

DISCUSSION PAPER / 2007.06



Living the Transition

A Bottom-up Perspective on Rwanda's Political Transition

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November 2007

¹ Previous (and shorter) versions of this paper were presented at AEGIS European Conference on African Studies, July 11-14 2007, Leiden, the Netherlands and at the conference: "Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented Society", 19-21 September, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa and during a master class with Michael Woolcock (Worldbank), Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, September 26, 2007. The author would especially like to thank An Ansoms, Tom De Herdt, Danielle de Lame, Ben D'Exelle, François Kabuya Kalala, Stefaan Marijsse, Wim Marivoet, Marina Rafti, Filip Reyntjens, Jos Vaessen, Bjorn Vancampenhout and Stef Vandeginste for their comments on earlier versions of (parts) of this text. The usual disclaimer applies.

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CONTENTS

Abstract	4
1. Introduction	5
2. The Transition Paradigm	6
3. Rwanda's Political Transition Lived from Below	8
3.1 Multiple Voices: Cross-Cutting Cleavages, Shifting Identities and Ethnic Bi-Polarity	8
3.2 Fieldwork & Methodology	12
3.2.1 Life history interviews and a subjective ranking exercise	13
3.2.2 Semantics, or what does it all mean: security, confidence, political representation?	15
3.2.3 The selection of communities (sectors) and respondents	17
3.2.4 Interviewers	19
3.2.5 A Note on Presentation: Interlocking Realities	20
3.3 Perceived Changes over Time	22
3.3.1 1980s – 1994	24
<i>Genocide in context: The tale of two villages</i>	26
3.3.2 1994 - 2000	30
3.3.3 2000-2005	32
3.3.4 2005 onwards	34
<i>The two villages in post-genocide context: justice-governance-development</i>	41
4. Some Concluding Remarks	46
5. Bibliography	48
Appendix 1 Four (Life) Stories	50
Appendix 2 Characteristics selected villages	54

ABSTRACT

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Political transitions are dominantly analyzed top-down and focus on a narrow range of political processes and institutions. Critical rethinkings of the 'transition paradigm' entail that structural factors, such as historical legacies and ethnic make-up, determine the trajectory of political transitions. In this paper we intend to complement top-down approaches by offering a bottom-up perspective revealing what it means to live through a transition in the ordinary perception. We use the Rwandan transition as case-study. An analysis of over 400 life histories of ordinary Rwandan peasants and their subjective ranking exercises over time on a 'ladder of life' portrays the trajectory of the Rwandan transition as perceived from below. The ethnicity of the respondents functions as pivot to shed light on the structural factor underlying the Rwandan transition: the Hutu-Tutsi bi-polarity.

RÉSUMÉ

Vivre la Transition

Une Perspective du Bas vers le Haut sur la Transition Politique Rwandaise

Les transitions politiques sont surtout analysées du haut vers le bas et se concentrent sur une liste restreinte de processus et d'institutions politiques. Repenser avec un esprit critique "le paradigme de la transition" implique que les facteurs structurels comme les héritages historiques et les appartenances ethniques déterminent la trajectoire des transitions politiques. Dans cet article, nous avons l'intention de compléter l'approche du haut vers le bas en offrant une perspective du bas vers le haut révélant ce que signifie vivre une transition dans la perception et l'expérience ordinaire. Nous utilisons la transition rwandaise comme sujet d'étude. Une analyse de plus de 400 histoires de vie de simples paysans rwandais et leurs essais subjectifs de classification dans le temps sur une "échelle de vie" décrivent la trajectoire de la transition rwandaise comme perçue par le bas. L'ethnicité des personnes interrogées fonctionne comme pivot pour éclairer le facteur structurel sous-jacent de la transition rwandaise: la bipolarité Hutu-Tutsi

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1990, a political transition was initiated in Rwanda. Several factors influenced the incumbent regime – a so-called development dictatorship – that came into place after the 1973 coup by Juvenal Habyarimana to open up and instigate liberal reforms that should eventually have led to a democracy. Domestic opposition forces came into play, contesting and competing for power that was until then mainly centred in the hands of a Hutu clique from the North of the country. At the same time, a Tutsi-dominated rebel force, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) started a civil war against the Habyarimana regime. During a social revolution in 1959, the Tutsi monarchy was abolished and thousands of Tutsi had sought refuge in neighbouring countries, fleeing the violence targeting their ethnic group. Their descendants were, at the end of the 80s, demanding a return to Rwanda. The denial of this return by the Habyarimana regime made them resort to an armed means of access to the country and a share in power. In August 1993, the Arusha peace agreement established an official end to the war and sought a compromise between the different parties involved: the elite on the side of the Habyarimana regime, the internal opposition forces and the armed rebel force (RPF).

The agreement was never implemented since the crash of the plane carrying Habyarimana unleashed a genocidal campaign against Tutsi civilians and so-called “moderate Hutu” not in favour of the incumbents’ politics. The RPF resumed its war and gained a military victory in July 1994 by defeating the government forces and stopping the genocide. They stated to follow the Arusha peace agreement and continue the political transition with the “forces” that did not participate in the genocide in order to achieve power-sharing and democratic institutions. This initiated a second phase in the transitional period, officially completed in 2003.

A mainly top-down assessment of the Rwandan transition(s), its different phases and its outcome is provided by several authors². We complement these approaches through a bottom-up perspective that intends to “bring peasants back in to an understanding of the political and social processes of the state.”³ We start by outlining a critical rethinking of the transition paradigm that brings into focus structural factors that impede a smooth transition to democracy. In our current analysis of what it means to live through a transition, a bottom-up perspective, we use ethnicity as pivot. Based on more than 400 life-story interviews with both Hutu and Tutsi and their subjective well-being rankings we shed light on perceived changes over time.

² On the Rwandan transition between 90-94 see: F. Reyntjens, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs en Crise. Rwanda, Burundi. 1988-1994*, Paris, Editions Karthala, 1994. G. Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis. History of a Genocide*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. A. Guichaoua (ed.) *Les Crises Politiques au Burundi et au Rwanda (1993-1994)*, Paris, Editions Karthala, 1995. R. Lemarchand, 'Managing Transition Anarchies. Rwanda, Burundi and South-Africa in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 32, N 4, 1994, pp. 581-604. On (mainly) the second phase of the transition see F. Reyntjens, 'La Transition Politique Au Rwanda', in S. Marysse & F. Reyntjens (eds.) *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2003-2004*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004) pp. 1-22. F. Reyntjens, 'Rwanda: Ten Years on. From Genocide to Dictatorship', *African Affairs*, N° 103, 2004, pp. 177-210. I. Nifosi, 'A New Conceptual Framework on Political Transitions. A Case-Study on Rwanda.' In: in S. Marysse & F. Reyntjens (eds.) *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2004-2005*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), pp. 73-94. And M. Rafti, 'A Bungled Path to Democracy: Political Transition and Authoritarian Consolidation in Rwanda,' paper presented at the Conference "Deepening Democracy in Divided Societies," Cape Town, South Africa, 19-21 September 2007.

³ C. Newbury & D. Newbury, 'Bringing Peasants Back In: Agrarian Themes in the Construction and Corrosion of Statist Historiography in Rwanda', *American Historical Review*, 2000, p. 874.

2. THE TRANSITION PARADIGM

The assumption underlying the main literature on political transitions, the so-called “transition paradigm” entails that a country shifting away from authoritarian rule is evolving towards democracy⁴. Through reform, compromise or overthrow – the modalities of the transition – do the choices of the main actors – incumbent and opposition elite forces – drive the transition towards its outcome: the new democracy. A reconceptualization of this classical transition paradigm has highlighted some major shortcomings based on the observation that several countries that underwent a political transition failed to democratize.⁵ Therefore, these emerging regimes – the outcome of the transition – need to be situated somewhere in the “grey zone”⁶ in-between authoritarianism and democracy, or in either of the two corners of this spectrum.

Important in the understanding of reasons why countries failed to democratize was the observation that “structural features” influence or hamper efforts to democratize. These structural conditions comprise historical and institutional legacies, the economic situation, social class or ethnic make-up. As a consequence, Carothers argues: “Democracy promoters are strongly wedded to their focus on political processes and institutions. They have been concerned that trying to blend that focus with economic or socio-cultural perspectives might lead to the dilution or reduction of democracy assistance. And having set up as organizations with an exclusively political perspective, it is hard for democracy promotion groups to include other kinds of expertise or approaches.”⁷

Moreover, analysis of political transitions – even when incorporating the critical rethinking of the ‘transition paradigm’ – are dominantly focusing on elite actions and discourses, institutional build-up and procedural regulations. Local perceptions of socio-political change are not mentioned in the transition literature. It is important that we incorporate concrete results of governance, that is, tangible life changes in the (perceived) well-being of the population, to understand the nature and in assessing the outcomes of transitions. Well-being includes both objective and subjective elements, so an assessment of indicators of change should include measures of how people feel about their lives and perceive the changing socio-political environment. Narratives of popular ‘agency’ and ‘perceptions’ of change are, therefore, a necessary ‘bottom-up’ complement to a ‘top-down’, or macro-oriented understanding of a transition. Processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to shift away from old socio-political procedures, behaviour, institutions and ideological underpinnings and evolve towards a new ‘order’ are operating in the context of the broader societal (opportunity) structure. A bottom-up perspective on ‘transition’, therefore, entails the exploration of the dynamic interplay between agency and ‘opportunity’ structure.⁸

⁴ S. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press 1991.

⁵ T. Carothers, ‘The End of the Transition Paradigm’, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, N° 1, pp. 5–21.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 16.

⁸ Our discussion of “structure” and “agency” is primarily based on: D. Narayan (ed.) *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction. A Sourcebook*, Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2002, pp. xvii – xxiii. D. Narayan, ‘Conceptual Framework and Methodological Challenges’ in D. Narayan (ed.) *Measuring Empowerment. Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2005, pp. 3–38. N. Long, *Development Sociology, Actor Perspectives*, London & New York: Routledge, 2001.

A society's opportunity structure is defined by the broader societal context being institutional, social and political; it is the formal and informal context in which people operate. We define *institutions* as laws, rules, norms and patterns of practices and behaviour. These can be formal or informal. *Formal institutions* include laws, rules and implementation processes mostly upheld by the state. State policies and the climate surrounding state institutions shape people's actions and perceptions. *Informal institutions* include norms and values, routines of conduct and clusters of practices guiding everyday life and societal intercourse. The opportunity structure is not only defined by institutions, but is also shaped by the nature of *social and political structures*. Agency and the way agency is exercised is to a large extent determined by the prevalent authority structures, be it political or social. These structures can be open or closed, inclusive or exclusionary, co-operative or conflictual. Groups can be cohesive and powerful and social cleavages deep and systemic.

We define *agency* as the capacity of an actor to process - perceive and interpret - social experiences and events and the (subsequent) capability to express personal preferences and make meaningful choices.⁹ Agency resides in a person's assets and capabilities. Assets are the means people can employ in life. We understand them as being material: land, housing, livestock, money, etc. *Capabilities* are enabling qualities inherently belonging to a person. They can be acquired during the course of life or they can be a-scripted from birth. We further make a distinction between: *human, social, psychological and political capabilities*. Under *human capabilities* we understand life-enhancing skills like health, education etc. *Social capabilities* are qualities that include a sense of belonging and identity, relations of trust, organizational capacities. Self-esteem and self-confidence, the ability to imagine and to aspire are part of the *psychological capabilities*.¹⁰ And *political capabilities* are the capacities to participate in political life: represent oneself or others, feel represented, hold people accountable, access information and form associations. Agency is not only inherent in the individual, but is also an important feature of collectives. Groups are characterized by an identity and capable of organization, representation and giving voice.

⁹ Long states: "The notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experiences and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Within the limits of information, uncertainty and the other constraints (e.g. physical, normative or politico-economic) that exist, social actors are 'knowledge-able' and 'capable'. They attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and monitor continuously their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and taking note of the various contingent circumstances." N. Long, op.cit, p. 16.

¹⁰ Appadurai introduced the notion of the 'capacity to aspire', A Appadurai, 'The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition', in: V. Rao and M. Walton, Culture and Public Action (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2004).

3. RWANDA'S POLITICAL TRANSITION LIVED FROM BELOW

We analyze the features of the Rwandan political transition along the re-conceptualizations of the transition paradigm identified above. In doing so, we offer a bottom-up perspective by focusing on perceptions of socio-political change, while a thread and focal point throughout our analysis are the cleavages structuring Rwandan society. We start with an identification of the different identity groups since the perception and experience of the same reality may differ depending on identity of those perceiving. Long states: "[...] Issues or events are, of course, often perceived, and their implications interpreted, very differently by the various parties/actors involved. Hence, from the outset one faces the dilemma of how to represent situations where there are multiple voices and contested 'realities'."¹¹ While the Hutu-Tutsi divide is the central cleavage structuring the Rwandan socio-political universe, identities are multiple and fluid, also in the case of Rwanda. Our intake is the rural peasantry where we identify socio-economic classes and ethnic (sub-)groups. In what follows, we further explain the nature of the methodology used to collect the data to offer this bottom-up perspective. Subsequently, we outline the course of events as experienced by the ordinary peasant population and illustrate how the underlying structural factor we keep in focus, ethnicity, not only shaped the transition but also shapes the current perceptions of the Rwandan transition that started in 1990. We will finally turn to the outcome of the transition, that is, the perceptions of the living conditions under the regime that emerged following military overthrow by the RPF.

¹¹ N. Long, 'Agency and Constraint, Perceptions and Practice: A Theoretical Position', in H. de Haan & N. Long (eds.), *Images and Realities of Rural Life. Wageningen Perspectives on Rural Transformations*, Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp, 1997, pp. 3-4.

3.1 Multiple Voices: Cross-Cutting Cleavages, Shifting Identities and Ethnic Bi-Polarity

According to the Rwandan Ministry of Finance 56,3 % of the Rwandan population is identified as poor in 2007¹². Poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon with 92% of the poor living in rural areas. Moreover, 87.2% of the entire rural based Rwandan population has agriculture as the main economic activity either, farming on their own account or working as a wage labourer. This means that the people in the countryside dispersed over the Rwandan hills are predominantly poor and almost all peasant.

But within this rural mass of poor peasants - only looking homogeneous when observed from a distance - a lot of differentiation can be made. The peasantry class has its own sub-classes characterized by their peculiar social interactions. This stratification was especially shaped since the installation of the Second Republic from the seventies onwards as the monograph of a rural hill by Danielle

¹² Republic of Rwanda, National Institute of Statistics, Preliminary Poverty Update Report, Integrated Living Conditions Survey 2005/6, (National Institute of Statistics: Kigali) December 2006.

de Lame makes clear in which a central theme is precisely this interaction between the “wage-earner” and the ordinary peasant: “The most striking feature of the Second Republic was, in fact, the rapid enrichment in monetary terms of a middle class composed of civil servants cum businesspeople who still maintained ties with their rural origins.”¹³ And: “The introduction of the political structures of the Second Republic provided new objectives for the ambitious. Success, until recently based on membership in a lineage and the defense of the interests of one’s house and its allies, came to integrate factors connected with fortune in the modern sphere such as employment on the Project, selling beer to an increased number of wage-earners, directing the choir.”¹⁴

The differentiation between those who have money or wealth that came into effect on the Rwandan hills some decades ago is still shaping present rural life. In the first place there is the differentiation between the subsistence farmers and those who, next to their own agricultural production, earn a wage as civil servant in the government administration, the education system or the numerous development activities. The latter are set apart from the others by more intense mutual interactions associating with each other in bars, on weddings and other festivities. While they mostly have enjoyed some form of education after primary school they are considered as the ‘*évolués*’¹⁵ by the ordinary peasants, imbued with ‘ideas’ necessary for the personal development in life. Their level of education makes that they are often solicited by the administration or, if there happens to be an election of some sort, elected by the non-educated to execute some ‘tasks’ for the government; implement some development programme or take up some kind of ‘sensitization’ campaign.

Apart from this dominant split between those having an (occasional) off-farm income and those without access to regular monetary income, the socio-economic differentiation is even more subtle. The chart below makes this clear [see figure 1]. It is important to understand these categories and the strategies for movement-up and mechanisms of falling-down on the social ladder because they form the background to understand the consequences of the violence experienced in the hills over the last fifteen years and the perceived regime performance in the domain of the economic recovery.

¹³ D. de Lame, *A Hill Among A Thousand. Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005, p. 62-63

¹⁴ D. de Lame, o.c., p. 262.

¹⁵ “The ones that moved up in life.”

Figure 1 Socio-Economic Profiles



Based on several Focus Groups Discussions with, in total, 35 participants between February and July 2006. A similar exercise had been summarized in: Republic of Rwanda, Participatory Poverty Assessment, (Kigali: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2001).

Apart from the differentiation according to socio-economic profile ethnicity is another aspect that structures interaction in the texture of social life in Rwanda. De Lame states that ethnicity was only a minor factor in daily life at the end of the eighties, the period in which she undertook fieldwork: “[...] membership in an ethnic group seemed more to be a discriminatory criterion for the political apparatus than an essential part of peasant’s everyday life. The real situation as perceived by the latter was that they were more or less poor, irrespective of their ethnic group, and at the mercy of richer people, most of whom were Hutu, and secondly, that access to education was carefully – and ethnically – guarded.”¹⁶ The basic socio-economic inequality she found existing between the peasantry, as explained above, was cross-cutting all three ethnic groups – Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. An economic inequality that could find an easy outlet through the lens of ethnicity when starting to provoke resentment.¹⁷

Whereas the influence of ethnicity might have been only to a small extent present in the period preceeding the 1990 attack by the RPF, it did structure the nature of the violence during the genocide and it is certainly structuring daily life currently, although paradoxically, ethnicity is ‘officially’ abolished. But since 1994, new identities have come into play. They are subcategories of the main cleavage dominating Rwandan society: the Hutu-Tutsi bi-polarity. New identity markers came into being due to the violence and its aftermath and the judicial proceedings to deal with the past, mainly in the *Gacaca* sessions.¹⁸

The group of Tutsi can be divided in genocide survivors and ‘old caseload returnees’. The former lived in Rwanda before the genocide and survived the mayhem. The latter are either former refugees or descendants of refugees that left Rwanda after the Hutu revolution. They often settled in cities after their return to Rwanda. Others, ordinary peasants, mostly returned to their region of (family) origin. The survivors are almost always of Tutsi identity, with only a few exceptions.¹⁹ Fieldwork observations make clear that there are, in general, three defining parameters necessary to be able to make a legitimate claim as victim seeking justice for ‘wrong done’ in the *Gacaca* courts:²⁰ one needs to have undergone persecution – not simply ‘having lost’ – between October 1990 and December 1994; a persecution because of having a certain identity; an ‘identity-based’ persecution because of belonging to the Tutsi as ethnic group that makes one currently an officially recognized survivor.

On the side of the Hutu, four groups can be distinguished in a local community. Firstly, there are the prisoners whom are absent in daily village life and are only transported to the village when their own trial takes place. Their families are present however and approach *Gacaca* as a means to get their loved ones free. A community also contains liberated prisoners. They have confessed in prison and

¹⁶ D. de Lame, op. cit., p. 94

¹⁷ D. de Lame, op. cit., p. 97.

¹⁸ The theme of the *Gacaca* courts is further explored in : B. Ingelaere, ‘The *Gacaca* Courts in Rwanda’, in: L. Huyse (ed.) *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation Mechanisms. After Violent Conflict: Learning From African Experiences* (Stockholm: International Idea), 2007. B. Ingelaere, “Does the Truth Pass Across the Fire without Burning?” *Transitional Justice and Its Discontents in Rwanda’s Gacaca Courts*, Discussion Paper, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, 2007.

¹⁹ There exceptions can be, for example, Hutu widows who were married to a Tutsi are regularly also considered as official rescapé, genocide survivors. On the other hand, female Tutsi, married with a Hutu are often not recognized as official survivor since they were married to a Hutu and therefore so-called protected. Most of the time, the recognition as survivor depends on local dynamics since some members of the local community are responsible for identifying survivors and therefore, local dynamics come into play. The life story of Séverine in annex – box 2 is an example of a Hutu women recognized as a genocide survivor. Her situation is special however, since she claims to be of Tutsi identity, while she is not.

