, Rwandans were divided into three parts and it was necessary to know where you belonged. Today, there are no Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. We are one people, we are all Rwandans *again* [emphasis added].

This quote points to a belief in the return to a primordial unity, which had long been destroyed, but finally restored thanks to the country's new leadership. This view, rather commonly expressed, was conveyed through such other statements as "[t]oday we are re-united again", or, "[n]ow Rwandans live in peace and unity

702 One pupil, for instance, observed that "today there are no teachers who compel children to hate each other".

like before". In an endorsement of official policies on unity and de-ethnicisation, another respondent explained away differences not only because they were supposedly historically irrelevant, but also out of a belief in the necessity to overcome past conflict and to strengthen the nation. This pupil affirmed that "today there are no *ethnies* or separation within Rwandans and this must be the example for other countries all over the world". The lesson he had learned from history, and which he urged other peoples to draw upon, was to "re-unite first in order to win".

Several pupils highlighted the success of the government's politics of reconciliation. One respondent reported that "now those who lost their family are starting to forgive". The *gacaca* courts were attributed a place of importance among the strategies introduced by the government to promote reconciliation. More rarely, respondents mentioned other mechanisms such as the ICTR, NURC, the NURC school clubs and *ingando*, the community service programme for detainees, the commemorations, and the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide. These mechanisms were presented as instruments being utilised by the government to prevent a new genocide by fighting against its ideology, and more specifically by educating and changing the minds of the population, curing Rwandans of moral depravity.[703] As explained by one respondent:

> In the past Rwandans had been bad, but now they change slowly because our government makes a big effort. Today, "Never Again" has become our motto and we are fighting so that the genocide is never forgotten.

Besides enjoying peace and reconciliation, present-day Rwanda was generally said to be characterised by prevailing good governance, democracy, and social justice. Rwandan pupils referred to successful schemes to promote human rights, equal opportunities in education and employment, the emancipation of women, anti-corruption, transparency, and decentralisation. Also, they emphasised the rapid progress made by the government in developing the country's economy and in promoting prosperity. They commended the government's considerable investments in the field of technology, in the economy, infrastructure, and social services and lauded the efforts made towards poverty reduction and job creation and towards overhauling and modernising housing, education, and health provision. The life of ordinary people in Rwanda was believed to have considerably improved as a result.[704]

703 One pupil vaguely mentioned the existence of "special measures to fight against those who can disrupt Rwandan security".

704 Rwandan pupils mentioned the government's efforts in road construction, transport and communication, provision of water and electricity, construction of hospitals and modern homes (*bayi bayi nyakatsi*), provision of cows for poorer families (*girinka munyarwanda*),

Expressions of satisfaction with the current progress in reconstructing the country and in rebuilding the nation were accompanied by expressions of hope for the times ahead. Rwandan pupils showed tremendous confidence in the future as well as a profound sense of patriotic pride and a strong commitment towards contributing to the wellbeing of the nation. Rwanda was depicted as having finally turned the page. The present was portrayed as a "good end" to a "sad" story, and as a "new beginning" founded on a rediscovered spirit of solidarity. Three pupils in particular were ardently optimistic. They declared that:

> After the genocide, Rwandans have started a new journey of life. Today Rwandans are reconciled and united towards a fantastic 2020 Vision of development, and Rwanda has become a wonderful and exemplary country in Africa and in the world.
>
> After all the bad past, Rwandans have worked together under the government's good leadership to change the history of our country into good history and to build a new Rwanda, a country of peace, happiness and 1000 hills […] No one can break our progress today.
>
> Now things are better than ever […] Rwanda is becoming a great nation […] Rwanda is new; even if we had a bad history now everything has changed and Rwandans are ready to be world changers.[705]

Echoing the official discourse, a few respondents demonstrated a particular preoccupation with restoring the tarnished image of the country abroad. One pupil expressed a concern that "[p]eople may think that here in Rwanda we still have the genocide". He therefore "invite[d] all people of the world to come and see the progress of Rwanda". Another pupil proudly argued that "[i]f they came, every foreigner will want to stay here forever".

Narratives often ended by summoning the population to continue working together to promote peace and development in the country. They showed young people to be supportive of the government's progressive agenda and responsive to its calls – also found in teaching materials – for the younger generations to take up a leadership role as key agents and motors of change. One respondent urged fellow Rwandans to "put their hands together and be one". Another pupil appealed to her countrymen's patriotism by "demand[ing] that the Rwandese

promotion of Millenium Development Goals, Education for All, universal basic education, merit-based access to higher education and employment, and the fight against social or regional segregation.

705 Another respondent declared that "today we have much confidence and we are satisfied with our progress. Now we are all working hard to counter all the problems caused by colonisation". Yet another recounted that "now Rwandans live in peace and unity like before, and they love each other. Now Rwandans are all the same and think about going very far in the development because they have the hope to live better than before because with love nothing is impossible".

accept their duty to love their country, to be heroes and to protect it against the enemies". Certain social groups within society were specifically addressed. One pupil, among many, called upon "us the youth to work to solve our problems", expressing a remarkable sense of empowerment and activism. A few respondents addressed the refugees who had not yet repatriated despite the government's instructions to do so. One pupil invited "all those who are still in Congolese forests to return and help construct the country".

Only a handful of critical voices were recorded. One such narrative acknowledged a continuing and widespread adherence to "genocide ideology" in present-day Rwanda, a situation recognised and warned against in the official discourse and in current curricula and textbooks as a serious danger to peace and reconciliation requiring vigilance and a collective fight against it. In contrast to the dominant view of a united and reconciled Rwanda, this pupil regretted the existence of rampant "hypocrisy" among the Rwandan population despite the positive efforts made by the government. One particular narrative stood out for distancing itself greatly from the overly positive views that were commonly expressed by Rwandan pupils. This account acknowledged the persistence of internal conflict in Rwandan society, diverging starkly from the dominant, more optimistic, narrative. This respondent perceived there to be a protracted state of societal conflict in post-genocide Rwanda that, in his view, was the result of a perpetual situation of injustice, which for decades had been promoted by manipulating history in order to maintain certain groups in power. While particularly outspoken on issues of identity and power in relation to the past, the tone of this pupil with regard to current dynamics and relations of power was only vaguely critical. In his words,

> Before independence, most of the kings were Tutsi; after independence, the country was ruled by Mbonyumutwa, Kayibanda, Habyarimana who were all Hutu and who favoured the development of the Hutu, but until now the stories are hidden. Everyone who has taken power does not tell the real stories and promotes his personal interest. When one analyses the situation, one can see that there is economic change but politically there is no great difference between the past and the present, which still causes internal conflicts.

The power of education: moulding a new generation after genocide

This chapter has built upon the analysis, conducted in previous sections, of Rwanda's curricula and textbooks and their representations of the nation's contested history. Following from a demonstration of school history's conformity to the official discourse propagated by the state, it has analysed "school voices" in post-genocide Rwanda with the intention of investigating pupils'

historical consciousness and their level of acceptance or rejection of the official discourse as is reproduced in school curricula and textbooks. It has examined the lessons young Rwandans have drawn from history by exploring the understandings, beliefs, experiences, norms, values, attitudes, worldviews, and aspirations for the future they implicitly or explicitly expressed through historical narratives.