²⁰ See a similar reasoning for the defining characteristics of victim/rescapé entitled for government or NGO assistance. H. Rombouts, *Victim Organisations and the Politics of Reparation. A Case Study on Rwanda*, (Antwerp: Intersentia, 2005, p. 149.

were therefore released. They are closely monitored by authorities. Often they play an important role in the *Gacaca* proceedings by accusing fellow villagers, Hutu that have never been imprisoned but were somehow implicated in the genocide. This can create serious conflicts between them and those they accuse. Outright intimidation or more subtle means are employed to silence or to forge an alliance with them. The same tactics are used to influence the behaviour of the genocide survivors. Sometimes killings take place to get rid of witnesses. A part from the (former) prisoners, two Hutu subgroups remain: those accused in *Gacaca* and others not accused. The first live in the fear and insecurity of an upcoming trial with an unpredictable outcome, the second group is relieved that they are not accused, but are very prudent not to get in conflict with anyone since they are aware that current conflicts can be dragged into the *Gacaca* arena to be settled under the guise of an alleged genocide crime.

3.2 Fieldwork & Methodology

Our research wants to understand (the experience and perceptions of) processes of transition and regime change. Rwanda's political transition started in 1990. We, therefore, needed the ability to capture dynamics over a longer period, not only an understanding of the current situation. Moreover, we needed to come to an understanding of the *perceived* comparison of the subsequent regimes without asking respondents explicit questions to do so. Direct questions of this kind by foreign researchers are not only 'unwanted' by the Rwandan political establishment and administrative authorities, they would also mainly trigger 'politically correct' answers by respondents. The violence experienced during the 1994 genocide and war has destroyed the Rwandan social fabric, distrust is pervasive. An environment where people experienced or participated in different forms of violence, is not the context where you can make clear-cut observations and impetuously 'collect' info to subsequently proceed with a univocal analysis and generalization. The following zealous combat to eradicate 'genocide ideology'²¹, equally counters all utterances not in accordance with the official "public transcript"²² and has installed a high degree of self-censorship among the peasant population.²³ Therefore, we integrated the following principles and research strategies in designing the study and during fieldwork: (1) an inductive 'theoretical drive' and an 'iterative' research process; (2) making observations on both the community (village/sector) and the individual level; (3) understanding the breadth and the depth of processes; (4) making use of a rigid sampling framework in order to have variance in the sites for in-depth study (multi-sited); (5) combining quantitative & qualitative research strategies (mixed method); (6) the ability to capture dynamics of change by adopting a diachronic perspective.²⁴

²¹ Republic of Rwanda, *Genocide Ideology and Strategies for its Eradication*, Kigali: GoR, 2007. Footnote 5 to 7 in the report (p. 17) gives concrete examples of instances of 'genocide ideology' and reveals its wide-ranging scope.

²² J. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 1990.

²³ The Kinyarwanda word "Kwibwizira" entails this idea of auto-censorship. It expresses the image that people do what authorities want them to do without the latter asking them to do so or without using coercion.

²⁴ The overall research design and strategy is further explained in B. Ingelaere, *Transitional Subjects/Subjects in Transition: Exploring Political Transition and Transitional Justice from Below. A Note On Methodology*. Discussion Paper, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, 2008. (forthcoming)

3.2.1 Life history interviews and a subjective ranking exercise

To avoid the pitfalls identified above and to live up to the research principles identified above, we approached the topic 'side-ways', by collecting life histories and subjective well-being and poverty rankings.²⁵ In so doing, respondents were not aware that they were not only telling their own story, but equally the story of (a political) transition and regime change.

In 2006, during a pilot period for the life story interviews, we conducted 50 full life-story interviews with 30 Hutu respondents and 20 Tutsi respondents from several villages. These interviews were conducted during several sessions with each respondent and through open-ended questions touching on every aspect of the interviewee's life. These initial life-story interviews lasted in total between 7 and 14 hours (several sessions). Based on an analysis of these narratives we deduced a set of questions to be used during shorter interview sessions that would take between 1,5 and 3 hours so we could use them with a larger sample of respondents. These questions would allow us to probe into crucial aspects of a member of the Rwandan peasantry life trajectory. We further grouped these questions into 5 themes that correspond with the different dimensions that matter in life for 'ordinary' people as identified above: the socio-economic situation, the feeling of security, the level of confidence in others (with a subsection for the own ethnic group and the other ethnic group), the feeling of political representation and the personal prospects for the future.²⁶ An analysis of these numerous life-story narratives enables us to understand what it means to live through a transition, a period of violence and from one regime into another. But apart from this 'qualitative' or 'ethnographic' research strategy, we added a 'quantitative' element to the exercise.

During each life story interview we used a "visual" to facilitate the respondents in the assessment of different periods in the life span.²⁷ [See figure 2] We asked this for the different themes identified above: the socio-economic situation, the feeling of security and the level of confidence in others and the feeling of political representation. In the life story interviews a value between -5 and +5 was given (by the respondent) through pointing on the appropriate step on the ladder for every year in the adult life period.

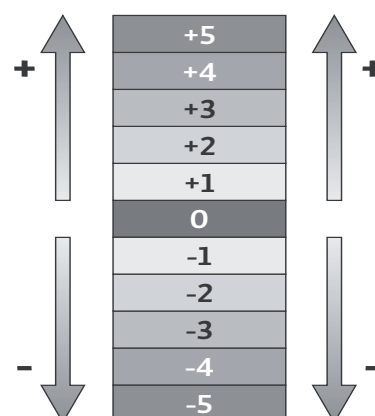
We proceeded as follows. First, the nature of the visual was explained: on top of the ladder are those people who are the best of (economy), the most secure (security), etc in the community of the respondent. Otherwise, the problem would exist that people would compare themselves with residents of Kigali, obliging them (in their perception) always to choose for the bottom steps. The spatial reference

²⁵ Apart from the life story interviews and subjective (poverty) rankings we present in this paper, we employed several other research strategies, survey interviews, semi-structured interview, focus group discussions on a number of themes, archival research, observation of daily life, political organization and Gacaca activities. In total, we spoke with over 1400 ordinary peasant.

²⁶ The above-mentioned 'capabilities' can be considered as dimensions of life that matter for ordinary people. They are also reflected in the findings from a large-scale research that aimed at establishing the different dimensions of 'well-being' and the 'good life'. These are 'material', 'physical' and 'social' well-being, together with 'security' and 'freedom of choice and action'. See the several volumes of the Worldbank study *Voices of the Poor* edited by D. Narayan (et al.) *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. And they equally refer to the different dimensions of the concept of 'human security' that shifted the attention from the territorial security of nation-states towards the security of people. The main threats to human security were summarized in the 1994 World Development Report as 'economic', 'food', 'health', 'environmental', 'personal', 'community' and 'political' security. UNDP, World Development Report, 1994, pp. 22-46.

²⁷ Inspired by H. Cantril, *The Pattern of Human Concerns*, (New Brunswick – New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965).

Figure 2. Life Story "Ladder of Life"



is the own community, in our field sites always rural with dominantly peasant inhabitants. With communities, we refer to sectors. There exist no villages in Rwanda. People live dispersed on the hills in the country-side and are grouped in administrative units. We define the local level, a local community, as the proximity of people's everyday lives. This happens at the cell and sector level as they existed before the administrative restructuring of January 2006.

When the geographical area for comparison was defined and the people on the top step characterized (step +5), the nature of the bottom step was further explained as 'people' who are 'the worst off in economic terms' (step -5) or 'feel the least secure', or 'are the least confident in the other ethnic group' / or the 'own ethnic group', or 'feel the least politically represented' in the *community*. The enumerators and my translator were 'trained' (and supervised) always to use exactly the same phrasings to explain the nature of the ladder and its steps in order to avoid a heterogeneous interpretation by the respondents. Equally important is the fact that all respondents have a similar understanding of the situation/feelings/concepts of 'economic prosperity', 'security', 'confidence' and 'political representation'. We always first asked the respondent to describe in his/her own words how he/she interpreted the notion 'economic situation', the 'feeling of security', the degree of 'confidence' and the nature of 'political representation'. Although their responses make clear that these notions comprise multiple characteristics and one respondent might pay more attention to one dimension over another one, their phrasings explaining the themes indicate that all are aware of the range of connotation a notion entails. Gradual continuity prevails in the semantic understanding of the notions under exploration, there is no difference in kind in the interpretations. We explain these semantics in section 3.2.2.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked to place themselves with regard to the topic discussed (economy, security, ...) on the ladder in their *current* situation. We then consistently moved back in time towards the year of marriage or the first year of adult life (if single). From that point onwards, we moved forward in time, asking a rating for every year. We used the findings from the life-story narrative to facilitate people to recall their situation at a certain moment in time. For example, when someone had told us he or she had a firstborn child in 1986, we would refer to 1986 as 'the year when your first child was born'.

It needs to be noted that the scale (ladder) itself remains fixed throughout the different periods in time. The fact that the scale remains fixed needs further explanation. For example, we have explained the difference in socio-economic classes in figure 1. The different groups such the *umutindi*, *umukene* and *umukire* etc always exist when considering the (sub-)groups as such. Even when a certain vil-

lage (at a certain point in time) does not contain, for example, households with the characteristics of the *umukire*, then the idea and knowledge of what it means to be *umukire* is still known to the inhabitants. A similar reasoning is made by the respondent when applying the scale for other than socio-economic themes such as the feeling of security or the level of political representation. Also in these cases is there an idea, understanding of what it means to be 'fully' represented, 'totally secure' or the flip-side situations. The scale functions as a mental map and background against which the personal movement up and down the ladder of life – the imaginary but stable situations/levels of the theme explored – is assessed related to a *certain theme* and *in time* and *in comparison* with the surrounding environment: the fellow community members, also moving on the ladder of life. Furthermore, as can be seen again in figure 1, enough differentiation exists between different groups/situations of economic prosperity (but also security/confidence/political representation) to allow for sufficient choice options.

Important to note is that these narratives and rankings are not indicators of economic welfare, social cohesion, security and political representation, but indicators of *perceptions* of these themes. Equally important in interpreting these findings is the fact that these results portray rankings over time: events and periods in the past are reinterpreted through the lens of events happening later and during following life periods. The functioning of memory and the effects of trauma, and current governmental campaigns to adjust the understanding of the past in nation-building strategies creates bias in the response of the ranking exercise. However, several elements need to be taken into account. In the first place: there are no baseline data available on these topics, recall is the best to get at these issues. Secondly, we want to understand the experience and perceptions of transition and this is how perceptions work: they are influenced by individual experiences in the past and mediated by discourses produced by the government, media and other instances, past and present. It is an element to take into account when interpreting and presenting the results of the rankings. And fourth: bias that might exist due to the recall activity goes in all directions: all respondents are subject to it.

3.2.2 Semantics, or what does it all mean: security, confidence, political representation?

What the ordinary Rwandan understands when considering the socio-economic situation of himself, his household and the neighbouring households is explained above in figure 1. When asked to explain what is understood under the feeling of security or confidence in others, often a reference is made to the heart (*umutima*). In the Rwandan context, the heart is the force unifying the human being.

It is the centre of reception of outward impulses and the locus of interior movement, the seed of the interior. Emotions, thoughts and will are interconnected and unified in the heart. The heart is inaccessible to others, but nevertheless the place where the truth lies.²⁸ A Rwandan peasant feels secure when the heart is calm and peaceful. Having peace of heart (*umutuzo w'umutima*), and thus feeling secure, is only possible when several conditions are met. Security (*umutekano*) has different dimensions. There is the security of the stomach (*umutekano w'inda*), security of the body (persons) and goods (*umutekano w'abantu n'ibintu*). The latter is fulfilled when one sleeps well (*ununtu araryama agasinzira*). There is a clear distinction between 'territorial' or 'physical' security and 'psychological' security. Territorial security is guaranteed when there is no war (*ntambara*) or conflicts (*imidugararo*) among the population. One can freely move around (*kujya aho ushaka*), cultivate the plots of land or breed cattle in freedom (*uburenganzira*). Territorial security is in the hands of the authorities and politicians. But this is no guarantee for economic sufficiency, security of the stomach. Poverty, the lack of food, hunger and the awareness that one is not capable to adequately counter sickness or pay the tuition fee for the children, creates a feeling of insecurity. Other intra-household problems, setbacks or conflicts contribute to a decrease in the feeling of security. Territorial security is no guarantee either for feeling at ease in the social and political climate in which one lives. The experience of the nature of the social constellation and the perception of the overall power structure and the functioning of the political order contribute to the increase or decrease of the feeling of security. The feeling that authorities are not on your side, that state policies are not applied equally and without arbitrariness creates the perception that one is targeted, one feels as if "they are aiming to do you wrong" (*Kukwirunkankiraho*). The lack of social cohesion and worries about the intention of some members of the living community further disturbs the peace of heart.

The heart is equally referred to in the context of confidence in others. Confidence in others is observable through actions and interactions in daily life. Amicable salutations and pleasant conversations are already a first sign of general trust in another person. But to really be confident in others, one needs to be sure about the nature of the heart of the other. But "the heart of man is far" (*Kumutima w'umuntu ni kure*) and thus inaccessible. Apart from the tacit exploration of the heart of the other in daily interactions do actions that go beyond the routine of daily life probe the nature of the heart of the other. These actions can be: inviting people to attend ceremonies of conviviality (*dusabana and dusangira*). Or through interventions and support by others when problems arise in the family due to sickness, death or other misfortune; by sharing foods and drinks, water and fire. Aid can be material (*gufashanya*) through money, a donation or sharing but it can also be moral (*gutabarana*) with the physical presence in

²⁸ See also: Pierre Crepeau, *Paroles et Sagesse. Valeurs Sociales dans les Proverbes du Rwanda*, (Tervuren, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1985), 154-155.

times of distress. Confidence is manifested when secrets are shared and confidentiality is kept, while speaking the truth (*ukuri*) is equally an important element in relations of trust. But truth and lies stand in a dialectical relationship. Communication is a function of forging alliances in a complex socio-political universe, not necessarily a means to describe reality.²⁹

An analysis of peasant narratives indicates that there are two understandings or dimensions to political representation. Political representation (*guhagarirwa*) in its most basic understanding in the Rwandan countryside comes down to the idea of being able to send someone to a meeting or a decision-taking body where this person will also defend your interests. It is about *how one is represented*. It entails the idea that authorities are aware of the living situation, the problems and well-being of the represented through almost personal contact, that they know “how you are doing” and can transfer a message to authorities higher up if necessary. It is about being aware and taking care of the needs of the population. One is further represented when (territorial) security is guaranteed and conflicts are solved. An additional dimension of political representation is related to *how one represents*, how one governs. It is about the way power is exercised. It is about governing in an impartial way, preventing the suffering of any kind of injustice that remains unpunished (*Kugukosereza*); that one is not the object of any form of violent behaviour (*Guhohoterwa*). Even more important is that the governed do not suffer from prejudice and injustice emanating from the administration itself, those who govern; that no one is impeding you of reaching your goal (*Ukubangamira*). A preliminary condition to feel represented is that one does not feel targeted by those exercising power, that one has not the impression “all means are employed to do you bad” (*Kukwirunkankiraho*).

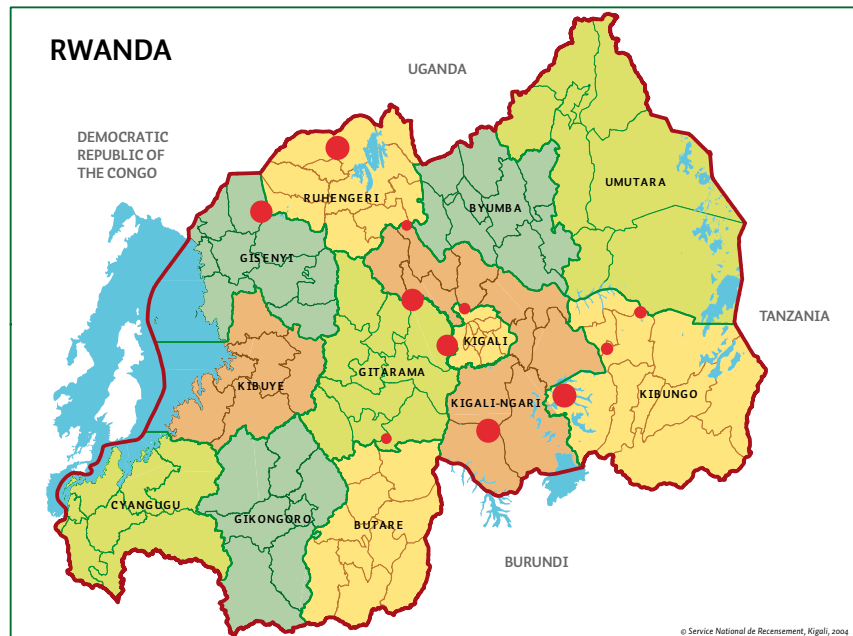
3.2.3 The selection of communities (sectors) and respondents

The selection of communities (sectors) was guided by the principle of *attaining maximum variance*.³⁰ The idea was to select contexts as widely diverging as possible on different levels: demographic and ethnic composition; historical bases of power; conflict history and intensity of violence. Maximizing variance helps to sharpen patterns, make recurring themes emerge and establish findings significant for a wide range of environments. The selection of provinces was based on an extensive literature review and the expertise of informed observers. We selected the (former) provinces Ruhengeri, Kigali-Ngali, Gitarama and Kibungo. We selected a range of communities at random within the above-mentioned provinces where we collected basic demographic information on the community and data on the events during the period of war, genocide and the aftermath and administered a survey for

²⁹ See on this topic: Aloys Rukebeshu, *Esotérisme et Communication Sociale*, (Kigali, 1985). Cornelis M. Overdule, “Fonction de la langue et de la communication au Rwanda”, *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 53, N°4, 1997, 271-283. ; Charles Ntampaka, « Vérité et Opinion Dans la Société Rwandaise Traditionnelle », *Dialogue*, N° 221, 3-24. The search for the truth and the nature of communication is a central theme in B. Ingelaere, “Does the Truth Pass Across the Fire without Burning?” *Transitional Justice and Its Discontents in Rwanda’s Gacaca Courts*, Discussion Paper, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, 2007.

³⁰ A procedure modeled on the work of, for example, A. Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life. Hindus and Muslims in India*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press: 2002). Or: C. Gibson & M. Woolcock, *Empowerment and Local Level Conflict Mediation in Indonesia: A Comparative Analysis of Concepts, Measures, and Project Efficacy*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3713, (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2005).

key informants. *Maximizing variance* was also crucial in the selection of communities for in-depth study (life-story interviews) in each province, again to sharpen patterns in different contexts. We collected data on the number of people killed during the genocide to classify communities.³¹ We argue that the ‘death toll’ is a good indication of the ‘shock’ a community needs to overcome on the economic, legal, human, material, social and psychological level. The classification of communities was then based on available statistical data – the number of community residents killed and further supported by the information delivered by key informants. Within this classification we purposively selected six communities in order to attain *maximal variance* for in-depth study. Table 7 in annex provides an overview of the main demographic and historical characteristics of the 6 communities (sectors). The variance in field sites allows for an indicative apprehension of life experiences incorporating various dynamics of historical events, state and societal practices. Field sites are highlighted on the map. Big dots are locations where life histories were collected, small dots are locations where we equally resided (but using other research techniques). The six locations do not allow us to claim national representativity. However, the guiding principles applied when choosing the research locations and in the selection of respondents allow for indicative findings and a grounded understanding.



³¹ These data were gathered by consulting the Gacaca records in every cell of the respective sector. This information only depicts the number of genocide – related victims (Tutsi and so-called ‘moderate’ Hutu). People killed due to the war or revenge killings are not part of these numbers. But we informed ourselves through numerous interviews on the dynamics of ‘other’ violent events in the respective sector.

Varshney summarizes the problem of different methodological approaches as “those who sample rarely collect oral histories, and those who collect oral histories rarely sample their respondents.”³² In his study on ethnic conflict in India he nevertheless has shown that transcending the methodological divide and integrating both approaches yields extraordinary results. We therefore selected respondents through stratified random sampling. Rwanda is an ethnic bi-polar society, with Hutu and Tutsi as the main ethnic groups. Nevertheless, due to the violence, ‘new’ groups have emerged. During our fieldwork we determined, as explained above, 5 social groups that are clearly identified by local inhabitants. Tutsi inhabitants can be divided into ‘genocide survivors’ and ‘old-caseload returnees’. The latter or their parents fled Rwanda after the Hutu-revolution in 1959 and returned

³² A. Varshney, *Ibid*, p. 20.

to Rwanda after the take over of power in 1994. The group of Hutu in a local setting currently contains released prisoners, those accused in *Gacaca* and those who are not accused and have never been imprisoned. We compiled lists with the names of all the household heads in the selected village and asked several groups of key informants to identify every household according to one of the five group characteristics. Subsequently, we randomly selected households within each group to interview the head of the household or his wife with approximately 70 respondents in every locality.³³ Selected persons with the age lower than 30 were systematically replaced. Respondents needed to have lived through the transition and regime change in a conscious way. We aggregated the weighted results for each of the five groups across all communities into a tendency according to ethnic group, Hutu or Tutsi, and subgroup. We first resided in one of the communities between July and September 2004 and later in all of them for a certain period between January and July 2006. Between January and June 2005, brief visits were made to some of the communities while working on another research project in Rwanda. Life-story interviews were conducted between January and April 2007, while we resided for shorter periods in the sectors.