This concluding section draws on the views and insights shared by the country's educated youth, and outlined throughout this chapter, to further reflect on policy and practice in (history) education in post-genocide Rwanda. The research thus recognises young Rwandans as key informants and their observations as fundamental in order to gain an understanding of (history) teaching as practised in Rwanda and to assess its impact and implications, while also gaining a better general grasp of Rwanda's post-genocide society and politics.

The findings presented in this study are distinct and diverge, in part, from those of previous research that has collected narratives from young Rwandans. The survey did not discover the "ethnic" patterning found by Longman and Rutagengwa or a great diversity of memories and narratives recorded by McLean Hilker and King a few years prior to the field research on which this book is based. Purposely conducted in a school setting, the large-scale field research that was carried out in Rwanda between 2008 and 2014 as part of this study revealed the prominence of homogeneous views of the country's past and present among the country's young generation, despite the deliberate inclusion of respondents from varied backgrounds and with a wide range of experiences. Young people's narratives were not reflective of the diversity of experiences characterising Rwanda's contemporary society or of the many controversies surrounding Rwandan history. Rather, what pupils chose to tell and emphasize strikingly coincided with what is prescribed by the state and considered to be legitimate knowledge in post-genocide Rwanda. Their accounts gave a semblance of general consensus and provided little evidence of the existence of ("ethnic") divide in society and of the circulation of, and adherence to, narratives diverging from the official rhetoric.

This chapter has documented in detail a tendency among the surveyed youth to broadly reproduce state-sanctioned knowledge on the nation's history as it has been imparted to them in schools. It showed how, to various degrees, their interpretations, emphasis and omissions echoed the content of state-approved curricula and textbooks in use today. It further demonstrated that, although the collected accounts presented a roughly concordant reproduction of politically correct public representations of the past, interestingly, variations in degrees of detail and outspokenness and of adherence to the official discourse propagated by the government were occasionally found to be dependent not so much on the

respondents' identity and background, but rather on the school they attended or the class they were in, thus suggesting a key role of schools as agents of socialisation and in shaping young people's historical understandings and related views and attitudes.

Very much reflecting the lessons taught in the school, young people's accounts of the genocide were highly selective, simplistic, normative, and at times Manichean. They showed narrow perspectives and there was evidence of the persistence of taboo subjects and of common self-censorship.

The survey discovered one single, basic plot, broadly accepted and running through young people's narratives. This plot, which centred around the "chosen trauma" of 1994 and was normatively structured into a "good" and a "bad" history, had the underlying effect of providing a larger justificatory context for the uncontested authority and the policies of the incumbent RPF and President Kagame. Young people did so by delegitimising previous regimes and their governance. They typically emphasised the responsibility of the white colonisers and morally corrupt post-colonial regimes in having sown the seeds of division, conflict and hatred among Rwandans through manipulations and distortions, which supposedly destroyed an ancient unity and harmony characterised in an idealised pre-colonial Golden Age. They also delegitimised the international community by condemning its passive or, in the case of France in particular, complicit role in the genocide. Young people presented the "good" governance of a much-revered political leadership as the antithesis of previous "bad" regimes and their "bad ideologies", thus accommodating the desire of the current elites "to construct as great a distance as possible between the new age and the old".[706] They celebrated and idealised that leadership's heroic victory in 1994 and its success in turning Rwanda into a nation reborn, peaceful and "re-united", and experiencing astonishing progress.

In telling this story, young people's narratives included pronounced evasions and omissions, most notably in relation to the RPF's track record. Through a strategy of "chosen amnesia",[707] the respondents abstained from criticising or challenging the moral standing and legitimacy of the incumbent leadership, for instance by ignoring abuses and crimes committed by RPF members during and after the war. They also disregarded the immediate, and particularly contested, circumstances of the genocide, namely the RPF military intervention in 1990, condemned by some critics as the trigger event that created the conditions conducive to genocide, and the assassination of Habyarimana in 1994, a violent act that some believe was committed by the RPF, and which eventually precipitated the genocidal violence.

706 Gillis, "Introduction", 8.
707 Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering".

Young people's historical accounts exhibited marked bias and simplism, particularly in their representation of the genocide. They often conveyed highly problematic Manichean views, characterised by a prominent recognition of Tutsi victimhood and Hutu responsibility, and by a blatant neglect of Hutu and Twa victims. Accordingly, the survey found a widespread and gradually increased appropriation of the current official expression of "Tutsi genocide" by Rwanda's younger generations as opposed to "Rwandan genocide", hence evidencing an effective discursive shift among the population in line with a changing policy that more clearly delineates victimhood against competing claims of suffering. The survey revealed the exceptionality of more nuanced and more complex accounts that avoided a generalisation of guilt or allusions to victims other than Tutsi. For the most part, young people's narratives lumped together victims and perpetrators into monolithic antagonistic groups, often along "ethnic" lines, thus failing to reflect the variety of human experiences that characterised this period of violence, Hutu experiences especially. They typically made no distinction between *génocidaires*, bystanders, resisters, rescuers, victims, and the grey areas between these roles, and paid no attention to the dilemmas and choices faced by individuals at that time.

Young people's narratives were further marked by noticeable discomfort, uncertainty, and caution on sensitive and controversial issues in Rwandan history, especially in relation to identity and ethnicity, and the conflict and the genocide – topics which are much contested yet not openly or critically debated in present-day Rwanda. They frequently showed disagreement, confusion, ambiguity, contradiction, and hesitation in referring to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa and in delineating responsibility and victimhood in the violence. Such insecurity is presumably the manifestation of a sense of wariness in relation to what is permitted today in the public sphere, and the result of ambiguous and contradictory discourses and policies concurrently negating and asserting societal distinctions within Rwandan society, depending on the context.

The apparent sense of uncertainty and caution on the part of the respondents was reflected in a number of evasive linguistic and discursive strategies widely employed to avoid or timidly and prudently address sensitive issues in their accounts of violent events in Rwandan history. Besides outright omission, these included a common practice of passivisation or nominalisation to obscure agency; a primary externalisation of blame and a relative failure to critically examine local agency and responsibility in the conflict and violence; a strategy of unification, for instance by indistinctly referring to the participants in the violence as "Rwandans", thus avoiding naming, blaming, and shaming and adhering to a generalised compulsion, in accordance with the official discourse on national unity, to speak of "Rwandans" to avoid admitting the existence of "ethnic" distinctions within society; and abstraction, detachment, and dis-

identification and self-denial, manifested in a general lack of vivid and personalised and humanised accounts or of explicit association to one particular group.

Despite variations in detail and outspokenness, in emphasis and silence, and, ultimately, in degrees of comfort with the official discourse, it was indeed this discourse that was found to be hegemonic in Rwandan classrooms. Alternative narratives were rarely articulated by the respondents, hence indicating the large success of the (re-)education efforts of the current government in transmitting its official memory to the new generation and in eradicating the "erroneous" teachings of the former regimes from people's consciousness. The very few respondents that reproduced rejected theories, notably on origins and settlement and on the RPF's onus of responsibility in the violence, were pupils who seemed to have not (yet) been effectively socialised in the Rwandan context possibly because of their young age or their foreign origins or the low performance of the school they attended. They included young Rwandans from lower classes in low-performing schools, and one Congolese pupil who had only recently moved to Rwanda to pursue his studies and who arguably was not aware of, or not susceptible to, the pressure to subscribe to the official discourse and policies.

Young people's widespread reproduction of the state-approved script as found in textbooks requires clarification and urges further reflection on the path taken in educating Rwanda's younger generations about the past. The striking homogeneity of the narratives collected from young people through the survey can be seen to be the result of a teaching and learning process whereby "history is acquired as information to be displayed"[708] and through which the younger generations have been moulded into assenting and uncritical consumers of official discourses by a system that, rather than nurturing pupils' critical thinking and analytical skills as professed by post-genocide curricula, actually induces the passive memorisation of prescribed narratives.

The near-univocality of the discourse found among young Rwandans might be explained not only as a manifestation of young Rwandans' passive and uncritical acceptance and appropriation of official narratives nurtured by schooling, but also as a function of an expedient enactment of self-imposed silence or "chosen amnesia", dictated by a constraining cultural and political setting characterising schooling in present-day Rwanda and by a fear to trespass the boundaries of the permissible in a context of growing zero-tolerance towards the circulation of illegitimate narratives in educational institutions. One may argue that the respondents' political correctness and evident cautiousness presuppose a degree of general awareness concerning what is, or is not, considered

708 Levstik, "Crossing the Empty Spaces", 71.

to be legitimate knowledge and, possibly, a degree of preoccupation with the risks involved in expressing critical opinion in a context where even children and adolescents are not exempt from serious penalties if found guilty of "genocide ideology". In a context of strict control over assertions about history, Wertsch's hypothesis of "a pattern of 'knowing but not believing'" official versions of the past may apply in present-day Rwanda.[709] He posits that the "mastery of historical narratives" concerns "cognitive abilities"; it entails "'knowing how' to use a cultural tool" and does not necessarily demonstrate an "appropriation" of the same.[710] In his words, "just because someone is exposed to a cultural tool – and just because the person has mastered it – does not mean that the individual has made it his or her own".[711]

It could also be argued that the discursive homogeneity found among Rwandan pupils might be the result of a gradual fading of private memories and knowledge "not considered compatible with the *res publica*"[712] and their yielding to an official historiography which today seems to be the main, and perhaps the only, source of knowledge for Rwanda's young generation as a consequence of an increasingly constraining political setting. In an environment where any dissent against the authorised national narrative is discouraged, many parents nowadays may be reticent to challenge the authoritative discourse of the government and may desist from telling their children about their family history, thus contributing to this discourse's hegemony and the effective suppression of alternative or contradictory accounts. Children themselves might find it uncomfortable to ask such questions and share their personal memories and narratives. Studies on the intergenerational transmission of memories in other post-war societies may be useful to understand the patterns of narrativisation observed among young Rwandans. Existing research has discerned cases of self-censorship in households affected by mass violence, be they victims and survivors or perpetrators. Children of the latter, in particular, are reported to have "learned to avoid embarrassing questions" in conversations with their elders as

709 Wertsch argues that the "pattern of 'knowing but not believing'" official histories was coupled with a pattern of "believing but not knowing" unofficial versions "learned from family, friends, underground literature, and other informal sources", knowledge of which, in comparison, "tended to be partial and fragmented". J.V. Wertsch, "Is It Possible to Teach Beliefs, as well as Knowledge about History?", in: P. Seixas, P. Stearns, and S. Wineburg (eds.), *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, New York/London 2000, 39.

710 Ibid., 41.

711 Ibid., 42.

712 M. Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling: Variations on a Theme by Hannah Arendt*. 2nd ed., Copenhagen 2013, 31.

well as to have withdrawn into muteness within society as a coping mechanism to avoid ostracism "in a world they experience as threatening".[713]

While the findings of the research presented here seem to prove the success of the incumbent government in consolidating the hegemony of the official discourse within society, they raise serious questions about the quality and the impact and implications of an education hijacked by politics in contemporary Rwanda and about the extent to which current teaching practices have effectively broken with a past abhorred by the current political leadership. This study urges further reflection on the present state of education in post-genocide Rwanda and calls for radical change for the sake of a more hopeful future. The next, and concluding, chapter of this book aspires to contribute to such a reflection by looking back at the findings of this study in order to tentatively suggest lessons that may be learned and recommendations for possible ways forward.

713 M.W.J. Lindt, "Children of Collaborators. From Isolation toward Integration", in: D. Yael (ed.), *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*, New York 1998, 170. In relation to the case of children of collaborators in post-WWII Holland, Martijn Lindt suggests that "[t]o advance their viewpoints means to risk being misunderstood, mistrusted, and rejected. Saying that your parents were not just 'wrong', but that they were also 'right', is against the national 'right-wrong scheme'". Ibid., 169.

7. Charting a way forward: what lessons for the future?

This study's multifaceted approach aimed to shed light, from a historical perspective, on the role of education in political and social engineering projects designed by dominant elites and to assess the challenges and opportunities involved in processes of educational reconstruction in the aftermath of genocide in Rwanda. This final chapter summarises and reflects upon the main findings and conclusions of the research. It ultimately aspires to identify possible lessons learned and to tentatively formulate recommendations by highlighting a number of missed opportunities as well as possible ways to effectively address the challenges currently faced.

This study embedded the analysis of the politics of education in Rwanda in a thorough investigation of colonial and post-colonial political discourse and "national mythscapes".[714] The examination of the political and discursive context of education policy exposed a strong political grip on narrative construction and circulation, and a relentless ideological preoccupation with history and identity and their narrativisation. It illustrated how in Rwanda successive regimes and their opponents have written and rewritten and taught and re-taught the history of the nation according to their respective political agendas, creating competing plots that differed visibly in the aspects they chose to emphasise or omit, and in the conclusions and lessons they drew. Greatly relying on pseudo-historiography, politicised narratives proved to be central to efforts aimed at legitimising the status quo or bringing about its demise, and at forging and consolidating an imagined community that reflected the views and values of its ideologues. These narratives, largely mythical and moralistic, have recurrently been used by political stakeholders to rally followers to their cause. In the past, manipulated collective identities and memories engendered societal divisions. They were used to condition the population into committing or condoning

714 This concept, mentioned in Chapter 1, is understood here as the "discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people's memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested, and subverted incessantly". Bell, "Mythscapes", 66.

violence by stirring resentment, mistrust and fear, notably through a "militant" recourse[715] to "victimological" memory,[716] which constructed an image of historical struggle between antagonistic groups. Collective memories of historical injustice were summoned as part of an ideology of victimisation which manipulated fears of the danger posed by a threatening "other" to the survival of the community. Today, the nation's history has been rewritten within the framework of a policy of national unity and reconciliation. The trauma of the 1994 genocide, omnipresent in the official memory promoted by the state, is regularly evoked by the incumbent authorities as a warning against a return to abhorrent past practices and beliefs which once divided the nation – with tragic consequences. This study suggests that, despite the visible changes in substantial content, a considerable degree of continuity can be observed in the discursive practices adopted by the people in power.