³³ Some communities did not have old caseload returnees, others didn't have released prisoners.

Table 1 Identity Respondents Life-Story Interviews

	Male	Female	Total
Hutu Not Accused in Gacaca / Never Incarcerated	74	62	136
Hutu Accused in Gacaca	68	9	77
Hutu Released Prisoner	58	0	58
Total Hutu	200	71	271
Tutsi Survivor	36	49	85
Tutsi Old-Caseload Returnee	28	25	53
Total Tutsi	64	74	138
All Respondents	264	145	409

3.2.4 Interviewers

All of the life story interviews were conducted by the author, together with 5 Rwandan field assistants. The interviewers were selected based on their previous experience with participation in survey and qualitative research, their capacity to reside in rural communities and skill in interaction with the peasant population. The enumerators were not inhabitants of the communities. They received a training of several days on the contents of the life story interviews and overall fieldwork principles (selection of respondents – introduction – behaviour towards respondents – etc.). The life stories were collected in each community with all enumerators present and the author as supervisor.

With each interview (both from the author and the field assistants) a general introduction on the origin and aim of the study was given. It was explained that the study was conducted by a 'university student from Belgium' and dealt with 'post-conflict reconstruction'. It was highlighted that we had the permission from both national and local authorities to conduct the research. We always stressed the fact that we were not connected or working for the government. Anonymity and voluntary participation was stressed and, if desired, the 4 permissions from the Rwandan ministries were shown. All individual interviews were administered in the house of the respondent.

The interviews were translated from Kinyarwanda to French by a field-assistant/translator. The interviewers wrote down expressions in Kinyarwanda with a specific meaning surpassing immediate possibility of translation. These were discussed afterwards and compared with the translated statements. All interviews were later typed out by another assistant, who would also annotate the interviews when faced with particularities related to translation of statements from Kinyarwanda. We did not use recording devices since respondents are not familiarized with them and they arouse suspicion and possibly a reservation in response.

3.2.5 A Note on Presentation: Interlocking Realities

Graphs 1 to 4 present the aggregated results of a subjective ranking exercise according to ethnic (sub-)group. These perceived changes enable us to discern differences and similarities in perceptions according to ethnic identity. In doing so, we depict the perceived changing nature of the type of regime and its policies through the lens of ethnicity. For each phase of the transition we also include excerpts from peasant narratives to elucidate the perceived socio-political changes over time by the ordinary Rwandan populace. We used the results of the ranking exercise as presented in the graphs to explore the extensive amount of life story narratives and identify recurring themes and underlying motifs. Focusing on the subjective ranking exercise, we analyze the nature of the perceived changes throughout the life trajectory. We juxtapose Hutu and Tutsi narratives to portray diverging and converging experiences. These narrative blocs and threads, in their turn, support and elucidate the nature of the results of the ranking exercise. We describe the perceived changes while using short quotes from the life story narratives to support our arguments in the interpretation of the results of the 'ladder of life' ranking exercise. We take a chronological stance and according to the findings, 4 periods can be identified: 1980s-1994; 1994-2000; 2000-2005 and the current situation from 2005 onwards.

The graphs and the 'ethnic' quotes are the master devices used to portray the experience and perception of 'transition'. Even though Rwanda is a bi-polar ethnic society with ethnicity as the master cleavage structuring historical events, the danger of reification exists when reducing the complexity of identity to binary ethnic markers and subsuming a variety of experiences under two ethnic categories. Moreover, the aggregation of the rankings across communities and individuals deprives lived reality of its richness in detail and particularism, both on the community and the individual level. Every social setting is marked by idiosyncrasies. The use of large-scale surveys avoids those idiosyncrasies by reducing the complexity of reality and producing universally valid predictions and statements. On the other hand, in-depth ethnographic research – through for example life-story interviews – generates information very rich in detail and is able to identify underlying patterns and themes that will not surface by using solely a ranking exercise. The technique of assembling quotes in a montage or panel does not do justice to the depth and coherence of an entire life story or the particularity of a specific locality. In both the presentation of the graphs as in the selected quotations is this dimension lacking. Therefore, the master narrative needs to be anchored in other dimensions.

We therefore present four extended (life) stories in an exemplary fashion in text boxes 1 to 4 in annex. One from an old Hutu man, another from a released and confessed (Hutu) prisoner and also the story of both a Hutu and Tutsi genocide survivor. All are living in the same village, Ntabona, in central Rwanda.³⁴ We also present the history of this community juxtaposed with the history of another community, both by recounting the past and presenting the graphs depicting the ranking results on the level of the community. For lack of space, we present two snapshots, specific moments in time. On the one hand the descriptive account of the events in 1994, on the other hand village life and the justice-development-governance nexus in the post-genocide era with a specific focus on the *Gacaca* activities.

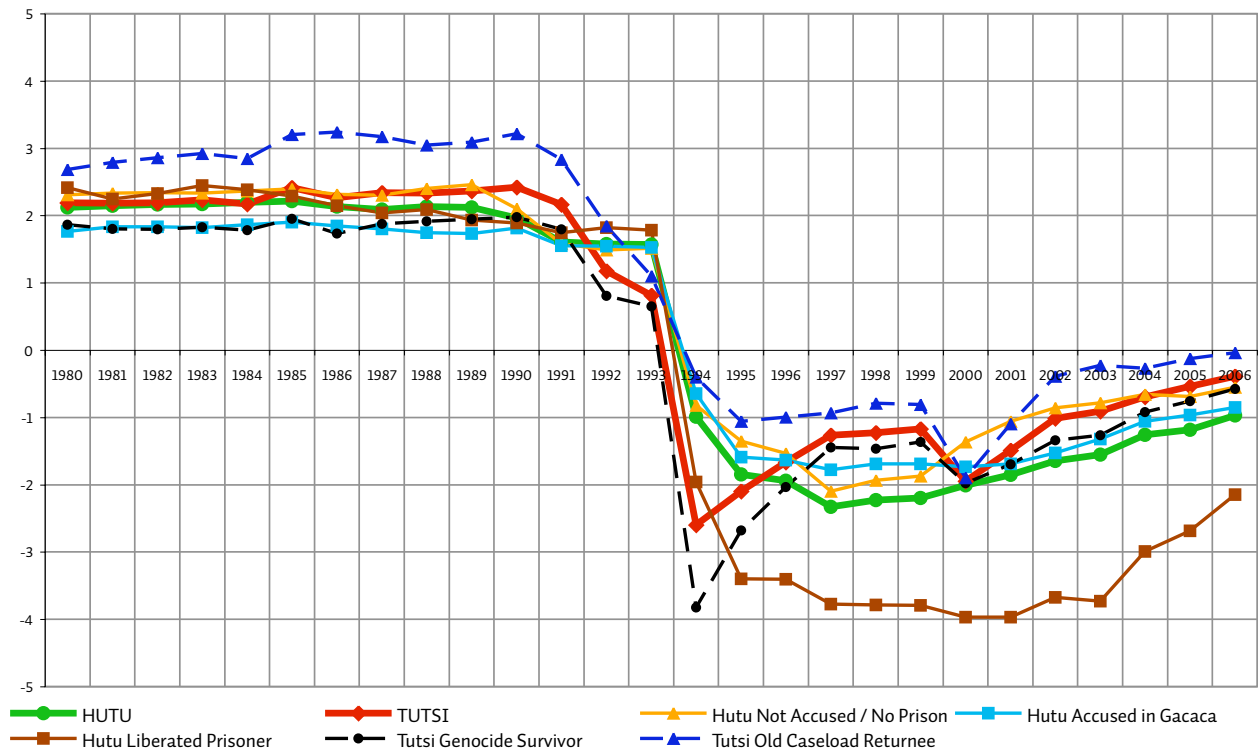
One additional dimension is captured in tables 2, 3 and 4 summarizing the regime attributes at different moments in the political transition. We consider a political regime to be a system of government determined by procedural, ideological and/or behavioural attributes. Regime change can take place when there is a procedural, ideological and/or behavioural change.³⁵ We discern 4 moments according to the 'officially' proclaimed transitional phases: the Habyarimana regime (1973-1990); the Habyarimana regime in transition (1990-1994) and the provisional and consolidated post-genocide regime (1994-2003 & 2003-2007). We summarize the regime attributes during these different phases to provide an overall macro framework in which to situate the bottom-up perspective presented here.

³⁴ The names of villages and individuals are changed to ensure confidentiality.

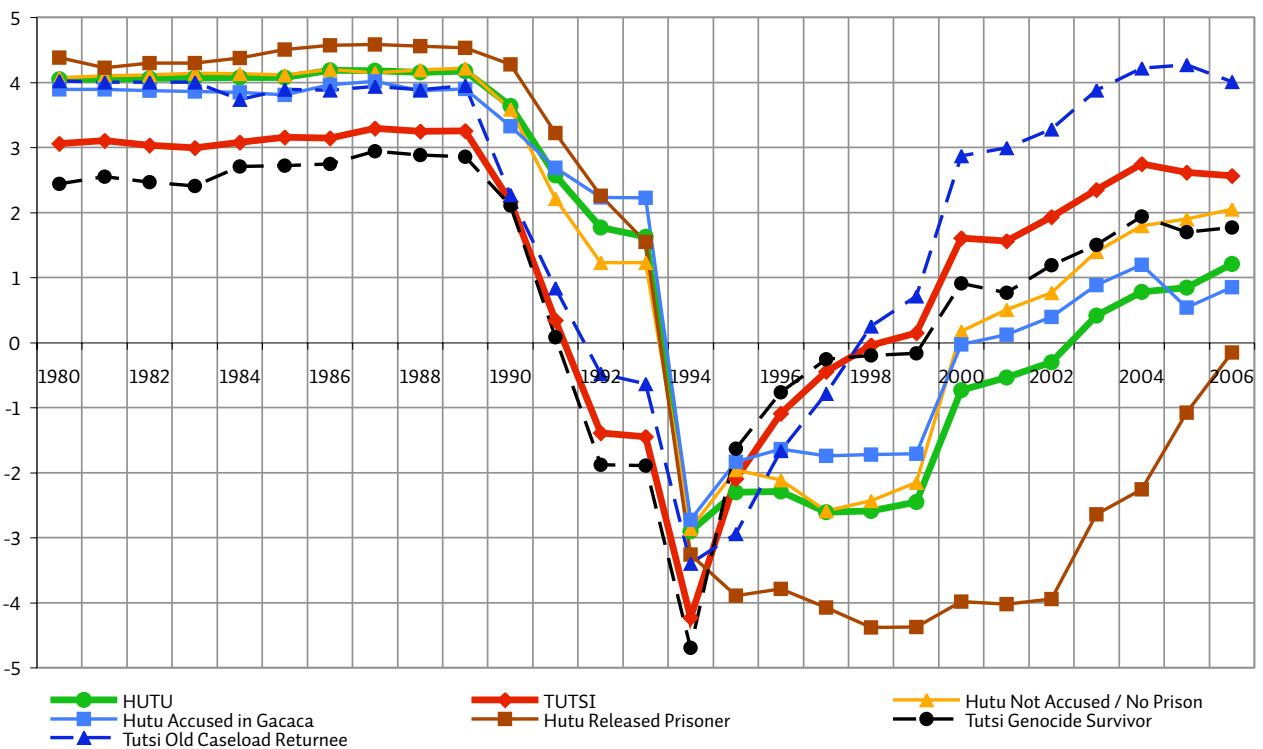
³⁵ See M. Rafti, op. cit, 2007.

3.3 Perceived Changes over Time

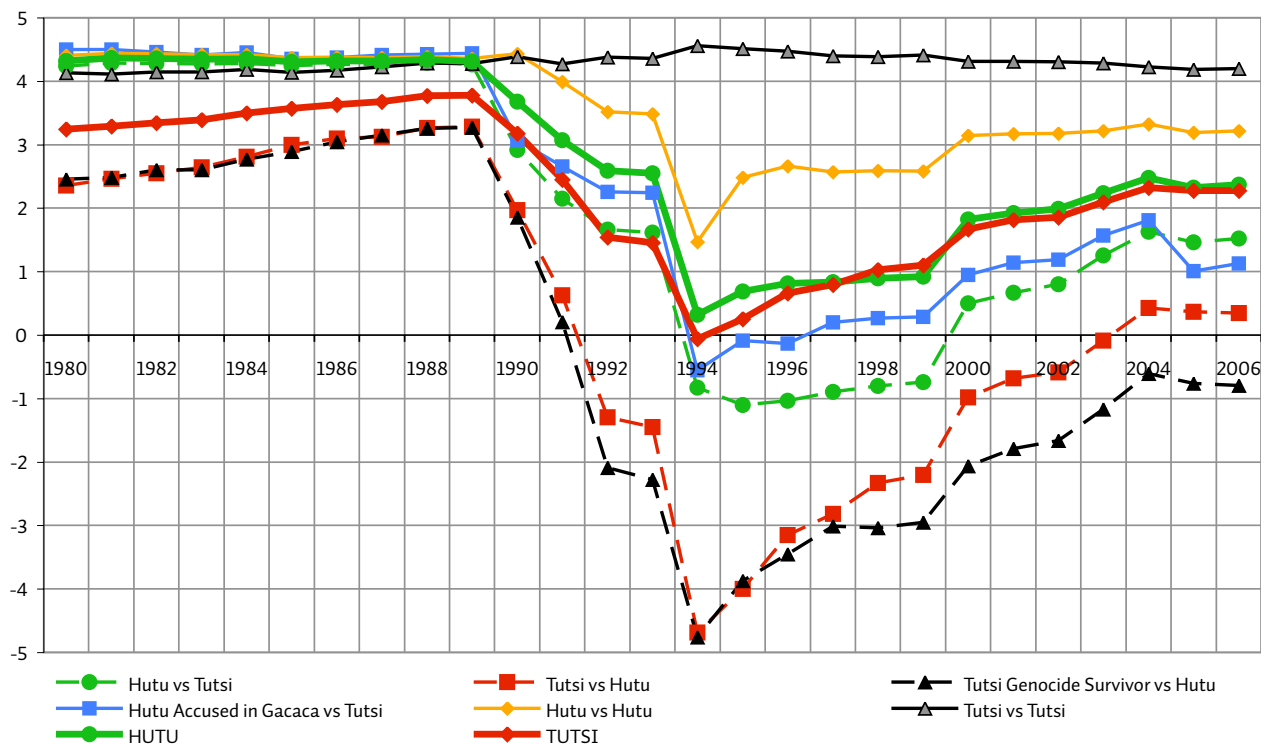
Graph 1 Subjective Ranking Perception of Economic Situation



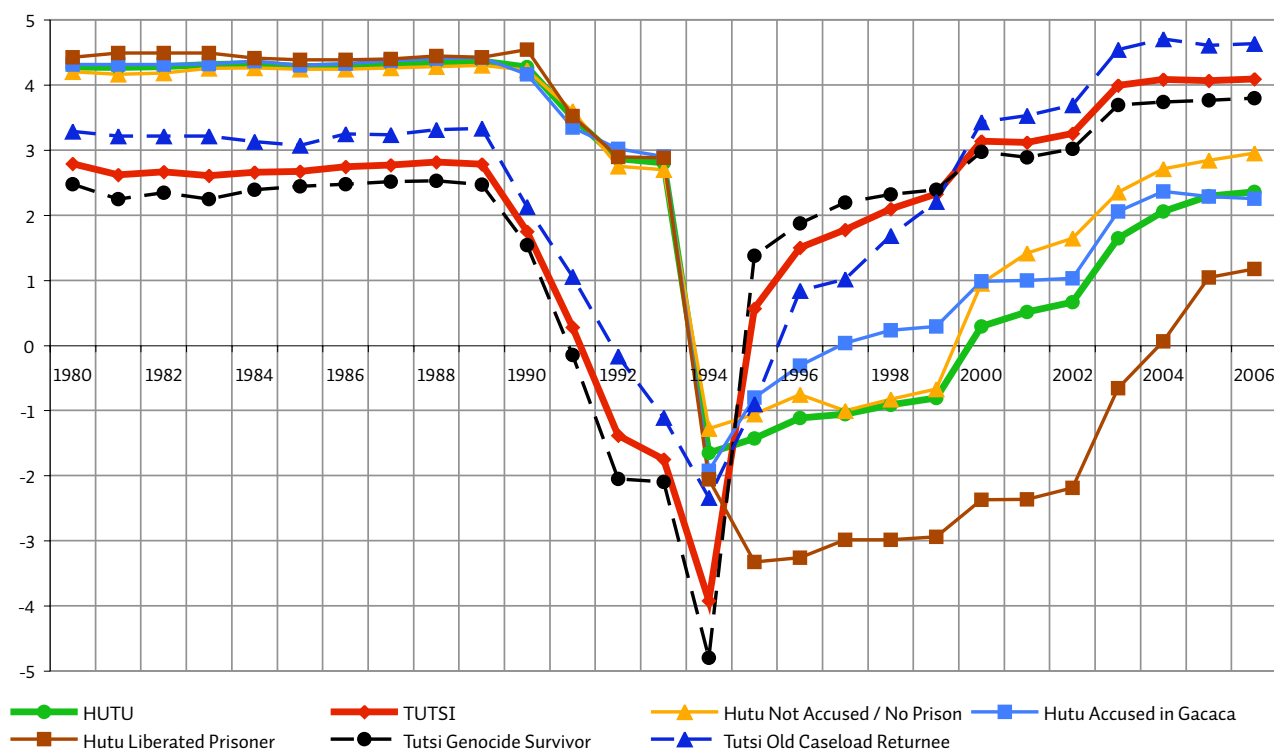
Graph 2 Subjective Ranking Feeling of Security



Graph 3 Subjective Ranking Perceived Level of Confidence



Graph 4 Subjective Ranking Perceived Political Representation



3.3.1 1980s – 1994

Through the subjective ranking, it becomes clear that both Hutu and Tutsi, valued the level of well-being during the 80s, at the height of the Habyarimana regime. At least when looking back, in their current perception. Food as well as territorial security were guaranteed. The ranking by Tutsi is slightly lower, especially in regard to the level of confidence towards the other ethnic group and the perception of the nature of political representation: a consequence of the awareness that their group had been targeted in the past, as they remembered from the experience of the events of 1959, 1963-1964 and 1973. This was more a latent awareness of not being fully represented due to the ruling of the great majority (*rubanda nyamwinshi*), being de facto the Hutu majority. Hutu don't make a distinction between their own group and Tutsi for that period. Trust was omnipresent for them, without distinction. Tutsi living outside of Rwanda at that time, were less confident in Hutu. Tutsi genocide survivors recall:

Tutsi

"During that period, the government equally did its utmost to guarantee the peace of the population, evidently they called us Tutsi, but it didn't hurt us."

"[In 1974], we were very skeptical about the peace brought by Haby-arimana, but [later] we gained confidence in the politics of Habyarimana."

"In 1963, a lot of Tutsi were killed and houses burned, but afterwards calm returned. In 1973 as well after the take-over of power by Haby-arimana, the feeling of security increased. There was no problem."

"In Rwanda [at that time], there were ethnic divisions. One ethnic group was favoured."

"[...] Tutsi were not considered in the same way as Hutu, so they didn't have all the advantages of Hutu."

"They didn't want Tutsi to have secondary and higher education in order to prevent Tutsi from having access to power."

"At that time there were people with 'genocidal ideas', but they couldn't put them into practice because the government didn't want it at that time."

"They [Hutu] had chased us from our country". [Old caseload returnee]

The feeling of security starkly declines from 1990 onwards, after the RPF attacked Rwanda. Especially Tutsi living inside Rwanda, currently genocide survivors, gradually lost confidence in their fellow Hutu community members. Some areas were directly affected by the war and the overall war culture pervasive throughout the country went together with the introduction of a multiparty system. The existing framework of clearly defined rules of conduct, social norms and power privileges evaporated. Initially this resulted in the experience of a multi-polar landscape with threats to the socio-political order coming from different sides: the Northerners (*abakiga*) against people from the south (*Nduga*); members of different political parties against each other; the RPF versus the Habyarimana regime. Political parties (*amashyaka*) used violent practices to recruit new members by 'liberating' them from the ties with other parties (*kubohoza*). They erected youth wings that later converted into militia gangs to compete with each other and terrorize local authorities. Existing (MRND) power structures were contested and administrative authorities were sometimes ousted in their communities. This resulted in the breakdown of the existing authority structure that guaranteed territorial security.

Tutsi

"The authorities couldn't solve my problems anymore, because of the political parties controlling the situation and looking to recruit members. They didn't want Tutsi."

"The effects of multipartyism were negative in the sense that one was harassed because being member of this or that political party."

"There was tremendous upheaval."

"There were a lot of parties here. We enrolled in the MRND, the strongest party here [in the village]. But it didn't serve us well later on [in 1994]."

"There was no security because of the political parties and because of them we had the genocide."

"With the arrival of the political parties, the situation was terrible. Before every one was member of the MRND, but then we had the MDR, CDR, PL, PSD."

Hutu

"The authorities couldn't solve the people's problems anymore because of the war."

"The war had started, the political parties were fighting over members and the RPF could profit from this. We were afraid from the Northern Hutu."

"We couldn't go to Kigali anymore, they called us Akazu, people on the side of the government in power."

"The youth members of the MDR had prevented me of governing the people of my cell (neighbourhood)."

"Authorities didn't exist anymore, bandits dictated the law."

"We couldn't sleep anymore, there was no free circulation allowed due to the violence caused by partisans of political parties such as the MRND, the MDR and the CDR."

Table 2 Habyarimana Regime (1973-1990) - Regime Attributes

Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic, based on the (Hutu) 1959 revolution; majority (Hutu) rule as democratic rule • Developmental > political – Developmental Dictatorship • Peasantry / Manual Labour
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-party system; elections within the MRND • Personality-based; strong presidency • Party-state: state structures=MRND structures; centralised hierarchic structure. • Ethnic quotas
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of political power and wealth by an oligarchy; • Ethno-regional favouritism • Clientelism; vigilance and strict control
Regime Type	Authoritarian regime, typical of post-colonial Africa: practiced strict control over the population; ruled by command; unrestrained presidential power; rulers were unaccountable to the population

Source: Compiled by author based on Rafti (2007)

Table 3 The Political Transition (1990-1994) - Regime/Transition Attributes

Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tri-polarity (1990-1993): Different currents; Pro-democratisation • Bi-polarity (1993-1994): Pro-Arusha (pro-RPF); Anti-Arusha/'Hutu power'
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-party, semi-presidential system • Extrication of MRND from state structures • Limited multi-party local elections • Re-structuring of the security services • Arusha negotiations
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence (war; political violence; formal and informal state repression) • Political mobilisation • Negotiations
Facets of the Transition	Three modalities of transition at play, changing over time: reform (Habyarimana government) → compromise (coalition government, Arusha talks) → overthrow (through war). Ethnic bi-polarity – structural factor that affects the transition.

Source: Compiled by author based on Rafti (2007)

In an effort to restore its authority the Habyarimana regime appealed on ethnic sentiments and managed to align multiple cleavages dividing the socio-political landscape with the central cleavage of Rwandan society: the Hutu – Tutsi bi-polarity. Tutsi living inside Rwanda become more and more stigmatized as 'enemies from within', 'cockroaches' (*Inyenzi*) and 'accomplices' (*Ibyitso*) of the RPF, the enemy on the outside of Rwanda and perceived as a Tutsi rebel force eager to undo the achievements of the 1959 Hutu revolution. Allegedly suspected Tutsi accomplices were incarcerated and massacres were instigated in some areas. The years between 1990 and 1994 are characterized by this mindset of war that diminishes the feeling of security and social cohesion, also within the Hutu group. But distrust was especially growing between the ethnic groups.

TUTSI

"Because of the attack of the RPF, there was no security for Tutsi"
 "I was afraid, because the Hutu said I was a member of the RPF."
 "Those in power were sensitizing the Hutu to kill the Tutsi"
 "We were harassed ever since the RPF attacked Rwanda.
 Tutsi were killed in Kibilira, Murambi and Bugesera."
 "The authorities started discriminating according to ethnic identity.
 They were preparing for genocide."
 "I was not represented because searched after to be killed as an
 accomplice (Ibyitso) of the RPF."
 "There was no security in the country and especially for Tutsi."
 "Confidence in Hutu diminished, because they imprisoned my father as an
 accomplice of the RPF."

HUTU

"[There was no confidence in Tutsi], because they were of the same ethnicity as
 those who caused the war."
 "The rumors of war made us lose confidence in them [Tutsi]"
 "Tutsi were shedding the blood of Hutu."
 "They [Tutsi] were killing Hutu on the battlefield."
 "We pitied Tutsi because they were menaced and killed, but we also heard on
 the radio the atrocities committed by the soldiers of the RPF."
 "People started to dissociate, Hutu said Tutsi had brought them war, Tutsi said
 Hutu were going to kill them."
 "The war had started in Umutara [Northern region] and people could change
 and become 'savage beasts' (*Inyamwaswa*)"
 "I was afraid at that time, because on the radio they said the *Inkotanyi* [RPF]
 killed people."

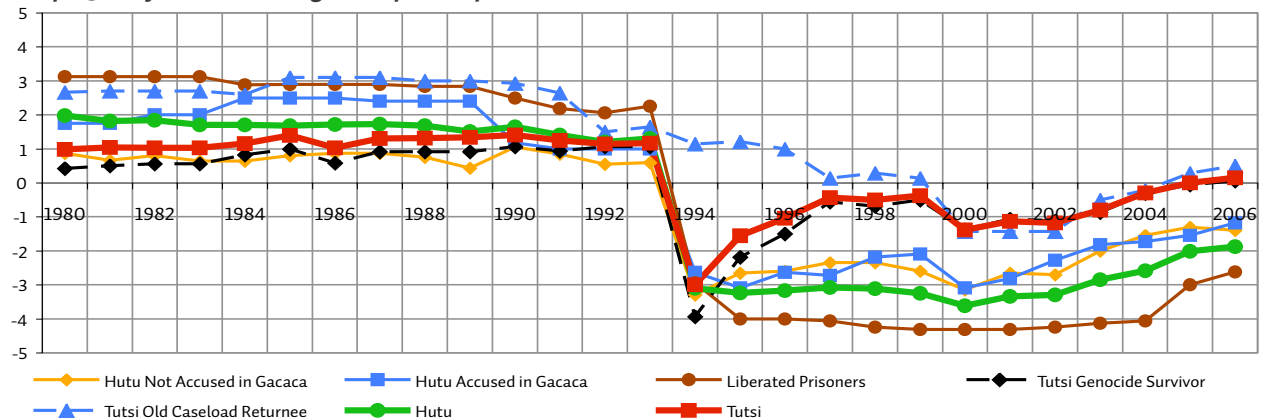
Genocide in Context: The Tale of Two Villages

Rukoma is a difficult to reach village in the south-east of Rwanda surrounded by swampland. After the 'Hutu-revolution' of 1959 Tutsi living in other areas of Rwanda were deported to the area known for its difficult living terrain. They were installed on a sort of collective farm, constructed by the state. Only a few Hutu families lived in the village. The downing of Habyarimana's plane created panic in Rukoma. Hutu and Tutsi families gathered together on the central square. An attack came from another village nearby. United Hutu and Tutsi repelled the assailants. After three days, a member of parliament originating from the area together with a protestant pastor with connections to the highest government circles, came to explain that the 'war was ethnic'. Hutu had to separate from Tutsi or they would be killed as well. Most followed these orders. The Tutsi, still grouped together in public places as schools and churches were attacked with traditional weapons such as machetes and spears. Their Hutu neighbors that had originally defended them looked on or started to join the attackers. They were 'sensitized'. The word was spread that the Tutsi had killed the president. Others refused to distinguish themselves from the Tutsi. The Tutsi resisted strongly with the same traditional weaponry. But the village was known for the great number of Tutsi living there. This attracted attackers from the surrounding areas. A large group of Hutu refugees from Burundi came to kill, pillage and rape. They incited and coerced others to do the same. They lived in a refugee camp nearby and had fled Burundi in 1993 after the killing of the firstly elected Hutu president and the violence following thereupon. Groups of *Interahamwe* militia men also arrived, together with soldiers. Busses and jeeps transported them to the area. They brought modern weapons with them and it broke the Tutsi resistance. On the surrounding lake a boat transported groups of attackers every morning to the village to pillage and kill. In the evening, the assailants would return home to rest and return in the morning. An opportunity for the persecuted Tutsi to leave their shelter and seek food in the nightly abandoned fields. In the span of less than one month, 12758 of the Tutsi inhabitants were killed. On the 5th of May, the RPF arrived in the area and stopped the genocide against the Tutsi. The Burundians returned to Burundi and the armed forces had already withdrawn when the RPF arrived in the area. All of the Hutu villagers fled, either into the swamps as the Tutsi had done before or to neighboring countries. The RPF soldiers tolerat-

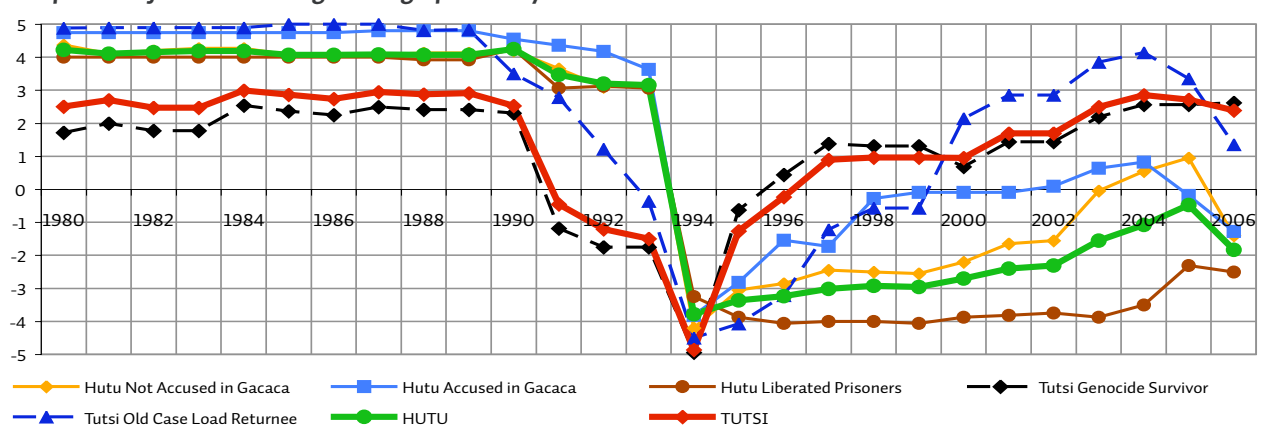
ed and sometimes supervised large-scale revenge killings against the Hutu population. Originally, the village had 14984 inhabitants with 90 % of the population being Tutsi. Currently *Rukoma* has a population of 2373. In total, 538 Tutsi survived the genocide, 292 of them are still living in *Rukoma*.

The dynamics in the village called *Ntabona* were very different. After Habyarimana's plane was shot down on April 6, everything remained calm in *Ntabona*. After four days, and similarly as in *Rukoma*, the sector was attacked from a nearby village by Hutu refugees, displaced by the ongoing war with the RPF in the North. They wanted to harass the Tutsi population of *Ntabona*. The local *bourgemestre*, together with the population, was alerted and drove the attackers back, killing some in the process. Calm then returned to *Ntabona* but later a small group of 'ideologists', with a former FAR-soldier and trained *Interahamwe* taking the lead, began to terrorize the community. Their initial actions were framed in the language of the genocide and the target of their harassment was the Tutsi population as tokens of a larger abstract entity: "the Tutsi as the enemy". But it was only after two weeks that they stepped up their actions and started to kill Tutsi. They could do so, since in the meantime, the political constellation in the community had changed: the *bourgemestre*, initially against the killing campaign, had lost his power through an intervention by the national authorities. The *Interahamwe* leader took over control of the village in this power-vacuum. He formed attacking groups (*Igitero*) composed of ordinary peasants to hunt down and kill Tutsi. The general perception of the population – both Hutu and Tutsi – was that these people using violence were 'a group of bandits' wanting to steal and take over power in the community. After some time this became clear when a large number of Hutu heads of household also figured on the death list of next 'targets'. These Hutu were somehow connected through family ties, they were 'the rich' of the area, occupied positions of authority or had other forms of off-farm income. Their behaviour could be interpreted as ambiguous, occupied with their own safety and coming into action by killing the *Interahamwe* leader only when they themselves became the objects of violence. After this, calm returned to the sector until another *Interahamwe* leader, backed up by national authorities, and the 'natural' order of power-relations shifted again. The group initially pillaging and hunting down Tutsi found renewed courage in the words of the national authorities that urged the population to divide the parcels of the Tutsi. This economic incentive increased the participation in the attacks significantly. And some people were implicated for very personal reasons such as, for example, the teacher attacking the Tutsi family that had refused their daughter to marry him years before. In *Ntabona*, the genocide was not a straightforward event, rather periods of resistance alternated with periods of outright violence and both Tutsi and Hutu became the objects of violence. On the 4th of July, the RPF took over the region. Almost none of the Hutu inhabitants fled the village, there were no revenge killings, but massive incarcerations followed.

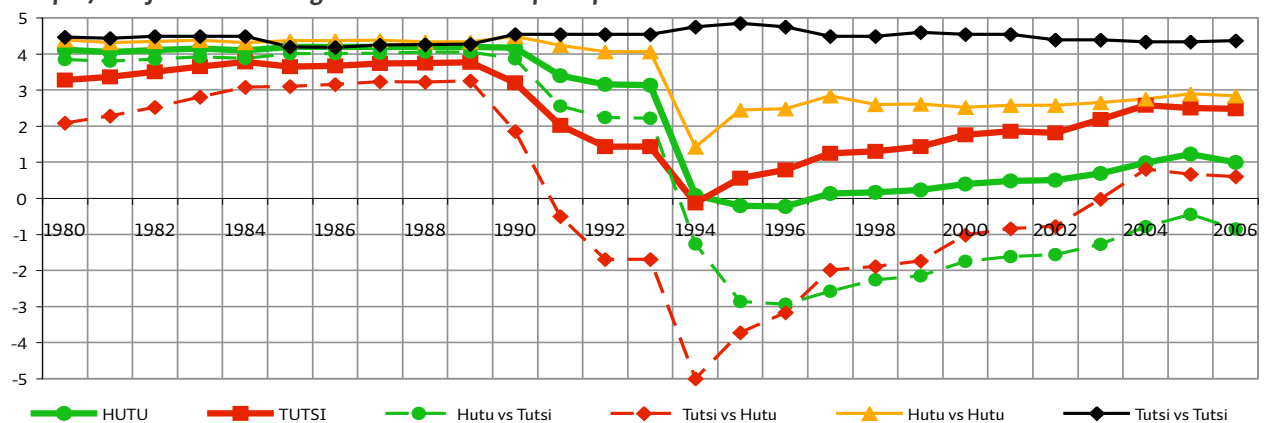
Graph 5 Subjective Ranking Perception of Economic Situation - Rukoma



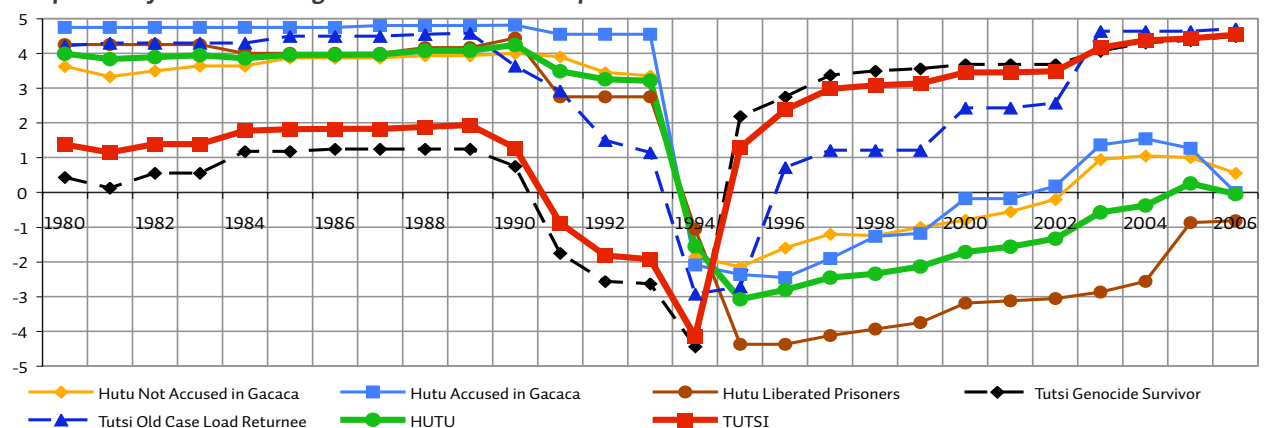
Graph 6 Subjective Ranking Feeling of Security - Rukoma



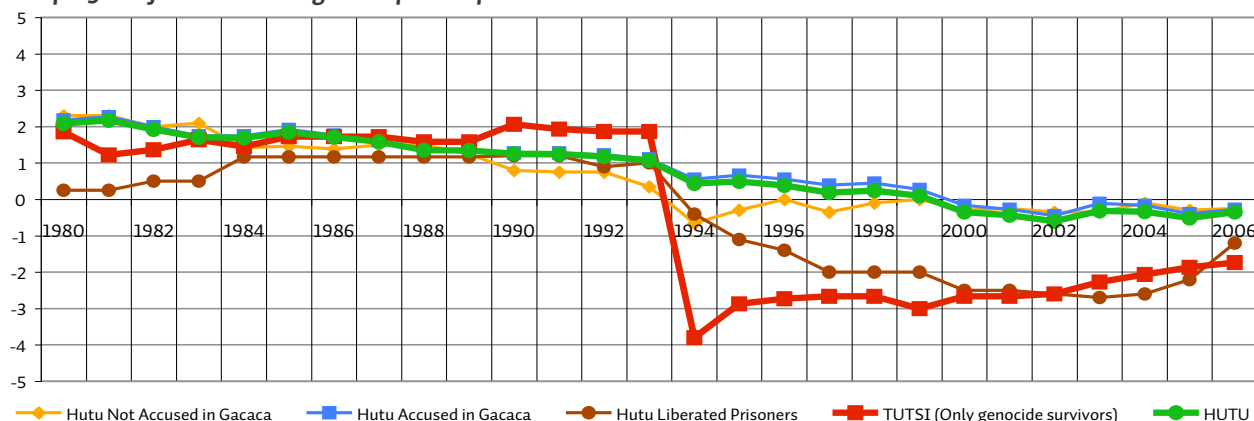
Graph 7 Subjective Ranking Perceived Level of Confidence - Rukoma



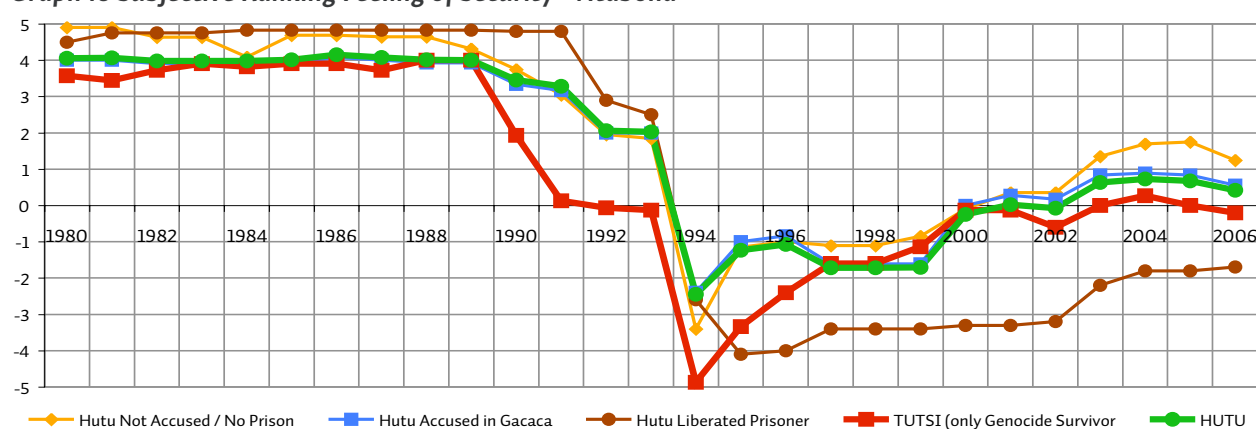
Graph 8 Subjective Ranking Perceived Political Representation - Rukoma