The analysis of ongoing processes of historical reconstruction in post-genocide Rwanda, which have accompanied initiatives to reform curricula and textbooks in the aftermath of war, revealed a persistent dominance of "grand narratives" about the nation and its past. The research exposed a still prevalent adherence to an absolutist approach to history which fails to acknowledge the epistemological limits of historiography to unveil "the true history". The political leadership in post-genocide Rwanda has promoted official efforts to write a "new history" of the nation with the aim of redirecting people's collective historical consciousness towards national unity. Whilst justified by the government as a necessity to prevent renewed violence, this approach has largely resulted in the suppression of open debate and has driven competing narratives underground. This study contends that this absolutist approach ought to be reconsidered in light of its capacity to fuel grievances and resentment among those who feel their stories have been marginalised or outright silenced. The research has drawn particular attention to concerns expressed in much of the extant scholarship on post-genocide reconciliation in Rwanda about the negative societal effects of unequal and politicised state-sponsored memorialisation and judicial practices which have allowed the official discourse to become institutionalised as part of the government's efforts to deal with the country's violent past. The study reiterated the claim of the overriding failure of recent transitional justice and reconciliation processes and mechanisms to adequately address the sensitive and controversial past and to mediate in today's memory wars. It stressed that, by being oblivious to Hutu victimisation, such practices might in fact have deepened ethnic polarisation, thus countering the supposedly cohesive function of the regime's unification discourse and policies and possibly

715 Ferro, *The Use and Abuse of History*.
716 Hoffman, "The Balm", 281.

posing a serious threat to Rwanda's long-term stability. The warning voiced by Dominick laCapra in relation to the Holocaust and its representation is all the more relevant in post-genocide Rwanda. "What is not confronted critically does not disappear", he posits; "it tends to return as the repressed".[717]

Against a backdrop of long-standing political manipulation and the use and abuse of history and identity in Rwanda, this study identified the country's education system as a key political and ideological tool that has been strategically employed by the state to anchor its discourse and practices in society. The research showed how, in a general context of institutionalisation of dominant ideologies and of enforcement of specific regimes of order and knowledge, official ideological tenets and beliefs have, in each instance, permeated and shaped the education system, which has in turn played an important role in preserving the desired status quo. Through an analysis of educational content, policies, and practices, and of the nature of their reform, which accompanied each major instance of political change, the study demonstrated the complicity of this sector in legitimising, reproducing, and reinforcing the socio-political order and power relations within which it was embedded, and in shaping collective identities and collective memories according to the convictions of the elites in power. Schools in Rwanda have taught a "grand narrative", an authoritative and uncontested normative and moralistic official story which "simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation's past".[718] They have transmitted mythico-histories and "invented traditions", "chosen glories", and "chosen traumas", through which the people in power have conveyed images, meanings, lessons, and warnings, and have promoted preferred orders, identities, and belief and value systems in line with their interests and ideologies. They have instilled a "collective memory grounded in 'state-approved civic truth'",[719] through a pedagogy "focused upon the acquisition of key facts and the commemoration of significant events of national importance".[720] They have taught young people the "'right' stories"; "what they should know and even, by extension, what they should think and feel",[721] further "provid[ing] a larger justificatory context for collective actions to be taken in response to current challenges".[722]

The analysis of pre-genocide education in Rwanda also confirmed certain trends and patterns that have been increasingly identified by extant literature as "the two faces of education". Functioning as a mirror to society, the education system in pre-genocide Rwanda appears to have reproduced and perpetuated

717 D. laCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*, Baltimore 1996, 65.
718 Bell, "Mythscapes", 75.
719 Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, 71.
720 Taylor, "Disputed Territory", 219.
721 Laville, "Historical Consciousness", 166.
722 Seixas, "Introduction", 5.

societal dynamics of violence, conflict, and injustice. Borrowing from the discourse on violence formulated by the founder of Peace and Conflict Research, Johan Galtung, it can be suggested that formal education in pre-genocide Rwanda had been a violent institution, where "direct, structural and cultural violence" had historically been perpetrated.[723] Theories on human needs and relative deprivation conceptualised by John Burton and Edward Azar in their analysis of protracted or intractable conflicts also serve to corroborate the conflict-exacerbating role of Rwanda's pre-genocide education.[724] The evidence implies that in this social domain basic human needs had long been denied, including such needs as physical security, political and socio-economic access and participation, and identity/recognition and cultural expression.

The study showed that schools in Rwanda had been places where targeted, systematic, and widespread physical, verbal, and psychological violence had been encouraged and perpetrated. Educational institutions were also sites and agents of discrimination, division, segregation, assimilation, alienation, and indoctrination. Through discriminatory and exclusionary policies and practices that deliberately endorsed unequal access to quality education, this sector generated and perpetuated unequal power structures in society. At the same time, highly politicised curricula and textbooks transmitted beliefs and values that were carefully chosen by the elites in power with the aim of expediently producing conformist and obedient citizens. Echoing findings from across the globe, the ideological and propagandistic role of school teachings in Rwanda has been particularly evident in the subject of history. This school subject, a primary locus of the politics of history and identity, functioned as a major vehicle for an uncontested state-approved truth about the nation, and about its past and destiny. A teacher-centred and knowledge-based approach to teaching and learning helped ensure children's uncritical acceptance and assimilation of desired beliefs and values. As denounced by the father of critical pedagogy Paulo Freire, this "banking education", favouring a top-down transmission of dogmatic knowledge, constituted – as manifest in Rwanda – an oppressive instrument of manipulation and domination that was used to reinforce hierarchical and hegemonic structures as well as people's feelings of dependence and passivity.[725]

723 J. Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, Oslo 1996. See also J. Galtung, *Violence and its Causes*, Paris: UNESCO 1981; and J. Galtung, "Cultural Violence", in: *Journal of Peace Research* 27(3) (1990), 291–305.

724 E.E. Azar and J.W. Burton, *International Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, Boulder 1986; E.E. Azar, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases*, Aldershot 1990; and J.W. Burton, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, New York 1990.

725 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York 1970, and P. Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, South Hadley 1985.

Against the backdrop of the education sector's historical implication in societal injustice, conflict, and violence in Rwanda, its reconstruction and reform presented an opportunity to promote national reconciliation and democratisation processes in the aftermath of the genocide. Although several promising steps have been taken since 1994 to transform schools into instruments for positive change, the opportunities to transform the education system into a peacebuilding tool appear to have been only partially exploited. History education, in particular, emerged as a field in which a critical opportunity has been missed to help society deal with the past. On the basis of this study, I argue that history education reform, while certainly challenging, has the potential, as yet largely untapped, to make a distinct contribution to peacebuilding, reconciliation, and democratisation processes in present-day Rwanda.

Assessing history teaching in post-genocide Rwanda: success or failure?

This section reappraises the results of the analysis of current curricula and textbooks, classroom observations, and the accounts offered by the hundreds of young respondents to the survey conducted as part of this research to propose an overall assessment of current history teaching policies and practices in Rwanda and to suggest ways forward.