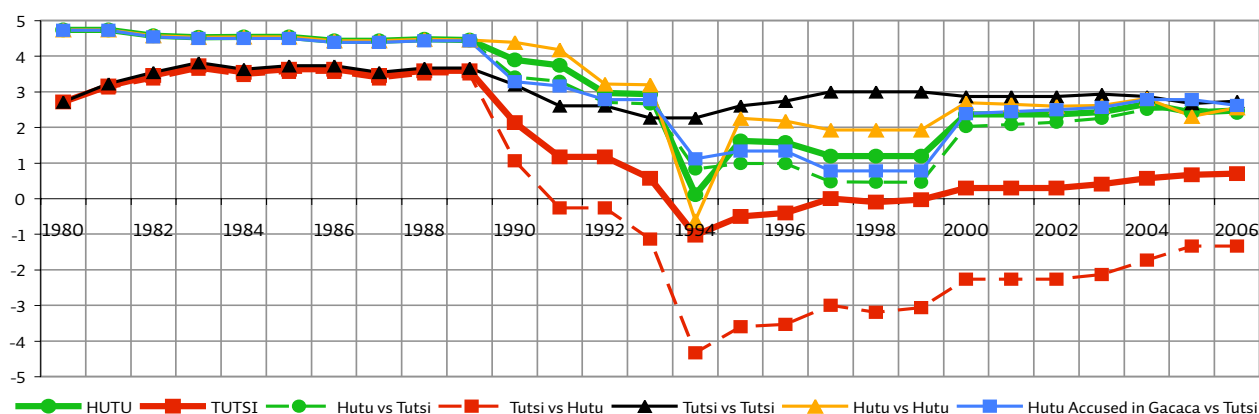
Graph 9 Subjective Ranking Perception of Economic Situation - Ntabona



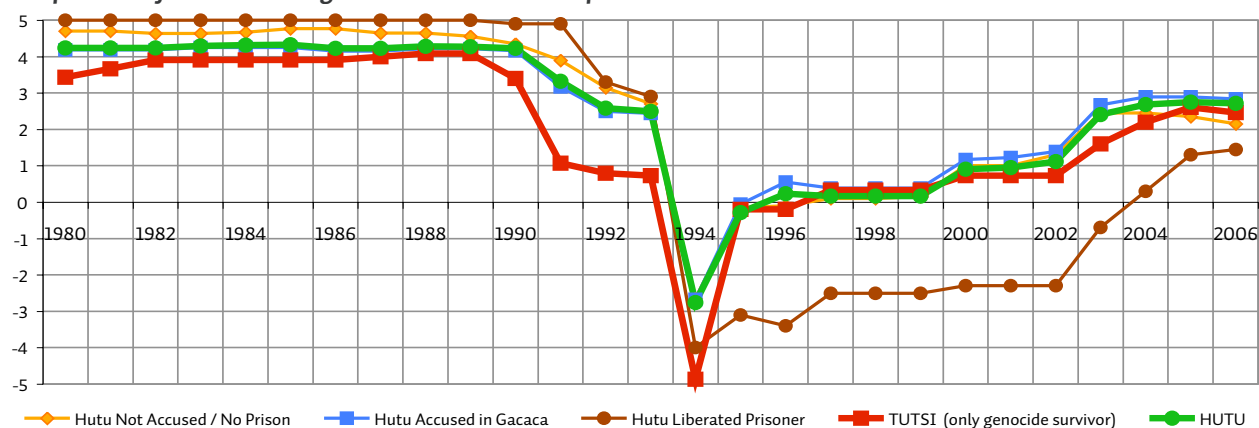
Graph 10 Subjective Ranking Feeling of Security - Ntabona



Graph 11 Subjective Ranking Perceived Level of Confidence - Ntabona



Graph 12 Subjective Ranking Perceived Political Representation - Ntabona



3.3.2 1994 - 2000

The downing of the plane of Habyarimana on 6th April 1994 started the genocide and widespread violence throughout the country. Both Hutu and Tutsi reach the lowest point in their feeling of security according to their current ranking exercise. The regime in place at that time is considered to have incited Hutu to kill all Tutsi. Throughout this entire period of political transition, war, genocide and regime change, the degree of confidence Tutsi experienced for members of their own ethnic group remained consistent and high in their current recollection. On the other hand: the nature of Hutu in-group starkly declines, especially during the genocidal campaign. While the intention of killing all Tutsi clearly stands out as the master narrative of the period between April and July 1994, a closer look at the variation in the periphery, the micro-administration of the genocide, also reveals the violence targeting people from all groups and for various reasons.³⁶

³⁶ I elaborated this theme in: B. Ingelaere, 'Changing Lenses and Contextualizing the Rwandan Post-Genocide' in: F. Reyntjens & S. Marysse, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Dix Ans de Transitions Conflituelles. Annuaire 2005-2006*, Paris: L'Harmattan, pp.389-414.

TUTSI

"We were not human beings anymore because chased as if we were animals."
 "The government condemned us to death."
 "People died as flies."
 "Chasing Tutsi was authorized by the government and they asked all Hutu to kill Tutsi."
 "We were at the mercy of all fanatical Hutu."
 "In the fight against death, all Tutsi were united."
 "People were killed, Hutu and Tutsi, because even wealthy Hutu have been killed."

HUTU

"It were the authorities who gave orders to kill the others [Tutsi]."
 "The state handed them [Tutsi] over (Leta Yabatanza)"³⁷
 "There was total anarchy during the genocide."
 "We were governed by groups of killers."
 "I was also afraid of being killed by the Hutu."
 "People participated because of *Inda Nini* [greed]."
 "Hutu also threatened me because I was hiding Tutsi."
 "It was war [*ntambara*] and I was afraid."³⁸
 "I could have died at any moment then, because the war [*ntambara*] was lethal."

When looking back, Tutsi survivors remember they regained an acceptable level of physical security after the take over of power by the RPF. In contrast to the experience of Hutu in the immediate aftermath, something that is sometimes acknowledged by Tutsi genocide survivors

³⁷ The expression refers the pre-colonial Rwanda. When someone had been condemned by the king and he had to be handed over to the executioner(s), the expression '*Umwami Yamutanze*' was used. In the context of the 1994 genocide it signifies that the State handed over the Tutsi to the Hutu to be executed.

³⁸ Hutu often use the word *ntambara* (war) when referring to the genocide, as they see it as part of a larger period of war.

TUTSI

"Security was assured. There were always soldiers [of the RPA] nearby."
 "Soldiers were everywhere and in our turn we traced the criminals [Hutu]."
 "My husband was sought by soldiers of the RPF who wanted to arrest all male Hutu."

HUTU

"It was a manhunt of the soldiers of the *Inkotanyi* [the RPF], killing Hutu."
 "During the genocide, Hutu chased Tutsi and after the take-over of power by the RPF, Tutsi chased Hutu."
 "We went to Congo and it was possible to be killed going there and in Congo where people died as flies."

The ranking for perceived political representation by Tutsi is remarkably high immediately after the take over of power, especially in contrast to the ranking of Hutu. This is due to the fact that the new regime was, by both groups, perceived as being "Tutsi" (-dominated). The political order had changed completely due to the military overthrow. The rankings reveal an ethnic reversal of the power constellation, at least in the popular experience.

TUTSI

"The government was on our side and we had a feeling of superiority towards the Hutu."
 "The Tutsi were satisfied with this new regime."
 "The war was over, there were still tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, but the government was on the side of the Tutsi."

HUTU

"In 1995, there were authorities, but I was not represented."
 "They incarcerated several innocent persons and others were killed. So authorities made a distinction in the way they governed."

Table 4 The Provisional (94-03) & Consolidated Post-Genocide Regime (03-07) – Regime Attributes³⁹

Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberation from colonial mindset; • ‘Rwandanicity’ / Citizenship – Abolishing Ethnicity • Unity and Reconciliation; Fighting genocide (Accountability) • Development; Vision 2020
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-party (without grassroots political activity), electoral ‘semi-presidential’ system; • ‘Consensus-based’ democracy; ‘home-grown’ national strategies • Bi-cameral national assembly (with appointed and elected members); • 1994-2003 Commissions endorsed
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong executive; • Military might; Strong Army (RDF); • Clamp-down on civil and political rights • Constriction of discourse and policy-making by small RPF group • Commissions act as RPF ideological vectors and disciplinary organs • Rule by command and force
Regime Type	<i>Electoral authoritarian: democratic procedures but non-democratic exercise of power; uneven political ‘playing field’; restriction on political and civil rights; limited accountability</i>

Source: Compiled by author based on Rafti (2007)

This ethnically diverging perception of the nature of political representation continues until now although Hutu steadily evolved from a negative appreciation into a positive one. This is mostly due to the fact that violent practices such as revenge killings, brutal pacification campaigns and massive (often) arbitrary arrests lasted for several years, but gradually ceased in the course of time. The year 2000 constitutes a turning point. In the years following the genocide, Hutu who fled to Congo, firstly experienced the violent dismantling of the camps in Congo, followed by massive arrests, extrajudicial and revenge killings inside Rwanda and a bald counter-insurgency strategy by the Rwandan Patriotic Army to repel the infiltrators (*Abacengezi*) that attacked Rwanda in 1996. The *Abacengezi*, members of the defeated army (FAR) and *Interahamwe*-militia, infiltrated (especially Northern) Rwanda and attacked Tutsi survivors and old-caseload returnees, but also Hutu who had taken up a position in the new regime. They lived among the ordinary Hutu peasants, who, therefore, were often also targeted as infiltrators by the new regime. Hutu, therefore, felt insecure for several years without signs of a steady recovery. In the same period, approximately 130.000 Hutu were incarcerated. Waves of prisoners are released from 2003 onwards. Until that moment they live in the harsh circumstances of overcrowded prisons with, in their recollection, the lowest level of security possible.

Although the new regime “was on their side” and guaranteed physical security for the genocide survivors, their perceived recovery in the following years went slow. The loss of house, goods and family members, trauma and the destruction of the social fabric impeded recovery for several years. The genocide and war and their violent aftermath, had left local communities not only economically devastated, but deeply divided along ethnic lines. The degree of con-

³⁹ We argue that the officially proclaimed period of transition between 1994 and 2003 did not entail regime transition. Regime transition implies a fundamental change in ideology, procedures and behaviour. The post 1994 period brought about the consolidation of the regime that came in place with the military overthrow in July 1994. No fundamental change occurred in the ideological, procedural and behavioural attributes of that regime in the period 1994-2007. See: M. Rafti, op. cit.

confidence in the other ethnic group dropped dramatically, especially in the recollection of Tutsi respondents. Also old-case load returnees returning to Rwanda in the wake of the take-over of power, settled in a threatening environment in their eyes

TUTSI

"Those who were not killed due to the war, have been seriously harmed by it (*uworitishye yaramukomerekeje*)."

"It was as if we were dead (*gupfa uhagaze*)"

"[In the years following the genocide], I regarded every Hutu as a killer"

"I was afraid from the Hutu, they glanced at me with an evil eye (*kureba umuntu n'ijisho ribi*)."

"Interahamwe were still hiding in the forests."

"Hutu were throwing stones on our houses at night."

"Trust in Hutu completely disappeared when I saw what they had done during the genocide." [Old Caseload Returnee]

HUTU

"I was in the middle as the tongue (*Narindi hagati nk'ururimi*).⁴⁰ When you were for Kagame, the infiltrators would kill you, when you were for the infiltrators, the RPA would kill you"

"During the war of the infiltrators, we could become the target of the soldiers of the RPF or of the infiltrators."

"In the years between 94 and 2000 a lot of inhabitants had been killed by soldiers considering us to be *Abacengezi* (infiltrators)."

"I was imprisoned and we were not sure at all of being alive the next morning, soldiers carried off people and went to kill them."

3.3.3 2000-2005

At the end of the 90s a normalization of social life takes place, but along the lines that were set out at the initial take-over of power. The feeling of security increases for both Hutu and Tutsi, at least the security of body and belongings (*umutekano w'umubir n'uw'ibintu*), not so much the food security, the security of the stomach (*umutekano muke w'inda*). Ordinary life recommenced, especially because overt hostilities on Rwandan soil ceased. The consequences of the 1994 carnage and the threat of persecution by Hutu infiltrators diminished for Tutsi, while the terror and violent practices of the new regime targeting Hutu equally decreased. Also the situation in the prisons improved. Only minor progress was made concerning the livelihood situation in the countryside, as the ranking exercise makes clear. This caused the experience of the "insecurity of the stomach". The dire economic situation becomes even worse during periods of drought and food shortage, as for example in 2000. Although this is the case for both groups, it is often more pronounced for genocide survivors since they lost family and assets, elements to rely on during periods of hardship.

⁴⁰ The expression refers to the fact that danger came from two sides. The tongue is caught in the middle between two rows of teeth.

TUTSI

"Operations to kill people diminished."

"Time went by and the sentiment to stay alive intensified."

"War is not only bullets, even bad living conditions can be worse than war."

"The war was over, but the war that stayed was the war against hunger."

"In the year 2000, there was scarcity and we suffered from an empty stomach."

HUTU

"We started to forget the difficult moments we had in 1997-1999."

"Years went by and we were not afraid anymore for vengeance from the Tutsi."

"Certain errors were corrected, like for example the arbitrary arrests."

"We started cultivating our plots of land and were sure we would not be violently mistreated (*guhohoterwa*) by anyone"

The government made reconciliation a policy objective only after the year 2000. This was reflected in the numerous sensitization campaigns (*Ibikorwa byo gukangurira*) continuously held in rural areas. The ethnic groups, who initially had shared the same living environment on the Rwandan hills, lived together, not reconciled (*abiyunze*), but in a mode of non-violent co-existence (*kubana*).

TUTSI

"The administrators convinced us to live together, even with the Hutu."

"Hutu didn't look at us anymore with an evil eye."

HUTU

"There were a lot of sensitization meetings and gradually we became convinced."

"The ethnic tensions diminished and the survivors soothed their tempers."

Although the degree of trust in the other ethnic group increased during this period, the difference between the nature of confidence in the own and the other group remained high, as can be seen on the results of the ladder of life ranking.

TUTSI

"I will never be able to really trust Hutu, if they have the opportunity, they can still kill me."

HUTU

"The Hutu cannot totally trust Tutsi."

This ethnic distrust is subtly reflected in daily life on the linguistic level in statements such as on the one hand *hagati yacu* or *turi twenyine* (between us – our ethnic group) and on the other hand *hagati yabo* or *ari bonyine* (between them – their ethnic group). Moreover, on the geographical level Hutu and Tutsi only live to a minor extent as neighbours in their respective communities. Tutsi survivors mostly live grouped together in settlements (*imidugudu*) erected after the genocide in their original neighbourhood. Those who returned from foreign countries – the so-called 'old caseload returnees' – settled mostly in cities or have otherwise taken houses in the settlements with the other Tutsi, genocide survivors. This has an effect on the flux of social interactions that are most sought-after and qualitatively intense with the people sharing the same living environment by frequenting nearby bars, shops and houses. But the predominant and most intense interactions with members of the own ethnic group and its consequences on the linguistic level is only to a secondary extent a result from a spatial restructuring of hillside life after the genocide. The massive decrease in mutual trust towards members of the other ethnic group is the primary source of the inequality in social interactions between ethnic groups. Both groups state that by the end of the 90s and in contrast with the preceding years the government started preventing that widespread ethnic distrust would translate into overt forms of violence.

TUTSI

"They are afraid to aggress us because of the government keeping a watchful eye on us."

"I am never going to visit Hutu and they never come to me, I can't even ask them drinking water."

"We need to distance ourselves from the Hutu, because they can use poison to hurt us. Among the survivors on the other hand, we share everything, even our grief."

HUTU

"When we see our victims [genocide survivors], we think they might seek revenge, but thanks to authorities they don't."

"[The] Authority is good, because the victims of the genocide and their 'bullies' (*abishi*) live together, they are not chasing each other anymore."

"The Tutsi government has done a lot to unite Rwandans."

In popular perceptions, power and identity remain intertwined, as they have always been in Rwandan history, and also after 2000 they stayed configured along the parameters set out during the initial take-over of power, even when government policies are appreciated. The strained relationship between ethnicity and the hold on or access to power is illustrated in recollections of the 2003 presidential elections. Tutsi often refer to the fact that they were free to choose their representatives, while this narrative thread is almost completely lacking for Hutu. Although a significant number of Hutu will have de-

liberately chosen for the representative in line with the 'order of things', it is clear that Hutu were guided in the making of their choice, sometimes through subtle means, but guidance also came through overt coercion.

TUTSI

"We elected the authorities of our choice."
 "During the elections, you could remark sort of ruptures based on ethnic factions"
 "A great number of people here didn't want the president [Kagame], so a lot of security forces came for 'that'.
 "I saw Hutu didn't really like us, they said they didn't want a Tutsi as president. But we 'arranged' ourselves and got our candidate [Kagame] elected."
 "We voted for our president because the reason why we are still alive is thanks to him."
 "Since president Kagame took power, we are very well represented. But it will be necessary to be very attentive during the next elections [to keep it that way]."

HUTU

"People thought the war would restart."
 "[In the year of the elections] there was the fear of a possible war: if Kagame was not elected there could be reprisals, if he was elected there could be troubles caused by the Hutu."
 "We were afraid the elections would not go as the government had planned and that we would have problems."
 "Soldiers were everywhere and a Tutsi could lie to them about your voting intentions so you would end up in prison and tortured."
 "They made us vote by force and we were afraid for reprisals if the elections didn't go as they had planned."
 "In the voting booth, we were accompanied by someone else indicating where to place the thumb, no refusal possible, otherwise"

The outcome of the elections was a guarantee of physical security for Tutsi: their expectations for political representation in the future are conditioned on a status-quo of the current order of things. Hutu were also relieved and moved up in their ranking of political representation, but more because the simmering tensions in the build-up to the elections did not erupt into violence. Others phrase their experience in more neutral terms, but also appreciate the stability brought by the 'new' elected government considering the upheaval of the past. The practices of the administration are in general appraised in the years following the elections. The gradual release of prisoners contributed to this more positive appraisal on the part of the Hutu population. Although this policy created frustration and fear for genocide survivors.

TUTSI

"The Hutu didn't cause problems after the election of president Kagame, they only said the votes were stolen."
 "I am very well represented, because if the Hutu are afraid of me it is because of the government."
 "Without the authorities we would still be massacred by the Hutu."
 ":[I will feel represented] if president Kagame stays in power."
 "[I will feel represented] on the condition that 'power' doesn't change."
 "Since the end of the genocide we have good representatives listening to the problems of the population."
 "Currently there are Tutsi in power. It was not them that killed us and can restart."

HUTU

"Calm returned and we regained confidence [in Tutsi]."
 "I was happy to have a president."
 "With the reign of Kagame, it's better with our representation."
 "The king does not kill, it's the people that kill. (*Umwami ntiyica, hica rubanda*)⁴¹"
 "The authorities started addressing the problems of the population."
 "The elected administrators governed us well [in that period]."
 "President Kagame had liberated some persons."
 "The head of state calms the survivors, otherwise all of us would be inside the prisons."
 "Since 2000, I started cultivating, I could go to the market and local authorities could solve my problems"

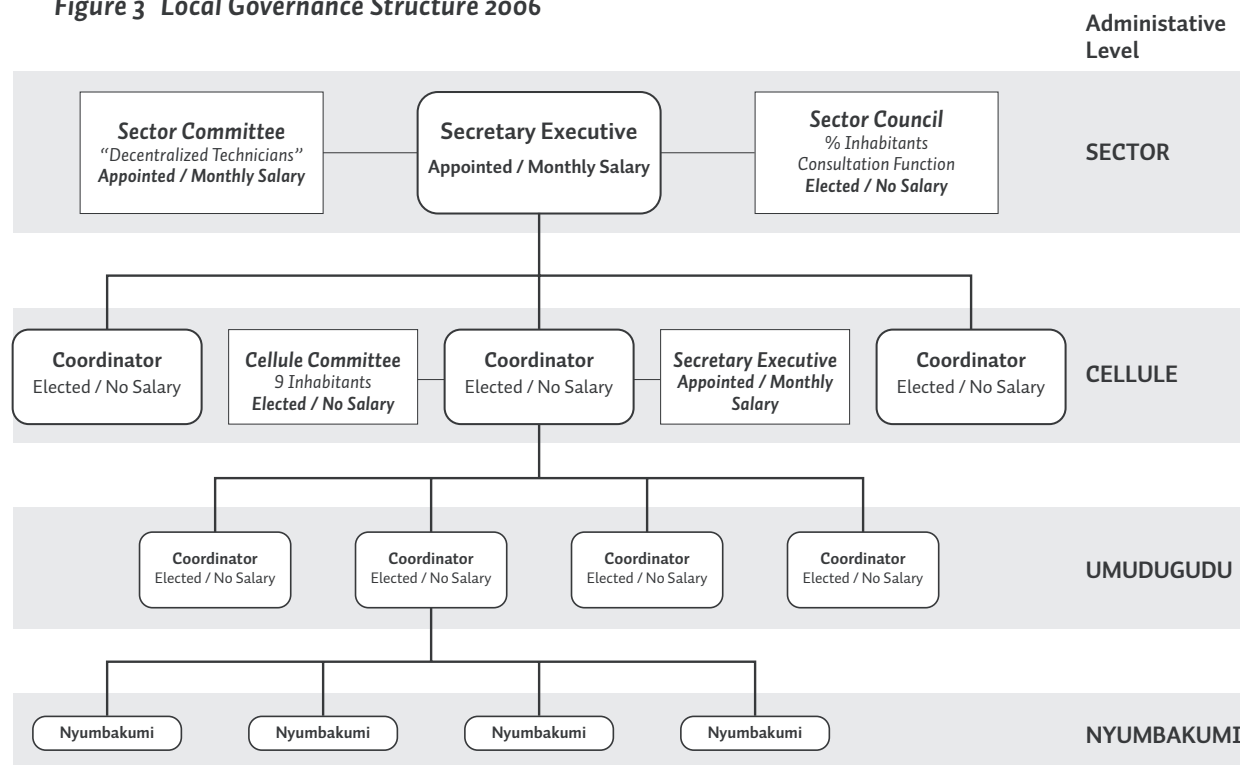
3.3.4 2005 onwards

Stability and physical security, being able to cultivate the fields, to sleep and eat is highly appreciated and stands in stark contrast with the turmoil of the 90s. Progress is made through policies that need to improve the well-being of the population. But there is a general perception that policies are not based on the needs and will of the population and even run counter to possible improvement, especially related to the economic situation. The nature and functioning of the local governance structure, institutionally consolidated during the administrative restructuring in the beginning of 2006, contributes to these grievances.