This study provided evidence of the strong ideological and propagandistic role of schools, particularly in respect to history curricula and textbooks, as effective state-controlled mechanisms geared towards legitimising and consolidating the established socio-political order in post-genocide Rwanda. It attested to a case of education still hijacked by politics and the power of state-controlled education in post-genocide Rwanda in socialising the nation's younger generations and in moulding their collective identities and memories by providing them with definitive and uncontested official accounts of the past while limiting their access to alternative versions.[726]

The survey that was conducted among Rwandan pupils, which collected their historical narratives and assessed how they deliberate controversial national questions, seemed to indicate the significant impact of (re-)education efforts in post-genocide Rwanda. It identified the extent of apparent appropriation of state-sanctioned knowledge and its related norms and values by the younger generations as evidence of it having filtered into popular consciousness. It thus pointed to the great success of the government's educative work in teaching "the

726 Wertsch, "Specific Narratives", 50.

right stories", and in so doing greatly influencing the social, civic, and moral orientation of the nation.

The results of the survey – which one should, however, be careful to take at face value as respondents might, for various reasons, have felt compelled to answer as they thought opportune – revealed young people's almost unanimous reproduction of canonical and politically correct public representations of the past and their almost blanket omission or dismissal of alternative and mostly covert versions of "the truth" despite the many controversies surrounding Rwandan history. In particular, it showed schools as apparently successful key instruments in the government's fight against "genocide ideology" and in its pursuit of the goal to "rebuild national identity" and to eradicate '"Hutu-Tutsi' identarism". Through their historical narratives, young people showed their apparent endorsement of the official policies on unity and de-ethnicisation that have been translated into curricula and textbooks. Echoing the official discourse, the pupils articulated a common rejection of societal diversity as an evil fabrication of the white colonisers and of "ethnic" differences in particular as historically irrelevant and as dangerous to the unity of the nation. The exclusive use of "Hutu" and "Tutsi" identities in relation to the past and the insistence on their present irrelevance seemed to indicate the gradual fading of ethnic identifications in today's Rwanda in favour of a proud national identity. More generally, the survey found no evidence of young people's adherence to ethnocentric views and to what the authorities have condemned as "genocide ideology" and "divisionism". The respondents further seemed to share the government's optimism and confidence in the "new Rwanda" under the leadership of the RPF and showed their support of its progressive agenda as reflected in school educational media. They seemed responsive to government calls to take up leadership roles as key agents and motors of positive change as was manifest in the expressions of a profound sense of patriotic pride and civic duty.

While schools appear to have effectively promoted the political agenda of the ruling elites, the question remains as to what extent schools in post-genocide Rwanda can be considered to have been successful in living up to their newly stated "mission" of promoting a culture of democracy, peace, and human rights.

One could argue that schools in post-genocide Rwanda have done much to teach the younger generations a "usable past", "a past in which they can find values and projects to take as their legacies";[727] a nationalist and patriotic history which, while addressing a painful and distressing past, has sought to establish social cohesion and a sense of attachment and loyalty to a "primordial" Rwandan community, proud of its traditions and heritage and of its heroes and triumphs; a history intended to instil respect for the established order and

727 Fullinwider, "Patriotic History", 222.

inspire hope for, and commitment to, a promised future. Such outcomes might well be seen as promising after a time of unspeakable violence, which had torn apart the social fabric of the nation and caused widespread anguish and despair.

The approach adopted by the current authorities to teach the nation about the past, whilst ostensibly promising has, however, involved dangerous trade-offs, which might eventually compromise the country's future. Whilst appreciating the immediate benefits of providing younger generations, especially in post-war countries, with a "usable past", this study raises questions about the longer-term perils stemming from the evident political wish to supply society with a definitive history and with common lessons on the past, upon which the current authorities are building the "new Rwanda". The study suggests that promoting patriotism and nationalism and sentiments of national unity through history teaching that is based on the transmission of undisputed knowledge and sacrosanct norms has come at the expense of nurturing critical thinking and respect of differences, which are aims simultaneously professed by history curricula and textbooks, but greatly neglected in Rwandan classrooms due to the constraints of a largely undemocratic political context. In Rwanda today, history education seems to aim more towards "compliance", for the purpose of creating a new "imagined community", than at "produc[ing] critical, questioning minds".[728] History teaching, as designed and implemented in present-day Rwanda, has transmitted and inculcated prescribed, selective, and largely simplistic and moralistic historical lessons, lessons which leave little space for complexity or ambivalence or for critical reflection, notably on controversial issues which could challenge the hegemonic narrative.

In this sense, one could posit that, to this point, history teaching in Rwanda has largely failed the nation. Due to imposed constraints, schools have failed to respond to the necessity to meaningfully and constructively deal with the past, especially with the conflict and its legacy. They have failed to equip the younger generations with the tools to be able to "comprehend [the past] in its historical complexity" and have instead allowed it to "be frozen into fixed mythology";[729] nor have they engaged those younger generations in a dialogue through which plural and conflicting interpretations are genuinely acknowledged and assessed. In particular, current practices in post-genocide Rwanda raise questions as to whether schools have promoted young people's genuine sense of inclusion within an "imagined community", whose "grand narrative" has excluded or, at best, marginalised, counter-narratives through a process of imposed selective amnesia of stories that do not fit the national biography written by the incumbent leadership.

728 Smith, "The Influence", 18.
729 Hoffman, "The Balm", 291.

On the basis of the present research, I would warn against political efforts to supply society with a definitive history, regardless of the intentions of such endeavours. In particular, I would caution against the counter-productive effect of a history education which, in essence, compels unity by imposing a single, uncontested, and exclusive narrative. I argue that the constraints imposed on openly, critically and comfortably discussing contested issues and multiple points of view have profound implications for the future of Rwanda as a healthy democracy and for sustainable peace in the country. In this sense, I strongly agree with Cole and Barsalou's suggestion that a "[p]edagogy that emphasizes rote learning, uncritical thinking, and the authority of a narrowly defined 'true' narrative is unlikely to permit new understandings of former enemies and promote social reconstruction".[730] Such practices hardly provide the solid foundations necessary for society to build a future in common; they may instead become a potential source of societal tensions and of further destructive conflict by "reinforc[ing] the social identities of those who fought against each other",[731] and by cementing dangerous "mythico-histories" and "chosen traumas".

Looking forwards: the promises of reforming history education

Having posited the perils of current educational policies and practices, I argue for a thorough reform of history education in Rwandan schools in order to better fulfil the promised role of schools as tools of social cohesion and reconciliation. Specifically, I plead for the imperative need for a comprehensive revision of history curricula and textbooks, which would steer them away from continuing their current practice of encouraging the "unquestioning acceptance of common lessons",[732] arguing that it is through the exploration and understanding of complexity and ambiguity and of different perspectives that history education promises to offer crucial lessons which could help society on its path to sustainable peace and democracy.