⁴¹ Expression referring to pre-colonial Rwanda and indicating that Rwandans are in general of the opinion that bad things and practices are not due to the ruling of the highest 'chefs' (king or president), but because of lower 'chefs' and people in the entourage of the ruler.

At the lowest level, sector and cell, a balance between 'appointed' and 'elected' authorities has been instituted. [See figure 3]

Figure 3 Local Governance Structure 2006



The importance given and the power attached to these different posts in the local governance structure by the central administration is in the first place reflected in the balance between 'elected' and 'appointed' positions. Moreover, only persons occupying the 'appointed' positions receive a regular salary by the central/district administration, a privilege reflecting the importance attached to the post. The secretary-executive is the most powerful person in the sector. He or she is not elected, but appointed by central authorities in Kigali and mostly comes from outside the sector. He is flanked by a consultation committee of elected sector residents (niyanama), but this body mostly functions as an approval machine for decisions taken higher up, policies the executive-secretary needs to implement. Survey results⁴² indicate that over the past years the level of popular participation has increased (Table 5 – Q. 1-4), but the quality of participation has decreased (Q. 5-8). The balance between appointed and elected positions and the direction of accountability contributes to this disparity. While government policies are appreciated in general (Q. 9) or related to particular elements (Q. 12-13), the upcoming land reform creates anxiety within the population (Q. 11), while the feeling of poverty steadily increases (Q. 14). Development is increasingly done by force. Improving the wellbeing of the population is – paradoxically – (partly) done irrespective of the wellbeing of the population.

⁴² We use the findings of this survey to interpret the impact of the Gacaca process over the past years. The results of this large-scale annual surveys corroborate the impact of the Gacaca process discernable on the graphs presenting the rankings related to the feeling of security and the level of confidence. See B. Ingelaere, "Does the Truth Pass Across the Fire without Burning?" Transitional Justice and Its Discontents in Rwanda's Gacaca Courts, Discussion Paper, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, 2007

Table 5 Confidence in government and governance (2004-2006)

		2004 N = 6456	2005 N = 10158	2006 N = 8719
1	% of respondents with the impression that they take part in the decision making on problems related to them	85	88	93
2	% of respondents that has recently participated in the activities of a local voluntary association	34	34	37
3	% of local elected personnel that at least once a month participates in reunions or activities to execute their task	58	60	63
4	% of beneficiaries participating in the administration of service delivery related to health, education or water	2	1	6
5	% of respondents of the opinion that the use of force is the motor of participation in state activities	41	47	52
6	% of respondents of the opinion it is better to leave the administration of local affairs to the central government	56	59	64
7	% of respondents of the opinion that only the sector coordinator (secretary-executive) really knows what to do and not the members of the executive committees	30	26	35
8	% of locally elected personnel that considers the proper engagement as elected person limited	18	17	30
9	% of respondents recognizing the efforts made by the government to improve the living conditions of Rwandans	89	96	98
10	% of respondents accepting the fight by the government to fight against the "ethnic divisionism" by limiting the right to associate	91	84	90
11	% of respondents in favour of the proposition by the government to consolidate land in order to reduce poverty	64	56	58
12	% of respondents of the opinion that governance and the fight against corruption improved in the districts	82	70	78
13	% of respondents of the opinion that governance and the fight against corruption improved in the sectors	85	85	89
14	% of respondents that declares him/herself very poor (on the bottom two steps of a "ladder of life" with seven steps)	54	55	59

Source: Republic of Rwanda, Cohesion Sociale 2005-2006. *Sondage d'Opinion*, (Kigali: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission – NURC, 2007) (Unpublished – On File With the Author)

The fact that the local government has a certain vision and dedication to the 'development' of the area is appreciated. They also have a 'technical capacity' and ideas to do so, because of their education.⁴³ But local authorities show a 'zeal' in the implementation of these objectives in the locality they 'govern' and so surpassing the capacities of the 'governed'. They have a great autonomy in achieving these goals and in the overall interpretation of national government policies. Moreover, the chain of accountability goes upwards towards higher authorities and not downwards towards the population; they are appointed, not elected.⁴⁴ Subsequently, an ambitious and internally coherent national ideology and vision is translated to the local level where measures are taken by coercion irrespective of 'real-world' considerations and local authorities often demand a lot of investments of the population, often enforced through a system of fines (see Table 6). They need to stick to so-called performance contracts signed with authorities higher up. These contracts are referred to as *Imihigo*, and refer to the capability to show others and observers that one is capable and competent in the execution of a task.⁴⁵ Social engineering has become the modus operandi in state-society relations and underlies a

⁴³ Personal capacity or power [*ububasha*] to achieve something in life is often phrased in terms of having 'ideas'. Lack of ideas and intellectual capacity implies the incapacity to move up in life.

⁴⁴ In several locations local authorities have been replaced by the central administration as they failed to implement government policies.

⁴⁵ Apparently, the concept of 'Imihigo' refers to the 'heroism' of the soldier in Rwandan culture and history. The soldier attempts through his actions in combat to show his competence and capability as a 'hero'. Recently performance contracts are also being signed with individual peasants. See: *The New Times*, 'Performance contracts to be signed at household level', 19 November 2007.

wide range of policy initiatives and practices. The narratives reflecting a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness indicate that these state interventions are not rooted in the local realities. This is also the case for Tutsi, genocide survivors but to a minor extent since in general the presence of a political order that guarantees physical safety prevails for them over the shortcomings of actual policy initiatives.

Table 6 System Of Fines Used for the Implementation of Measures Improving General Wellbeing

	Forbidden or Obligatory Activity	FINE (RWF)
1	- Tending livestock on 'public places'	10.000
2	- Cultivating on riverbeds	10.000
3	- Refusal to dig anti-erosion canals	10.000
4	- Absence of roof-gutter and receptacle near house	10.000
5	- 'Having' a second wife	10.000
6	- Churches without chapel (building)	10.000
7	- Religious groups praying at night	10.000
8	- Refusal to participate in nocturnal security patrols	10.000
9	- Parents who refuse to send children to school	10.000
10	- Teacher or other person sending child from school for not paying tuition fee	10.000
11	- Consulting traditional 'healer' without authorization	10.000
12	- Cutting trees without permission	10.000
13	- Heating wood to fabricate charcoal	10.000
14	- Selling wood products without authorization	10.000
15	- Refusal to make/use a 'modern cooking stove'	10.000
16	- Selling home-made products like cheese, milk, etc, without authorization	10.000
17	- House without compost bin	2.000
18	- House without clothesline	2.000
19	- House without closed toilet	2.000
20	- House without table to put cooking utensils	2.000
21	- House without conservation place for drinking water	2.000
22	- Someone without clean clothing & body hygiene	2.000
23	- Teacher without clean clothing & body hygiene	10.000
24	- Consumption of beers in cabarets or at home with straw	10.000
25	- Commercial centre without toilet	10.000
26	- Restaurant without toilets or not clean	10.000
27	- School compound not clean	10.000
28	- Health centre without hygiene	10.000
29	- Market with no toilets and/or not clean	10.000

Source: Letter from a District Mayor addressed to the Executive Secretaries at the sector level
 – Fieldwork observation June 2006 – Northern Province

TUTSI

"We thought the state was going to help the survivors, but until now, I haven't seen any help."
 "I wish the authorities would listen to the interests of the population. The State should do all that is possible to save the people that risk to die from poverty."
 "Since the liberation of prisoners, the authorities don't want to listen and follow up on my anxiety caused by these liberated prisoners."

HUTU

"They [political dignitaries] seek a solution for the problems of the population, but they don't want to know what our real problems are. If the state is not engaging in listening to the problems of the population, poverty will kill people in the shortest delay."
 "They [national authorities] are there [in Kigali], but they don't want to come into the countryside although it is there where there are a lot of problems."
 "They come to make us have reunions, but they ignore completely our well-being."
 "I can't say we feel represented, people are dying from hunger and nobody is taking stock."

The identity of power holders in these key positions at the local level and the (perceived) nature of the exercise of power tend to give an ethnic dimension to grievances. These statements shed light on the perceived order of things and explain the gap between subjective rankings over time according to the identity of the respondent: Hutu or Tutsi. Although state institutions and stated policies are intended to overcome (ethnic) divisions, at least in the ordinary perception they also perpetuate the cleavages they are supposedly eradicating.

HUTU

"They [Tutsi] have all of power and power is on their side. Even when a Tutsi does wrong, one cannot punish because authorities don't want to 'touch themselves in the stomach' (Kwikora mu nda)⁴⁶."

"Currently, we have no liberty of expression, what is said is controlled, there are things we do not dare to say out of fear of being thrown in prison."

"Representation is only for some people, the Tutsi, not for the Hutu, we have no right to speak."

"There are Hutu in the administration, but the problem is that when a Tutsi makes an error, he or she is not punished as a Hutu who made the same mistake."

"We Hutu are obliged to keep our cows fenced inside, while Tutsi are free to let them circulate outside."

"[The representatives] take much trouble to help the survivors, but do nothing for the Hutu. It accentuates the differences between people. The Hutu do not dare to say this in public, but they envy the privileges allocated to the Tutsi."

"They [authorities] install divisions between people, I mean, the Hutu have nothing to say."

"The state needs to stop making distinctions between people, so that problems will vanish and confidence will return."

"We are not afraid of the genocide survivors, but we are afraid of the harm we inflicted upon them [during the genocide]. Today they are strong, they have the power."

⁴⁶ This expression means that one doesn't want to sanction someone from one's own family or group. The word stomach introduces the idea of pregnancy referring to the sharing of blood, coming from the same womb.

Within this framework of (perceived) state functioning, the *Gacaca* courts were installed to tackle the distrust between Hutu and Tutsi and reconcile Rwanda and Rwandans. From the year 2000 onwards, the upward trend is visible on the charts depicting the results of the ranking exercise. But the levelling of this trend is equally visible from 2005 onwards, the moment when the *Gacaca* courts come to dominate rural life. The *Gacaca* process should bring reconciliation, but instead, or at least in its initial or operational phase does the placement on the ladder of life by respondents indicate that the degree of trust in the other ethnic group is not improving with the advent of the *Gacaca* process. The feeling of security starkly diminishes for genocide survivors, but also for Hutu who were never imprisoned but stand now accused in their communities. Tutsi and especially genocide survivors feel less secure since the start of *Gacaca*, while the feeling of security levels out for Hutu.

Both Hutu and Tutsi situate themselves several steps lower on the ladder of life compared to the situation before the genocide and war, the start of the political transition. Most of this is a consequence of the violence: the dire economic situation in rural areas, the loss of life and goods, the destruction of the social fabric and social cohesion. The state guarantees physical security and local authorities are present to solve conflicts and problems for both Hutu and Tutsi. Both groups are faced with the problem of the security of the stomach, the economic and household situation. Nevertheless, in general Hutu perceive their security situation lower compared to fellow Tutsi community members. This is a result from the fact that security also entails an appreciation of the political order, the policies it generates and how these policies are implemented.

In the aftermath of war and genocide, co-habitation was a necessity as mentioned above. Life in the countryside is highly pragmatic. Peasants depend on each other in their daily struggle for survival in mutual impoverishment. Secrets are kept in the dark and personal thoughts are not ventilated in order not to make enemies in the community. But distrust was pervasive, lingering under the surface of daily life. Confidence and the feeling of security is often expressed by referring to the heart, as explained above. The heart is the force unifying the human being. Hearts have changed because of the crimes committed, the violence experienced and the inhuman acts observed. Reconciliation, therefore, is a matter of the heart (*umutima*). Hutu and Tutsi would share the same living area again and partake in ordinary village activities in a mode of peaceful co-existence. The heart was only tacitly explored in the years before the installation of the *Gacaca* courts, without much discursive content.

TUTSI

"Before [1994] people shared everything. Today, that's finished. Before, a daughter was given for marriage without verifying the origins of the husband, while this has become a major concern currently."
 "The genocide has killed a lot of Tutsi in Rwanda and later, the Rwandan army has equally killed a lot of Hutu. So there is a problem of hatred in the heart of people from all categories [ethnicity]."

HUTU

"The heart of man is far "
 "One is confident in others when you can 'read' the heart of the other, but since that is impossible, it is equally difficult to be confident in people."
 "The face one shows is different from that which is in the heart."
 "It is difficult to know what is in the heart of the other, so I have to be careful."

Exploring the heart of the other would come into play after 2005, when the *Gacaca* courts started to operate nation-wide in every local community. The (nature of) participation during the *Gacaca* sessions has become the element to probe (the nature of) the heart of the other. The (state-sanctioned) speaking or hearing of the truth has become an important condition to increase the level of confidence between parties that distrusted the nature of the heart of the other before. The truth is not only an important prerequisite in the restructuring of social relationships, it is equally the cornerstone of the entire transitional justice framework in Rwanda⁴⁷. The fact that truth in the popular experience, both from the side of Hutu and Tutsi, is perceived as not surfacing in the *Gacaca* process, explains the levelling out of the confidence ranking. Not only factual knowledge remains largely absent, but a re-humanization and re-socialization of the other—the healing dimension of truth-telling—is not easily forthcoming.

TUTSI

"Gacaca made relationships between people worse."
 "They [Hutu] confess only partially, they are not telling the entire truth."
 "The Gacaca judges are not veracious, they are accomplices of the criminals."
 "People are not telling the truth [here]. Survivors have become liars in front of their perpetrators and those who confess don't do it from the depths of their heart."
 "Our former neighbours don't want to tell us how our family members were killed and who came to pillage our belongings."
 "For the Hutu, we greet each other in passing, but there is no real confidence. They think I will accuse them in Gacaca for what the other Hutu have done [in 1994]"

HUTU

"To have confidence, you need to be sure people tell the truth, but they don't."
 "The victims also need to tell the truth in their testimonies without lying because it 'kills' confidence."
 "I have no problem with the genocide survivors, but the fact that I denounced my neighbours as accomplices [in crimes during the genocide], has created conflicts."
 "A lot of Hutu started fleeing the country since the start of Gacaca. They are afraid of being accused."
 "The inhabitants [of the community] do not trust each other. They are not united, they are not telling the truth. It's the result of the war. Before the war, people were united and veracious."

⁴⁷ For an analysis of the conception, nature and functioning of the Gacaca court system see: B. Ingelaere, 'The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda', in: L. Huyse (ed.) *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation Mechanisms. After Violent Conflict: Learning From African Experiences* (Stockholm: International IDEA), 2007. For a more comprehensive insight in the problematic quest for the truth in the Gacaca process, see: B. Ingelaere, "Does the Truth Pass Across the Fire without Burning?" *Transitional Justice and Its Discontents in Rwanda's Gacaca Courts*, Discussion Paper, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, 2007

Despite *Gacaca* and partially because of *Gacaca*, Tutsi survivors continue to situate the nature of their confidence in Hutu on the negative side of the ladder of life. Tutsi old case load returnees are less pronounced in their disapproval of Hutu. They never even embodied the physical threats and psychological hardship the genocide survivors firsthand experienced during the 1994 extermination campaign, but they have not forgotten the course of history. Hutu suffer more from an overall climate of distrust, especially due to the denunciation principle through which the *Gacaca* courts operate. They express a higher degree of confidence in Tutsi than Tutsi in Hutu, but this is still significantly less than the in-group cohesion they portray. Hutu distrust towards Tutsi is for them often also more resulting from government policies that ought to facilitate the reconciliation process, but at the same time obstruct their own objectives. Hutu situate themselves, on average, on the positive side of the ranking for political representation, the feeling of security and confidence in Tutsi, but the fact that they are situated lower than Tutsi respondents, should be interpreted in that way.

TUTSI

"Me, I can't trust Hutu, they are angry [because accused in *Gacaca*], they are like animals."
 "There are those who still cultivate hatred and others harbour the genocide ideology."
 "There is no confidence between people due to ethnicity."
 "The government obliges us to live together with them, but we know it are very malicious people, they can still kill us."
 "They can't exterminate us massively, but they can kill us one by one."
 "The Hutu dispelled us from Rwanda in 1959, they burned our homes, ate our cows and did it again in 1973, while in 1994 they have killed almost every single Tutsi. How can I trust people who behave like animals?" [Old Caseload Returnee]
 "Nothing is possible to restore confidence in the population, even when you 'boil an elephant in a jug' (*niyo wateka inzovu mu rwabya*), it's over."⁴⁸

HUTU

"How can I be confident when I see that I am going to die in prison."
 "Until now they call us *Interahamwe*, because we are Hutu."
 "The state needs to stop favouring some and punishing others. As long as some feel superior compared to others, there will be no confidence."
 "The obstacles for Rwandans are those trials that are unjust. One ought to leave the ordinary peasant who didn't know what was going on [in 1994]. But they do it anyway because they are judging the Hutu (ethnic) group. Is there a Tutsi put on trial? They also killed, but you can't accuse them. If someone stands upright in his State, you can't do anything against him (*Iyo umunu ahagaze muri Leta ye, nta kindi wakora*)⁴⁹."
 "They [Tutsi power holders] can use [make] us [Hutu] as their servile instrument(s)" (*Bashaka kutugira ibikoresho*)⁵⁰."
 "The cry is not combatting the drum (*Induru ntirwana n'ingoma*)⁵¹."

⁴⁸ Signifying: even when you do the impossible one will never restore confidence in the population. An expression with an identical signification is "*niyo wateka ibuye rigashya*" – when you cook a stone until it becomes eatable.

⁴⁹ Signifying that one cannot do anything against a person who feels strong because very well represented by the government, it gives the person who feels represented in this way the right to do what he or she wants and those who undergo his injustice can't do anything against the one who feels strong in his state.

⁵⁰ Expression referring to the feudal period when the Hutu worked as servants for Tutsi.

⁵¹ The drum refers to the idea of power. Power is symbolized by the drum in Rwandan custom. The expression signifies that how many people try to shout, make noise and do other things to circumvent the will of power, power will always prevail. The one who has power – who has the drum in his hands – will always reach his goal, despite the popular will.

It should be noted that these statements reflect the dominant perception, as depicted when considering the ethnically diverging rankings on the ladder of life. But the overall picture also reflects the fact that both Hutu and Tutsi situate themselves on the positive side of the ladder again, except for the economic situation. Therefore, narratives also indicate an appreciation of a positive evolution on these themes compared to the upheaval experienced in the past.

TUTSI

"I noticed there are some Hutu who have very human sentiments, more than some Tutsi."
 "*Gacaca* has done something for me. It is a sort of connecting-piece between the victims and perpetrators. There are people of all sorts. Those who tell the truth, others lie and even more just say nothing. But somehow people are together to talk."
 "I am confident in people. I pardoned them, but I am most confident in those who pray together with me. I (re)gained confidence in Hutu. I am often together with them in their ceremonies where I play an important role."

HUTU

"The genocide survivors said [during *Gacaca*] that I did not play any role during the genocide. So, in a certain way, I regained confidence in them."
 "I started having good relationships with everyone, the year that my husband was liberated from prison."
 "After my liberation, not one genocide survivor has treated me badly although it was my expectation when still in prison. The programme of unity and reconciliation will continue and be fruitful."

A trend most see continued in the future, but nevertheless often conditioned on (the absence of) a crucial element of interference that might derail the process. For example the condition that the nature of the (perceived) ethnic power balance does not change in the future in order to feel represented as already mentioned above for Tutsi, or, paradoxically, on the condition that Gacaca is over or, but to a lesser extent, Gacaca has reached its goal.

TUTSI

"Maybe the children will live in harmony because the teaching of hatred that divided Rwandans is over, but the adults will die with their divisions."

"In order for people to be totally unified, Gacaca should continue because it will restore confidence."

"If Gacaca is finished, I think Hutu will hate us less."

"When Gacaca will be over, the situation will be good."

"In the future, I think security will be good, but there are people on the outside [Hutu refugees], that might want to return and disturb our security."

HUTU

"[After 2010] Gacaca will be finished and this will bring calm in the population. Tensions between people will diminish."

"If Gacaca finishes and I am not put in prison again, confidence towards Tutsi will increase again."

"[In the future] Gacaca will be over and we will see that it is not good to have conflicts and bad relationships."

"I don't think they will stop their 'bad' operations of killing and incarcerating people in the future."

"If the imprisonments continue, this will cause insecurity, because a lot of people are not satisfied. It can provoke another war."

The conditionality of the expectations towards the future reveals a high level of uncertainty based on a sense of fragility permeating virtually all domains of life. A fragility not only resulting from the violence experienced (past and present – overt and covert), but equally from an understanding of Rwandan history as excerpts from interviews, one from a Hutu, the other from a Tutsi genocide survivor, indicate. They shed light on the "underneath of the things"⁵², the undercurrent of ethnicity gravitated towards the loopholes of power, at least in the perception of the ordinary peasant.

⁵² M. Ferme, *The Underneath of Things, Violence, History and the Everyday in Sierra Leone*, Berkeley University of California Press, 2001.

TUTSI

"On the State, I have nothing to say. It is the State that organizes reconciliation without consulting us, without consulting the wise men. It is the State that does what it wants. The State decides what needs to be done. [...] The State says "you do this" and you clap your hands. [...] [Referring to the genocide] People put into practice whatever you ask them to do (*Abantu ni ba nyamujya iyo bigiye* – men follow the current of things). [...] We have a small pause of calm. There is peace but without guarantee. Habyarimana also said to bring us peace, but afterwards they killed our children. If you sleep at night and wake up in the morning, it's good (*ni ukubara ubukeye*). All changes always. Everything changes here on earth. The priest says things happen in eternal succession, so [...] It [massacres] are things that happen often since 1959. The authorities tell us that there is peace. For example in 1973. But see what happened in 1994. How much time has passed since 1994 to confirm that it will never happen again?"

HUTU

"Why are you asking questions about powersharing and democracy? In Rwandan tradition and custom, power is symbolized by the drum [Ngoma]. If you put your hands on the drum, it means you have power. What happens is that people are coming to put their hands on your arms holding the drum. Those people are your family and friends, the people of your group [ethnicity]. In that way they reap the benefits of power. But they also keep your hands pressed against the drum so they can continue to benefit. You don't have a lot of freedom to manoeuvre and there is not much room for others to profit. The only means for them to access the drum and thus power is to violently chop off the arm reaching for the drum and holding up those other arms. The drum comes in the hands of another and other arms are mustered to support and to be supported by the drum."

The two villages in post-genocide context: justice-governance-development

Graph 5 to 12 depict the rankings of respondents in Ntabona or Rukoma⁵³. Table 5 and 6 indicate the perceived changes in the socio-economic profile of all households in Ntabona and Rukoma. It is the overall background against which to situate life and state policies in post-genocide Rwanda. We have to keep in mind that these socio-economic categories, as explained in figure 1, are in general solid as a rock. Movement is, in normal circumstances, rather the exception than the rule. Rukoma currently has 644 households, 371 of them can be considered to be the same as before the genocide; 158 are newly es-

⁵³ These rankings are the result of a subjective ranking exercise similar to the individual ladder of life ranking used during the life story interviews. They were made by a group of key informants during focus group discussions. We used a list with the names of all the heads of household of the sector. Names were called and the participants in the group discussions sorted, in a collective effort the households on the ladder of life. Figure 1 was used as a visual to facilitate respondents to situate households according to socio-economic category currently and 16 years ago – before the start of the war in 1990. In total, 5 FGDs were held in both Ntabona (29 respondents) and Rukoma (27 respondents).

established households by children of residents of Rukoma; 115 households migrated to Rukoma since 1994. We consider the change in socio-economic situation of the 529 households that existed before or were established by off-spring. These newly established households are compared to the socio-economic situation of the parental unit as it is the economic starting point for newly established households to develop. 57,8 % did not experience any movement up or down. Only 9,4% moved up in life, 32,7% experienced a decline over the past 15 years. Of the 158 new households who experienced movement in relation to the situation of their parents, 15,8% moved upwards and 41,1% live according to a socio-economic status lower than their parents.⁵⁴ The dynamic of socio-economic change is similar for the 712 households of Ntabona, out of which 120 are newly established households connected to households living in the sector. 6% of them moved up, 22,0% moved down and 71,9% did not experience any change. For the new households this entailed a status-quo for 42,5% compared to the status of the parental unit, 17,5% moved up, 40% moved down.

⁵⁴ We have to keep in mind that the current socio-economic profiles are the result of a recovery after the genocide. Between 1995 and 2000 most households were situated in a category lower than they occupied in 1990 and currently 2006. The current situation relative to the 'original' positions in 1990, indicates that the economic macro-level recovery Rwanda experienced after the genocide is not the same as the perceived micro-level recovery on the household level, experienced by households who were in the country in 1990 and went through the violent decade of the nineties.

Table 7. Perceived Socio-Economic Change Rukoma 1990-2007 (N=529)

		2007					
		Abatindi Nyakuja	Abatindi	Abakene	Abakene Bifashiji	Abakungu	Abakire
1990	Abatindi Nyakuja	72	1	0	3	0	0
	Abatindi	2	25	7	4	5	0
	Abakene	3	8	91	15	3	0
	Abakene Bifashiji	6	9	64	97	11	1
	Abakungu	4	2	30	40	23	0
	Abakire	1	0	1	1	2	2

Table 8. Perceived Socio-Economic Change Ntabona 1990-2007 (N=712)

		2007					
		Abatindi Nyakuja	Abatindi	Abakene	Abakene Bifashiji	Abakungu	Abakire
1990	Abatindi Nyakuja	53	1	0	1	0	0
	Abatindi	6	42	7	4	0	0
	Abakene	8	21	144	17	2	0
	Abakene Bifashiji	4	4	45	199	8	2
	Abakungu	0	1	10	46	67	1
	Abakire	0	0	0	6	6	7

Although the local dynamic during the genocide showed quiet some variation when comparing *Ntabona* and *Rukoma*, the underlying motif and the final outcome was the same: massive violence against the Tutsi minority. While the *Gacaca* objectives are identical in both communities, the difference in the actual functioning of the courts is also apparent.

The genocide in *Rukoma* was devastating, surpassing the imaginable: 12 758 persons killed in one month's time. Revenge is the emotion prevailing in *Rukoma* since 1994, revenge against those that are left to take revenge on. It is not only an underlying tendency in the current *Gacaca* reunions, but structures interactions and daily life since 94. Genocide survivors went to live in the houses of the Hutu families in exile in Congo since their own properties were destroyed. The return of these refugees created further animosity. In the years following the genocide, the state implemented a villagization scheme in the area. Local NGOs build houses for the survivors much in need of shelter. The Hutu were obliged to destroy their own houses and to come and live 'next to the road' as well. They did not receive any help or material to do so. This spurred further ethnic resentment. Power was seen to be siding with one ethnic group. Until today, the living conditions function as an element of segregation, the *Gacaca* activities as well. All *Inyagamugayo* in *Rukoma* are Tutsi survivors – except for one cell, the neighborhood where the Hutu live. It is a situation that does not increase the legitimacy of the courts in the eyes of the Hutu. Moreover, observations of hundreds of trials in *Rukoma*, reveals that the Hutu population has hardly the chance to speak freely during the *Gacaca* sessions. They accept any accusation out of fear of being thrown in prison accused of harboring the genocide ideology. The *Gacaca* judges are hardly following any of the procedures and function under severe pressure of the numerous genocide survivors coming to assist in the trials. They greatly outnumber the Hutu population. Sometimes decisions are simply rebuffed because the population does not want to follow the judges. Confessions are only very rarely accepted.

A great number of the Hutu admits to have taken part in the extermination campaign or the looting activities or simply to have been present during this month of havoc. But most Tutsi inhabitants perished at the hands of outsiders to the village: the Burundian refugees, the soldiers, the *Interahamwe* militia and the people that came to kill and pillage from other areas. These persons are unknown to the community or disappeared afterwards. Those that are left are those standing accused. On top of this already bleak picture, but in line with an already grim atmosphere, killings have taken place in the periphery of the *Gacaca* activities. A young Tutsi survivor was killed by a Hutu who had confessed his participation in the genocide. The murder weapon was, again, a machete. The motif, however, a row over a cow,

unrelated to the past nor the *Gacaca* trials but nevertheless framed in the context of and explained with the omnipresent catchword 'genocide ideology' to the outside world. Up to 10 Hutu villagers, half of them children, were killed in retaliation by a group of Tutsi genocide survivors. They also plundered and burned over 30 houses. The Hutu fled out of fear. The army intervened and the soldiers made a safe return of the Hutu possible. The names of the avengers are known to the Hutu villagers, to the police and judicial authorities, but none of them were arrested or tried. On the contrary, some Hutu were incarcerated on charges that they failed to provide security. The initial murder and the spontaneous revenge actions was a rare instance where the simmering tensions between the two population groups were brought in the open. The reaction by the state and judicial authorities was another proof in the perception of the Hutu that not everyone is equal before the law. During the next week *Gacaca* continued to "impartially deal with the past and foster reconciliation". A great number of Hutu consider themselves to be 'servile instruments' in the hands of the Tutsi power-holders, using expressions referring to the feudal period. To no surprise, no one has raised the killings by the RPA in the aftermath of the genocide during the *Gacaca* sessions in *Rukoma*. Continued observations after this incident, but especially after the new modification of the *Gacaca* law in March 2007 indicate that the heightened tensions between the groups are diminishing and that the sentences pronounced are less arbitrary and severe as before. But fear and frustration lurk under the surface of daily life.

The social environment in *Ntabona* stands in stark contrast with the prospects for *Rukoma*. Distrust exists also in *Ntabona* and fragility permeates daily life as well. Co-habitation became the order of the day at the end of the 90s for a group of widows, who lost husband and children during the genocide. They were also grouped in a resettlement site at some distance from their previous homesteads. They live in the harsh circumstances of impoverishment because of having lost belongings and they are unable to rely on family, the first thing to turn to in times of distress and need. They prefer to stay in their small group of peers who experienced the same traumatic events. Interactions with Hutu happen in a stiff manner. And they were afraid after the arrival of liberated prisoners who confessed in prison from 2003 onwards. Some of them had been incarcerated on their demand in the years following the genocide. Seeing them return, apparently free without constraints, made them fear for their lives. Another group of genocide survivors has refused to leave their original homes most probably because a great number of them survived the genocide through the protection of Hutu. Family ties through ethnically mixed marriages proved to be an important countering power to the genocidal orders and violence. It's a remarkable phenomenon that has made them decide to keep on living in their often remote homesteads. The

Hutu households that saved during the genocide function as a beacon in the sea of suspicion characterizing the social landscape in the post-genocide era. Also these Tutsi survivors distrust the great majority of the Hutu population and prefer to rely on members of the own group. During the genocide, they were in hiding so they are unaware of all who participated. They saw some and suspect others based on rumors and information obtained through third parties. They hoped the *Gacaca* could bring clarity on these matters, especially on the locations where the bodies of some of their loved ones were thrown. The exhumation of the body of disappeared family members is an important prerequisite to arrive at a symbolic closure with regards to the past. Hutu hoped that *Gacaca* might liberate their family members imprisoned since years without a file or a trial.

Numerous observations show that *Gacaca* sessions in Ntabona function as envisioned by the organic laws and the instructions of the SNJG. Procedures are followed and everyone, apparently, ‘participates’ as prescribed. However, the first phase of the *Gacaca* process during which information was collected was marked by a heightened polarization between the different ethnic groups. Terror was taking root due to the fact that it was impossible to defend oneself or others against accusations. This sentiment diminished when the trial phase started and interventions from all sides became a possibility. While before the same persons were always cited when referring to the leaders during the genocide, people that had initially tried to evade their own responsibility started to accept their part in the upheaval of the past. But *Gacaca* brought about a lot of tensions in the community due to the fact that people accused each other of genocide crimes. An older man philosophically remarked: “I am wondering when we are going to hold a *Gacaca* to deal with the conflicts arising from the *Gacaca* sessions related to the genocide.”

And as in Rukoma, killings took place as well since *Gacaca* started. A local judge, Tutsi genocide survivor was killed. The security forces rounded up a number of genocide convicts that had appealed to their judgment and were thus awaiting further trial proceedings in the community. Several were killed in custody by the armed forces in retaliation and brought to the village with the message that ‘this happens with beast that learned to kill (during the genocide)’. None of them had probably anything to do with the initial killing of the *Gacaca* judge that was most probably a result of a family feud. But this possibility was never seriously considered. The revenge killings created panic and unexpressed fear among the inhabitants. Also for the genocide survivors, who felt that through the police actions the Hutu thought they had instigated the armed forces to resort to these actions. With no further actions undertaken afterwards, calm returned and the fragile *Gacaca* process resumed. But almost none dared to appeal against a verdict, as those killed in retaliation had done. Most of the prisoners returned in the meantime to start community service in the village.

This has diminished the resentment among the Hutu population that saw large groups of male adults disappear in custody since the start of *Gacaca*. Their return creates new problems however. People fierce in their denouncing of former participants in the genocide, now see those return of which they thought they would remain locked up for a long time. This is especially the case for genocide survivors who decided to rest their case and refused to actively participate in the *Gacaca* trials happening after the return of the prisoners. They found some consolation in the restitution they receive through the *Gacaca* sessions related to property offences, often taking place through an amicable settlement.

4. SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

We didn't ask respondents explicitly to make a comparison between pre- and post-genocide Rwanda. But the findings from the subjective ranking exercise and the accompanying narratives give us an opportunity to glance at what it means to live through a 'political transition', from one regime into another, from 'peace' over violence into 'peace'. More analysis is necessary to fully explore the multiple dimensions in the rankings and narratives to understand differences and similarities according to ethnic group or the subgroups such as prisoners, those accused in *Gacaca* etc, to understand the similarities and differences across rankings, to explore the semantics of word choice, the effects of specific policies such as the installation of the *Gacaca* courts and policy initiatives affecting the economic domain, the particularity of locality, etcetera.

Further exploration is also necessary when relating these perceptions to the critical rethinking of "transition paradigm". The rankings themselves don't give us a full insight into the type of regime that emerged after the genocide. A further exploration of actual practices and observations of the state-society relationship need to substantiate these elements in connection with a top-down analysis of the ideological, procedural and behavioural attributes of the subsequent regimes summarized in tables 2, 3 and 4.⁵⁵

In this paper we limited ourselves to explore a 'structural feature' underlying the Rwandan transition: ethnicity. The graphs with rankings visually paint the trajectory the Rwandan transition took after its departure. The most striking element in the results of the ranking exercise is this reversal of perceived ethnic dominance. While Hutu had the upper hand before 1994, Tutsi are on top of Hutu rankings in the post-genocide rankings. Hutu are more confident than Tutsi, but feel less politically represented. Tutsi on the other hand score high for political representation after 94, while in their perception they live in an inimical social environment being the untrustworthy Hutu in their

⁵⁵ See especially the paper by M. Rafti providing a macro-oriented analysis of Rwanda's political transition that should be read in parallel with this paper. M. Rafti, "A Bungled Path to Democracy: Political Transition and Authoritarian Consolidation in Rwanda," paper presented at the Conference "Deepening Democracy in Divided Societies", Cape Town, South Africa, 19-21 September 2007.

communities or on the outside of Rwanda. The reversal of dominance, therefore, needs to be attributed to the scores on the feeling of “political representation” and “security”, the latter hinging on the former since the feeling of security emanates from the perceived nature of power. It is here that ethnicity comes in the equation.

How to interpret this change? By looking at power in its overt manifestation and in its disguises.⁵⁶ The graphic results of this subjective ranking exercise presented and commented upon in this paper portray the cartography of the perceived interrelation of power and identity that structured and continues to structure Rwandan socio-political landscape and everyday life. Previously, several authors have explored this theme, often in an attempt to understand that which brought about the genocide. The ideological underpinnings of the Rwandan Republics (1963-1973 & 1973-1994) “constituted both a reversal and a continuation of [these] long-standing psychocultural images”⁵⁷ of the foreign, racially superior Tutsi pastoralist and native, subaltern Hutu cultivator that had been reinforced under colonial rule. Hutu and Tutsi remained distinct categories after the social revolution, but Tutsi became now “matter out of place”, the inferior creatures in a newly regained natural order of Hutu homogeneity. “In the neo-traditionalist 1931-59 version, the petits Tutsi felt proud of belonging to the ‘ethnic aristocracy’, although it brought them very little beyond the sense of superiority. Now [after the Hutu revolution] it was the Hutu who fell prey to the same error and mostly persuaded themselves that because the government was Hutu, they, the humble peasants from the hills, somehow shared in that power.”⁵⁸ Reyntjens, referring to Lemarchand, notes with regard to the impact of the 1959 “Hutu” revolution on the socio-political organization of Rwandan society that “there had been a change in the occupants of the roles but no major change in the structuring of the roles.”⁵⁹

Apparently, the current rankings reveal a similar process at work. It solicits a further exploration of the micro-politics of power: how power is and was institutionalized and behaviourally practiced and how it was/is exercised in its ideological – agentive – or hegemonic mode and the possibly contradictory nature of the two domains. But it is also about how power is culturally constructed and has been historically transferred as the statements quoted in the last sections reveal. Those statements reflect, to a certain extent, a “wisdom” embedded in Rwandan custom or tradition, but even more a mere interpretation of the alternation of power in the course of Rwandan history and its repercussions for the ordinary populace during the event itself and in the aftermath. Although history and culture should not function as a deterministic explanatory framework, they render actions and events meaningful for those involved.⁶⁰ Dimensions that require further exploration of the narratives collected and practices observed to further contextualize the perceptions presented here.

⁵⁶ J. Gledhill, *Power and its Disguises. Anthropological Perspectives on Politics*, London: Pluto Press, 1994.

⁵⁷ P. Uvin, *Aiding Violence. The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, Connecticut: Kumarian Press Inc., 1998, p. 33

⁵⁸ G. Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 80.

⁵⁹ F. Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit au Rwanda. Droit Public et Evolution Politique, 1916-1973*, (Tervuren : Musée Royal de L'Afrique Centrale, 1985). (Translated by the author)

⁶⁰ P. Chabal & J.-P. Daloz, *Culture Troubles. Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*, London: Hurst & Company, 2006. & J. Gledhill, *op.cit.* For the Rwandan context de Lame notes: “Rwandan mentalities are still imbued with a spiraling conception of time, as shown by the pervading ideological recourse to (considerably falsified) history to justify the present (Des Forges 1995). Any important new event harks back to a similar, earlier period, especially when it touches on historical identity. [...] Being unique, the source of power remains incompatible with shared authority, be it cohabitation with a rival or the republican separation of powers.” D. de Lame, *A Hill Among a Thousand. Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005, p. 482.

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APPENDIX 1 FOUR (LIFE) STORIES

BOX 1 The Life Story of André. 85 years of Rwanda's History Experienced Through the Eyes and Practices of a Hutu Peasant of Ntabona.

I was born here in 1921. This here is the land of my father. I have given part of the land to my son. My daughter lives here as well. She has got a child, but the father is a protestant and so I have withheld my consent to marry someone from another religion. I lived here with my mother, as my father had two wives. I was about twenty years old when I started my family [+/- 1940]. At that time the situation was better; I had cows and I worked for the Tutsi patrons as a client. [when referring to clientship, he uses the words *guhakwa* (servant) and *umugaragu* (client) reference to the *Ubuhake* clientship institution]. But there was a chief in (...). Here there were only seconds-in-command (*sous-chefs*). There were clients working for him, others worked for themselves. We took turns in the house of the patron: we stayed a certain time to work in the lords kitchen or to tend cattle. Afterwards we could return home. But there was also the *uburetwa* [forced labour]: the chef called upon you to do small jobs.