Looking forwards, I advocate the development of history curricula and textbooks that are both factually accurate and inclusive of existing views. Accuracy and inclusiveness could be guaranteed by organising open scholarly discussions and broad-based consultations, which could later be translated to the pedagogic domain. Such varied stakeholders as academics, curriculum planners, textbook authors, teachers, and pupils should be involved in these activities. In the process, young people's insights should be given due consid-

730 Cole and Barsalou, *Unite or Divide?*, 10.
731 Weinstein et al., "School Voices", 67.
732 Freedman et al., "Teaching History" (2008), 685.

eration. While young people in the past were "driven to become a destabilising and destructive force",[733] today they should be engaged in empowering decision-making processes that are sensitive to, and inclusive of, their perceptions and understandings. I contend that capturing the views, experiences, and aspirations of those most directly concerned and affected by the school system is of crucial importance if teaching is to avoid the risk of being irrelevant or, worse, of reinforcing misconceptions. Evidently, the success of this type of initiative greatly relies on a genuine willingness on the part of the government to loosen its grip on sanctioned narratives about the nation's past, present, and future. Democratisation of the political context in which processes of educational reform are embedded is undoubtedly a necessary condition for a much-needed democratisation of history education. As Harvey Weinstein et al. remind us, "the ambitious goal of building tolerant societies within schools is doomed to failure if the sociopolitical environment is not supportive of these endeavors".[734]

In recognition of the crucial role of political conditions in determining the nature and outcome of education reform processes, I argue that, in order for curriculum and textbook revision to be genuinely inclusive and to allow the required democratisation of education in Rwanda, discursive liberalization is a prerequisite, which would allow a critical examination of dissenting views as opposed to the imposition of what some observers have criticised as an elusive consensus created by the current authorities. I thus agree with Phil Clark and Zachary Kaufman's suggestion that "Rwanda's future hinges on the ability to navigate divergent interpretations of the past".[735] Only a process of open, inclusive, and democratic dialogue in which a multiplicity of experiences, views, and interpretations are shared, recognised, and assessed has the potential to lead society to a shared understanding of the past and to the construction of an inclusive collective memory and identity capable of reconciling differences. As Andrew Schaap poignantly affirms, "a reconciliatory moment is not construed as a final shared understanding or convergence of world views, but as a disclosure of a world in common from diverse and possibly irreconcilable perspectives".[736] In order to support a process of much-needed reflection and deliberation over the nation's past, which would guide and nurture history education reform, collaborative historiographical endeavours should be re-

733 J. Lowicky, "Missing Out: Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict Face Few Educational Opportunities and Increased Protection Risks", in: *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 2(1) (1999), 4.

734 Weinstein et al., "School Voices", 49.

735 Clark and Kaufman, "After Genocide", in: Clark and Kaufman (eds.), *After Genocide*, 8.

736 A. Schaap, "Guilty Subjects and Political Responsibility. Arendt, Jaspers and the Resonance of the 'German Question' in Politics of Reconciliation", in: *Political Studies* 49(4) (2001), 762, quoted in Cole, "Introduction", 5.

valued in Rwanda as important avenues that could help society meaningfully deal with its sensitive and controversial past by bringing to light and critically evaluating existing views. To echo Chris Lorenz's eloquent words regarding the principles behind such projects, while "it is neither realistic nor reasonable to expect consensus in historiography […] the most we can strive for is a sound knowledge of the different points of view, leading to a maximum of empathy and to mutual understanding of past and present positions".[737] Such a principle should resonate in history curricula and textbooks, whose reform should not only reflect the results and outcomes of historiographical research, but also adopt its processes and tools.

While acknowledging the significance of revising the substantive content of history curricula and textbooks based on historiographical research, in this conclusion's reflection on the historical lessons that should be taught to Rwanda's younger generations for the sake of the future, I appeal more strongly for a reorientation of discussions and of mainstream practice from an emphasis on content (what to teach) to an emphasis on pedagogy and aims (how to teach and for what purpose). I contend that a meaningful approach to history education reform in post-genocide Rwanda should primarily entail a re-conceptualisation of the aims and objectives of this course as well as a redefinition of its methodology. The analysis of the state of history teaching and learning presented in this study revealed that insufficient attention is being paid to the development of young people's cognitive skills and understanding of the discipline of history. It is especially through the promotion of such skills and understanding that history education has a distinct role to play in society.

Borrowing from Laville's conceptualisation of history education, I argue that the primary focus of history as a school subject should be shifted from a common practice of "history teaching" to a practice of "historical education". Whereas the former "furthers the creation of a common historical consciousness" by providing young people with a simplistic short-term and "presentist" "practical past",[738] the latter is "aimed at the acquisition or development of historical 'thinking'" and historical understanding.[739] The aim of "historical education" as understood by this study entails the promotion of a willingness and capacity to deal historically with the past, that is, to accept its complexity and ambiguity. From a methodological point of view, efforts to reform the history curriculum could find inspiration in the so-called "New History", a philosophy and approach to history education which was developed in Britain

737 C. Lorenz, "Towards a Theoretical Framework for Comparing Historiographies: Some Preliminary Considerations", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 39.
738 M. Oakeshott, *On History and Other Essays*, Indianapolis 1999, 1–48.
739 Laville, "Historical Consciousness", 177.

during the late 1970s and early 1980s.[740] Based on critical historiography, which reconceptualises history as interpretation of evidence rather than factual truth, this philosophy overtly challenges the notions of a fixed past and of history as a received subject. Instead of aiming at the uncritical acquisition of a predefined content through a traditional text-based and knowledge-based curricular approach, the "New History" approach focuses on promoting an active process of historical learning which requires pupils to "be concerned not only with knowing *that* but also with knowing *how*". Schools are uniquely positioned in this respect. As Peter Lee points out, "[w]hatever else it does by way of acquainting them with different kinds of past, history education in schools should give students an intellectual apparatus for handling history. No one else will".[741]

Informed by specialised literature on history education practices, this concluding chapter proposes two main sets of aims and objectives which it recommends should be favoured by curriculum reform in Rwanda in order for history education to develop pupils' historical thinking. Needless to say, the translation of the following suggestions into policy and practice might not be straightforward and would inevitably be a major undertaking, requiring considerable and time-consuming structural changes and necessary political will, societal support, and funding.

First of all, the revision of Rwanda's curricula should result in pupils being thoroughly familiarised with the discipline of history and being encouraged to embrace the understandings, dispositions, and propensities of professional historians. In particular, history education should promote a clearer understanding of the relationship between the nature of history as a discipline and the construction of historical content knowledge, that is, how we know, explain, and give accounts of the past. To echo the words of Denis Shemilt, pupils in Rwanda should be more systematically introduced "to the idea of reconstructing from evidence, […] and to the problems of reconstruction in the face of biased, incomplete and contradictory evidence".[742] School history should nurture an appreciation of the inevitability of multiple and "complementary, competing, or clashing stories",[743] stemming from different questions and different points of departure. Pupils should thereby learn to be aware of, and attentive to, the many

740 See, *inter alia*, J. Arthur and R. Phillips, *Issues in History Teaching*, London 2000; A.K. Dickinson and P.J. Lee (eds.), *History Teaching and Historical Understanding*, London 1978; R. Phillips, *History Teaching, Nationhood and the State*, London 1998; D. Shemilt, *History 13–16. Evaluation Study*, Edinburgh 1980; J. Slater, *Teaching History in the New Europe*, London/New York 1995; and S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, Philadelphia 2001.

741 Lee, "Understanding History", 155.

742 Shemilt, *History*, 5.

743 Lee, "Understanding History", 129.

"untold" stories, which, in Michael Jackson's words, often "remain in the shadows, censored and suppressed".[744] This appreciation should go hand in hand with a rejection of attitudes of passive and uncritical acceptance of given stories and with a proclivity to question and deconstruct received truths. Pupils should understand the relationship between history and politics, with specific reference being made to Rwandan historiography, and should be taught to be suspicious of narratives that claim to hold the ultimate truth. They should recognise the pretension of such claims and the conditions and constraining factors that influence historiographical production. The discipline should also nurture an awareness of the undesirability of giving in to a "natural" propensity to analyse and interpret the past through the lenses of the present.[745]

Secondly, curriculum reform should ensure that the acquisition of disciplinary concepts and dispositions is matched with the development of pupils' ability to apply the historian's methods, tools, and approaches to discover the past for themselves by actively engaging in a sophisticated process of independent historical enquiry and narrative construction. Contrary to common practice in present-day Rwanda, history classes should stimulate pupils to formulate and answer relevant historical questions, and to reconstruct the past through the articulation of well-founded arguments, based on an accurate and critical handling of a range of relevant sources. Curriculum revision should encourage a teaching and learning process which presents history "in the form of a debate among different and often conflicting representations",[746] and through which pupils can learn to arbitrate amongst alternative interpretations of the past and to "construct complex narratives that take 'ambivalences and paradoxes, ambiguities and dissonances into account'".[747] Evidently, for this approach to be effectively implemented, curriculum revision should be accompanied by adequate investment in order to train educators in critical, democratic, and active pedagogy, and specifically in dealing with sensitive and emotive issues in history. To support their work, resources should also be made available to produce and provide access to varied sources of information besides state-sanctioned textbooks, including printed, audio-visual and electronic resources reflecting multiple views and perspectives.

In order for history education to be relevant to the specific socio-political context in which it is embedded and to the reality lived by the pupils, schools should aspire to the role of a meeting place where a multiplicity of private views, experiences, and sentiments brought by pupils and teachers to the classroom can

744 Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling*, 31.
745 Wineburg, *Historical Thinking*, 3–27.
746 Lorenz, "Towards a Theoretical Framework", 39.
747 M. Salber Phillips, "History, Memory and Historical Distance", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 104.

be openly addressed and acknowledged. Schooling should provide a safe forum where young people feel free to discuss "unofficial" accounts and to articulate and process personal memories and family histories that may conflict with the state meta-narrative. At present, schooling seems to give pupils an opportunity to publicly transpose their private knowledge only insofar as this knowledge fits into the authorised version of Rwandan history. The experience of learning history in present-day Rwanda might thus be alienating for those youngsters whose personal or family history does not appear to find expression in the classroom and in the wider society. As Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli suggest, "all children have a right to know and to understand their own personal story, that is, they have a right to know their own place in a larger history". They add that, "[n]ot only do young people need access to these stories, but more importantly, they must be able to read them critically so that they can become active participants in writing their own stories".[748]

Ultimately, it is my contention that, through the application of "a pedagogy of apprenticeship historical thinking", as Laville defines it,[749] history education has the distinct potential to contribute to the advancement and consolidation of post-war peacebuilding and democratisation processes in Rwanda and beyond. Through its disciplinary teachings, history can promote such skills and abilities as critical thinking, problem solving, analysis, synthesis, and judgement. These are fundamental to the formation of informed and independent-minded citizens who are duly equipped to effectively deal with "abusive, ideologically slanted efforts to reconstruct the past".[750] Such skills are particularly needed in as contested an environment as that in Rwanda, where the past has been liberally manipulated and mobilised for present political gain. Besides reducing young people's vulnerability to dangerous manipulation and indoctrination, a critical approach to history education has a unique power to widen perspectives and to defy narrow-mindedness and parochialism. History teaching can nurture democratic dispositions, and advance attitudes of respect, understanding, and acceptance towards what is or seems to be different. In particular, an apprenticeship in historical thinking can provide dispositions and tools necessary to help younger generations handle multiple sources of information that reflect different views and "to develop empathy for or take the perspective of those perceived as 'other'".[751] More specifically, history education has a crucial role to

748 Bush and Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education*, 19.

749 Laville, "Historical Consciousness", 171.

750 J. Létourneau and S. Moisan, "Young People's Assimilation of a Collective Historical Memory: A Case Study of Quebeckers of French-Canadian Heritage", in: Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 123.

751 L.S. Levstik, "Crossing the Empty Spaces: New Zealand Adolescents' Conceptions of Perspective-Taking and Historical Significance", in: O.L. Davis Jr., E.A. Yeager, and S.J. Foster

play in helping young people navigate through competing accounts of the recent violent past, with which they might be struggling in their efforts to understand "the truth" about "what really happened". In so doing, history can likewise respond to the need to encourage pupils in Rwanda to embrace more nuanced and balanced views as opposed to simplistic and archetypical perspectives. Such a critical and pluralistic history education could finally empower young people to become what Elavie Ndura-Ouédraogo calls "reflective agents of change".[752] As Bush and Saltarelli comment, "[t]his critical thrust of education opens possibilities for thinking and acting in ways that both challenge orthodoxies and struggle for transformation and empowerment".[753]

While the challenges of writing and teaching history have proven extremely daunting in Rwanda, the promises and opportunities that this field presents are considerable. If capitalised upon, such opportunities may prove to be key in allowing the younger generations to move forward towards a more peaceful and prosperous future. Equipped with the tools of professional history, today's young people could be better prepared to face the hurdles and challenges that have so often tragically impacted upon this turbulent region of Africa.

(eds.), *Historical Empathy and Perspective Taking in the Social Studies*, Lanham 2001, 71–72. See also K.C. Barton and L.S. Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good*, Mahwah, N.J. 2004.

752 E. Ndura-Ouédraogo, "Grassroots Voices of Hope: Educators' and Students' Perspectives on Educating for Peace in Post-Conflict Burundi", in: C. McGlynn et al. (eds.), *Peace Education in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies: Comparative Perspectives*, New York 2009, 29.

753 Bush and Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education*, 29.

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Glossary

Abiru	Court ritualists and guardians of esoteric codes in ancient Rwanda.
AERG	(Association des Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide): Association of student survivors of genocide created in 1996 as a support mechanism for thousands of young Rwandans in secondary and higher education.
AI	(Amnesty International): Human rights organisation with its headquarters in London, UK.
Amoko	A term which in the local language, Kinyarwanda, designates any kind of "category" and which, while traditionally employed to refer to Rwandan clans, since colonial times has also been used as an appellation for ethnic groups.
APROSOMA	(Association pour la Promotion Sociale des Masses/Association for the Social Promotion of the Masses): Hutu-dominated political party founded in the late 1950s and defunct by the early 1960s.
CCM	(Centre for Conflict Management): Institute created in 1999 at the University of Rwanda, conducting research and teaching in the fields of genocide, peace, and conflict studies.
CDR	(Coalition pour la Défense de la République/Coalition for the Defence of the Republic): Extremist Hutu political party and ally of President Habyarimana's party, which played a major role in the 1994 genocide. In the midst of civil war in the early 1990s, it rejected the Arusha peace accords and was therefore barred from participating in the Broad-Based Transitional Government (BBTG). Several of its prominent members were convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
CLIIR	(Centre de Lutte contre l'Impunité et l'Injustice au Rwanda/Center for the Fight against Impunity and Injustice in Rwanda): Organisation created in Belgium in 1995, critical of the current Rwandan government and engaged in advocacy against human rights violations in Rwanda.
CNLG	(Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Genocide/ National Commission for the Fight against Genocide): Institution established in 2007 with the mission of fighting against genocide and its ideology. It is in charge of genocide commemorations, oversees memorial sites, advocates for survivors, and conducts research on genocide.

DRC	(Democratic Republic of Congo): Rwanda's western neighbour, formerly known as Zaire.
FAR	(Forces Armées Rwandaises/Rwandan Armed Forces): Rwanda's national army until July 1994, largely responsible for carrying out massacres in 1994.
FARG	(Fonds National pour l'Assistance aux Rescapés du Genocide/Genocide Survivors' Assistance Fund): Fund established by law by the Government of National Unity in 1998 to provide education, health, and housing assistance to vulnerable genocide survivors.
FHAO	(Facing History and Ourselves): Non-profit educational organisation headquartered in the United States and operational worldwide. It works with educators and develops resources and training on prejudice and injustice, with a focus on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.
Gacaca	Kinyarwanda word, literally meaning "justice on the grass" and referring to an indigenous form of local justice in Rwanda, which was adapted and implemented in the early 2000s to try hundreds of thousands of alleged perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.
GoR	Government of Rwanda.
HRW	(Human Rights Watch): International nonprofit, non-governmental human rights organisation headquartered in New York.
IBUKA	Kinyarwanda word literally meaning "remember", referring to Rwanda's high profile lobby group and umbrella association for genocide - survivor organisations. Established in 1995 and based in Kigali, its mandate includes keeping the memory of the genocide alive and providing support to genocide survivors.
ICG	(International Crisis Group): Independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation headquartered in Brussels and committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict worldwide.
ICTR	(International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda): Ad hoc international tribunal located in Arusha, Tanzania, and created by the UN Security Council in 1994 to prosecute individuals who carried the highest responsibility for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity that had been perpetrated throughout 1994 both in Rwanda and abroad.
Ingando	Informal education programmes, also known as "solidarity camps", which have provided lectures on the country's past and current affairs as well as self-defence training to thousands of Rwandan citizens since the late 1990s.
Inkotanyi	Originally the name of a warrior group under King Rwabugiri in the 1800s, it was used by the RPF rebels at the time of the civil war in the early 1990s to refer to its armed wing.
Interahamwe	Kinyarwanda word literally meaning "those who fight/attack together". It refers to an extremist government-backed Hutu militia, comprised mostly of unemployed young men, which played a central role in the 1994 genocide.

Inyenzi	Kinyarwanda word meaning "cockroach", used pejoratively by the hate media in the early 1990s to refer to the RPF rebels at the time of the civil war and to dehumanise all Tutsi.
IRDP	(Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace): Rwanda's leading national independent and non-profit research institute for peacebuilding, founded in Kigali in 2001.
IRIN	(Integrated Regional Information Networks): News agency reporting on humanitarian issues worldwide.
Iringaniza	Policy of quotas regulating access to education in Rwanda prior to the genocide.
Itorero	Rwandan civic education institution rooted in local traditions, which was officially introduced in 2007 as a mechanism to rebuild the nation's social fabric by instilling such cultural values as national unity, patriotism, and integrity.
MDR-Parmehutu	(Mouvement Démocratique Républicain-Parti de l'Emancipation du Peuple Hutu/Democratic Republican Movement/Party of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Hutu People): Political party of Hutu nationalists founded by Rwanda's first president Grégoire Kayibanda in the late 1950s and fighting for the emancipation of the Hutu majority.
MIJESCAFOP	(Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Professional Training): Ministry established in the second half of the 1990s. Its various sections have since then been divided to form the distinct ministries of Youth and ICT (MYICT) and Sports and Culture (MINISPOC).
MINEDUC	(Ministry of Education): Formerly known as the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education/Ministry of Higher Education Scientific Research and Culture (MINEPRISEC/MINESUPRES), and as the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research.
MRND	(Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement/National Revolutionary Movement for Development): President Juvenal Habyarimana's political party, founded in 1975.
MSM	(Mouvement Social Muhutu/ Hutu Social Movement): Hutu political party founded in 1957 by Rwanda's first president, Grégoire Kayibanda, and later renamed MDR-Parmehutu.
NCDC	(National Curriculum Development Centre): Specialised institution within the Ministry of Education in charge of developing school curricula. In 2009 it was merged into the Rwanda Education Board (REB) together with the Rwanda National Examination Council (RNEC), the Teacher Service Commission (TSC), the General Inspectorate, and the Students Financing Agency of Rwanda (SFAR).
NUR	(National University of Rwanda): Institute of higher education established by the government in the southern town of Butare in 1963. In 2013, it was merged into the newly created University of Rwanda (UR), together with all public higher education institutions in the country.
NURC	(National Unity and Reconciliation Commission): Commission created in 1999 by law with the objective of promoting and coordinating

	measures aimed at fostering national unity and reconciliation in the wake of the 1994 genocide.
Parmehutu	See MDR-Parmuhutu.
PRI	(Penal Reform International): International non-governmental organisation founded in London in 1989 and working on criminal justice reform worldwide. Amongst other things, it was involved in the development and monitoring of the *gacaca* process in post-genocide Rwanda.
RADER	(Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais/ Rwandan Democratic Rally): Progressive Tutsi-dominated political party created in 1959.
RDF	(Rwanda Defence Forces): National army of Rwanda, until 2002 known as the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA).
RoR	Republic of Rwanda.
RPA	(Rwandan Patriotic Army): Armed wing of the former rebel movement and now ruling party RPF, turned into Rwanda's national army after the RPF's victory and political take-over in 1994. The army was renamed Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) in 2002.
RPF	(Rwandan Patriotic Front): Current ruling political party in Rwanda, led by President Paul Kagame. It was created in 1987 by Rwandan refugees in Uganda.
RTLM	(Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines): Rwandan radio station which broadcast between 1993 and 1994, notorious for its role in inciting the 1994 genocide through hateful rhetoric.
Ubuhake	Traditional practice of pastoral clientship in Rwanda, which reportedly was a prominent form of social hegemony practised by cattle-rich Tutsi. This practice entailed a formal relationship between a client and a more powerful patron and involved the exchange of services in return for access to cattle as well as for protection.
Ubukonde	Traditional system of land tenure and a form of clientship mainly practised in the north of the country, whereby the right to exploit the land was granted to tenants by landholders in exchange for obligations.
Uburetwa	Traditional form of corvee labour service required from tenant families by a chief.
UNAMIR	(United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda): Peacekeeping mission established by the UN Security Council with the aim of aiding the peace process and the transition in Rwanda between 1993 and 1996. It has received considerable attention for its inadequate role in the context of the 1994 genocide.
UNAR	(Union Nationale Rwandaise/Rwandan National Union): Now defunct Tutsi-dominated monarchist political party founded in 1959, which called for immediate independence under a constitutional monarchy.