I became a client at the end of the famine called *Ruzagayura*. We went into a Tutsi family where we were four. They could have a number of them. It was a kind of servant's work: we looked for wood and we had to do the cooking. There were four of us but not all completed the job as we were beaten there. The other three are dead but I got my cow at the end. There was a lot of violence because you were beaten with a stick when you were told that you had not worked hard enough. In the morning we had to find water, then we went looking for wood in the wilderness and afterwards we started preparing the meal. We made rotations as the families in which we worked, the Tutsi – husband, wife and children – did not do anything at all. After two months we could return home because there were also married men. You had to be a client to get a cow, that was the only way. I was wealthy at the time, I had cows and above all the strength to work. I spent two months with them and then I returned to my family to work for myself.

[In addition to the Tutsi chief there were also] the ordinary Tutsi families settled (on the hill). They had taken up their residence there a long time ago. The Tutsi of (...) have always lived there; I have always known it like that. They were mixed up with the Hutu. At that time you could not see any distinction between the Hutu and the Tutsi. It is during the war that the big distinction was made. When the patrons were here, also these Tutsi families went to work for them in order to get a cow. The Tutsi also worked for the patron but they did not share with the Hutu. And as far as work is concerned, they only did small jobs like collect straw. The big jobs – cleave wood, working the fields – were for the Hutu. The Tutsi were also servants but only for the small jobs. As far as the meals are concerned, after the patron had eaten, it was the Tutsi; they did not eat together with the Hutu. The Tutsi had to stay less time to get a cow even if they only did the easier jobs. The others sometimes had to stay some years.

Clientship came to an end under the reign of *Rudahigwa* [former Tutsi king at that time, between 1931-1959]: the period of dividing the cows. Before that one went to work for a family and one got a cow, but then *Rudahigwa* said that we had to divide the cows in a fair way. It is *Rudahigwa* who said that there was an excess [in clientship]. After the period of clientelism, I kept the cows that I had received. Until this very moment the cows that I have now are offspring of those cows. Now I have two cows here descendants of those. But I have given two cows to my nephew at the occasion of a newborn child. After giving birth to a calf, the calf was given to my daughter.

Even when I was asked to work hard, I have received cows. I felt secure. I travelled, talked to people and the relations were good.

When I was still young, I went to Uganda to visit my two brothers and also to look for a job. That was from 1940 on, at the end of the famine called *Ruzagayura*. It was in the period of the war when the soldiers had finished the war in Eritrea. There were Rwandese there in Uganda who had participated in the war, looking for a job.

We went together in a group of persons. We looked for some money and wrapped some food to go to (...), province of (...), where there were customs collectors. There were periods when we went there in groups of 5 – 10 persons. We stayed there for three days. There we did « *uburetwa* » [forced labour]. There was a *muzungu* [white man], but also the personnel to organise the work for the *muzungu*. After having done those works, we had to undergo medical test to pick over the sick. After that we arrived in the English zone. I remember from that period that there were Rwandese refugees there. It was 1946. We went to find somebody to work in his big field and someone called me. It was somebody who came from Rwanda; together we had had the training to prepare marriage. It were Rwandese refugees who were there. There was a little war there between Hutu and Tutsi, but the one I met was a Hutu. Yes, yes, even before, there was a war between the ethnic groups.

I stopped going to Uganda twenty years ago, when my eldest brother died there. From 1970 on till 1975 I also worked for the white parish priest of the neighbouring sector. I worked on the watertanks. I had a feeling of security, I could do the job. I felt good as I worked for the *Muzungu* [White] priest. When the other priests came [in 2001], I did no longer work on the watertanks. Nothing was given to me to thank me for my work. During the revolution [1959 Hutu revolution], all chiefs were arrested and taken to prison in (...). They were called together in (...) and they never returned. They left for abroad. Before the revolution it was good; the population lived in harmony. After it also, but orders were given from higher authorities. [...] In the very beginning it was good, the people lived well. We worked and followed the orders from above. There was no *Uburetwa*. [...] For me nothing had changed except that we had to go to the polls. But for the population nothing had changed. There were the political parties like *PARMEHUTU*, *APROSOMA* et *RADAR* during the period of *Kayibanda*. And also *UNAR*. They organized meetings to prepare the elections, etc. It was the period of *Mbonyumutwa* et *Kayibanda*. During the period of *Habyarimana* it was good but he was alone, there was nobody to contradict him (*yaravugana rikijyana*). Under *Kayibanda* it was not as before: there were political parties. In the end he had become like that. Under *Habyarimana* the leaders were in charge, there was nothing special. When there was a need for somebody to take up the position of authority, one called everybody in the sector together to vote. One proceeded to the pre-selection. Candidates were presented and the one with most votes won. It is currently the same thing. After the vote the one who would be in charge was presented.

The confidence had diminished in 1990 because it was said that Tutsi and Hutu were waging war. After the genocide we thought of fleeing the country. We had taken all luggage to leave but we finally left it behind. Almost the whole population had fled towards the cell of (...), in the eucalyptus forest, but after three days we came back. We thought that the present military [*RPA-soldiers / rebels at the time*] could kill us. After the massacres and after the people who had fled had come back, confidence returned bit by bit. I had confidence but not complete. People who had done nothing, were arrested, so I was afraid that I would also be arrested.

My economic situation worsened after I got ill and after my wife died and also my cows. That was in 1995. Currently, my economic situation is not good; I have not very much property. And with the surgery on my stomach I had to undergo, I was told to reduce the hard labour a bit. I have even problems with my arms to harvest coffee. I only have little security due to my health. In April I went for a medical examination and the doctor who had examined me said that everything was normal but I feel ill. I got a prescription for three different drugs but I only received two.

Having a feeling of security is when there are no people that tell things against you, when you can talk to the people smoothly, when there is nobody that accuses you of anything. I have trust in others and this is in everybody. I can go ask things to the others. I have not had any period in my life that I did not have confidence in people.

On the *Gacaca*: there are people who have committed crimes. One tries to put them on the same line as the others [*re-educate them*]. Even for those who have done nothing, it is ok. I know the old *Gacaca*. There was the war before, houses of the Tutsi were burnt down and they fled; that was at the time of *Kayibanda*. There had been a period of war when people killed one another. But after a certain time people returned to their homes. No, one has not used *Gacaca* at that time here. There is a difference between the current *Gacaca* and the old one. The current *Gacaca* throws people into jail. The difference is that currently notes are taken down while in the earlier times *Gacaca* was only to talk between the people and to go on living together. The current *Gacaca* is enormously complex. They can say: that one has joined a [attacking] group [*ibitero*] and they can arrest you even if you have not done anything. You can look at someone, accuse him and he is jailed. The ones that have been considered guilty are those who have led group attacks, but even the others can be put into prison. I am not against the current *Gacaca*, even if someone is arrested on the base of testimonies, he can later be released again.

The political changes are a source of great concern to me. I have seen many changes and I am worried that it will go on. But at my age it will go on. I am not represented [by the current authorities] because they ask a lot of money. And they ask money for everything. For me the representation is not easy. Things are asked to have oneself taken care of [*mutuelle de santé - social security*]. Things are asked from people like me who do not have anything. But paying is compulsory. How can I find that money? Me, who has no more strength. I see that with my eyes, but I can not say anything. I turn my eyes to God, not towards the others. I only observe.

There are people having rights to do certain things and others without any right. It are the authorities that give the orders and have the rights. For instance, now, the authorities give the order not to let the cattle leave the sheds. I do not know how future will be with this kind of orders. I do not see the origin of these things. I have participated in the latest local elections. Candidates were introduced and we were told to elect the one we considered capable of governing. The candidates were first lined up and we had to go stand behind one of those candidates.

In the past, in the period of Habyarimana, I felt represented; the authorities could solve our problems. It was better then. Under the reign of Kayibanda, I also felt represented although he was not elected by the population. When comparing the periods before and after the war, there are authorities that govern as the others and others that govern differently. Previously it was Kinyarwanda, now it are the foreign languages that govern; they talk "Kizungu" [strange – unfamiliar – foreign languages/discourses] before talking Kinyarwanda. But for a peasant like me, the most important thing is to have peace.

(Interviews Ntabona, 2004-2007)

Box. 2 The (Life) Story of Séverine, genocide survivor Ntabona

Séverine was born in 1956 in a sector [village] near to Ntabona. In 1974, she came to Ntabona to get married. Although she is currently officially considered as a genocide survivor (rescapé) and insists that she is Tutsi, local inhabitants argue that she is in fact Hutu. Her husband was Tutsi: a farmer, but he also had a small shop, where he repaired clothing and sold these on markets in the region. "After the marriage, we had large plots of land. We had a cow and sheep, plots of land and coffee trees, we could charge a full truck without any problem." Her husband had obtained a sewing machine which allowed him, together with his brother, to gain an off-farm income. In the meantime, Séverine would cultivate the fields and employ wage labourers. Social relations were good, but "because of our richness, we attracted envy and hatred." Together they had three children, born in 1976, 1977 and 1979. Her husband died at beginning of the eighties due to a disease. "Life became difficult when my husband died. Only when the children grew up, life became better again."

Beginning of the nineties, Séverine belonged to several agricultural associations. The members cultivated sugar cane in the valley of the river (...). These associations were ethnically mixed. But due to the war with the RPF and upcoming polarization of social life during the period when multi-party politics was introduced, Séverine was excluded from the association. Also in that period, in 1992, a local teacher who would become a local ringleader in the genocide later on would not pass messages from a secondary school in the province of Gikongoro to Séverine because of her 'ethnic identity' or at least that of her children. The child got expelled from school because of this. In that period, "there was not a single authority looking after us".

When the plane of Habyarimana was shot down, Séverine's children became the target of the violence. "When I went to cultivate after the plane crash, people started to call me names. (...) asked where my son was. They said they needed him to participate in the 'rondes', the patrols to maintain security. I told him I would send him, when he came back. A certain day, I saw a large group of Tutsi families who had come to seek refuge in the buildings of the parish. At night a local teacher came knocking on our door asking me to send my children. I did not open the door. They came in group and I heard whispering: "when you want someone, you will have to proceed very carefully." The next day, my son told me they had pillaged the houses of the families of (...) and (...), two Tutsi families. I decided to leave."

Séverine took the children with her to a neighbouring sector, her place of origin, to hide them. Going there she had to pass several barriers installed on the roads. She has been beaten there several times and she now has scares coming from machete blows on her arms. She stayed in the sector of her parents for about a month. Someone from Ntabona had sent messages to the local authorities over there to send her children to the people of Ntabona. Once discovered the people over there obliged her to send the children back to Ntabona, so they could be killed where they came from. Séverine followed these orders and returned. "I arrived in Ntabona at night. (...) came to take my children. They transported them to the river. (...) took my children at the legs to smash their heads against the rocks. The next morning I went to look for their bodies. I almost turned crazy. The dogs had starting eating the flesh of their bodies."

After the genocide Séverine stayed alone in her house surrounded by people or their family members who had participated in the killing of her children and the looting of her house. In 1998 she sold her property and went to live in an Umudugudu [resettlement site] for genocide survivors in a neighbouring sector some 3 kilometers from her former home and fields. "In 1995 and 1996 they started arresting those suspected of participation in the genocide. Security was assured then. There were always soldiers close to us. I felt represented by the authorities at the time. Even now, but the Gacaca is a problem."

Her most intense social relationships are with other genocide survivors, her neighbours in the Umudugudu. "Confidence means that there is no one running behind you and aims at doing bad. I am generally confident in people that work together with me and speak the truth." Together with another female genocide survivor she is the head of Ibuka, the association of genocide survivors and controls the distribution of FARG assistance to the survivors in the area. But she is not satisfied with this assistance: "Ibuka doesn't help at all, except for the survivors with children. People like me, without children being survivor don't get anything. I hear on the radio that there is help from the FARG fund for the most vulnerable, but there is no one that comes here. It stays without result. You hear them talking on the radio but when you go and ask [at the district], they say the money available is used up." Her only possessions are a pick axe, a small chair and table and a radio. Regularly she returns to the sector to cultivate the fields or attend the Gacaca sessions.

She has trouble sleeping, she feels useless, without confidence and incapable of taking decisions. Her living conditions and the loss of her children makes her live in conflict with virtually the entire population of her former sector. She has accused people in Gacaca that later turned out to be innocent. Hutu inhabitants feel a tension when Séverine and the other rescapés arrive in the sector. The other women, Hutu mention: "We try to talk to them, but when they get angry, we have to keep silent. [...] For us, there is no obstacle to reconciliation, but the survivors think that everything they say needs to be followed literally."

In 2006 she also became Inyangamugayo, judge in the Gacaca court, after other judges had to be replaced because of their alleged involvement in the genocide or affiliation with suspects. She is not happy with the way Gacaca functions: "Gacaca works, but not very well. I have lost my children. I saw the people [that took my children] and when I went to give a testimony, everyone turned against me, saying that I was lying. The people that are with me in the committee [of judges] have family implicated. They have relationships with those people. It are their children and uncles." During one of the Gacaca sessions, one of the inhabitants argued that Séverine is also responsible for the death of her children, since she had sent them back to the sector herself. Séverine was deeply hurt due to this statement and went to file a complaint at the district office saying that the people of Ntabona continued to hurt the survivors and tried to make them responsible for the genocide. Authorities held several reunions with the population, also provoked by allegations made by other survivors, to make sure that one would leave behind the 'genocide ideology'.

Reconciliation seems an utmost impossibility for Séverine: "They have killed my children in a brutal way. They have thrown a rock on the head of one [starts crying] Those people have committed serious crimes. They pillaged and destroyed my belongings. We are getting old, we don't have any force left. [...] Those people who are in prison don't want me to be alive. They wonder there in prison, whether I am still alive or not. The same for their families, the relations are not good. They don't tell the truth. Do you think a prisoner will come here ask for forgiveness and reconcile? I don't think so. For me neither. It will not be easy. [...] The state puts a lot of pressure for reconciliation, but I have undergone those actions. The state can do what it wants, it doesn't concern me." She does not feel very secure. "Security means that one has peace and that the conversations with others are good, as they were before. Currently, you salute someone and he is not responding. [...] The relations are not good because they [other villagers – Hutu] say that we want everyone in prison so that we [survivors] can stay alone in the country. When you arrive somewhere people stop talking and they whisper: 'ah, the group [of survivors] that wants to send everyone to prison.'" She considers her prospects for the future very bleak: "If God wants, there can be security. I wish life in the community will be better and with security. Currently, when I go to the commercial centre [a place with small shops and bars], I sit down and everyone leaves. All of that are the consequences of the war and Gacaca. If Gacaca had not taken place, the relations would not have been as bad as they are now. They put people in prison? Why? Is it going to give back the dead?"

(Observations & Interviews Ntabona, 2004-2007)

Box 3 Sylvere. The (life) story of a released prisoner and confessed “génocidaire”

I was born in 1966 in (...) I have never lived anywhere else. I married in 1990 and was in prison from 1994 till 2003.

My current economic situation is not good. My home could collapse any time. I have mended it but because of that I have a debt of 30.000 FRW with my brother-in-law who lives in Kigali. Before 1994 I was better off, I did not have any problems. Everything was ok, we danced and sang songs. I was not among the rich of the village, but we cultivated the land and had good crops; we could even go to the market to sell products. I was part of several agricultural associations in the river valley. I tilled our fields, I grew beans and sweet potatoes. I consumed the harvest slowly. I currently have the same fields, but the family has grown and that is the reason why I have problems; there is less for more. At my imprisonment I had two children. After it another two and that makes it difficult. Particularly after my liberation that I saw that it was no longer as before. The harvest is less and the chickens are ill; there is an epidemic. That is the reason why I have come to a standstill.

Since birth, I have always known that there were good relations within the population. There were mixed marriages, drinking was shared. There were no problems. That situation changed during the war. We often heard the sound of bombardments in the distance coming from the battlefield. But all was calm here. I did not envisage that there would be massacres here. After the plane crash, all started, the population was worried. People living on the other side of the river [refugees from the North displaced by the ongoing war with the RPF] said the president had been killed by the Tutsi. That's why they, on the other side of the river, started throwing Tutsi in the river. But some could swim and crossed. They came in hiding here.

After a while, it also started here. People from a neighbouring sector came here. We asked them what they were doing and they replied that “they were working as anyone else” [the word ‘working’ was used to refer to participation in the extermination campaign]. They said everyone had to protect himself against the Tutsi, that they wanted revenge. Rondes [patrols] were organized against the Tutsi with only Hutu participating. The national authorities came to incite us saying that “everyone needed to be aware of the common enemy” and that we “needed to look for them, the Tutsi”.

I was part of the attacking groups [igitero] looking for and chasing Tutsi in hiding. We went to search the houses of Hutu families to verify whether there were Tutsi in hiding. When we found someone, we transported him or her to the river. They were stripped from their clothes, sometimes tied with ropes and beaten with sticks. [Turns his eyes to the ground] I was there, but I have not done those things. The houses of the Tutsi were already destroyed at that point. We want to verify with the known Hutu friends of Tutsi, people that had exchanged a cow in the past. Sometimes we also threatened these Hutu. In total we found 9 persons in this way.

We participated in a voluntary way. Some just followed in the back. Motivations to participate varied, some to plunder, to eat and pillage or to cultivate the fields. The responsible and the conseiller [local authorities] never really tried to stop the killings. They could have. Personally, for me, I learned in school how the Hutu had been mistreated in the past. When I heard the Tutsi would return, I thought, no, the Tutsi can never return. Most of us had these type of ideas. The old people explained younger people that if the old regime would return, we would all die.

Yes, yes, the majority of the people of my neighbourhood was involved in the massacres. The way I observed it – even if I was not everywhere – the majority has played a role. The majority has participated in destroying the houses, etc. The people that were together with me in the attacking groups have never been imprisoned before the start of Gacaca. They are afraid now.

When we were in prison, we were tranquil. But when you consider the household, you realize they have a difficult time. The wife was alone. We were sometimes badly treated in prison, but not all the time. Somebody is in security when he is at home, when he does not pester anyone and when he follows the rules of the government.

Confidence is when you see somebody's face and when he can do good for you as you do for him. Since the collection of the information [start of Gacaca], it has become worse. But the District Authorities have come to soothe the population. We often went to meetings with the authorities. After these, the threats decreased as people thought they would be brought to court.

There were quite a number of people happy to see me back after my liberation in 2003. The day of my letting out I was welcomed because the people did not know that we had given testimony in prison on what had happened [during the genocide]. There has been a change since the beginning of Gacaca. When we were asked to tell the truth, I gave my testimony. I have mentioned the names of the people involved. At that moment, they began to say: “you see, he is our enemy, he wants to eliminate us also”. But it is only with the people involved that the relations are bad. With the others, even the survivors, relations are good. Those that were implicated in the violence say that we want to eliminate them also.

The people that were not involved and that have not suffered the consequences are good. But the people that were involved and/or have given evidence have to be intelligent, I mean, they have to pay attention. When somebody has a ceremony, they leave you aside [don't invite you].

A lot of people do not tell the truth, except those that have confessed and asked forgiveness. This is to hide what they know. They are afraid that they would be asked where they got that information from. Thus, it means that they will be asked where they were at that moment, so that they could be accused of being with the attacking group. And if they give a genuine evidence, they might also accuse members of their own family. They are afraid of being accused in turn. These people, there are some that can say what they have seen (...). Others who have not joined but who know what has happened do not say anything because they say it is only for those that have already confessed to their crimes like me.

A small number of people tell the truth. That is the only positive aspect of Gacaca. There was even a time when I regretted being released from prison by the State because of the problems with the other people in the village. And the families that we have treated badly behave nicely towards us. Yes, yes, I have wished at a certain moment to be in prison. I have had more problems than those who stayed in jail. But now, it has changed. The State has given us confidence and we do not have to fear anything. But at that moment I thought it was the State that had imposed the things in that way, so that we could be treated badly and lose our heads.

The person who currently wants to hurt me more than the others is a certain (...) who has never been in prison. I charge him with participating in the attacking group I was also part of. When I speak out his name, he becomes extremely furious. As he is my closest neighbour, he says that I can kill him, even so I am not the only one to accuse him. During the genocide there were nephews of him hiding in his place, they were killed and since that day, he condemns me saying that I was leading the attack against his nephews. Yes, I was in the mob but the attack was led by the former responsible of the cell and it is mainly by this incident that I was in prison; it was that man who made me imprison.

The relations with the survivors are good. When I make a confession, I am thanked because they do not know what happened. There are even others who come and ask more information about what happened. They come therefore from other places. They thank us. The survivors have some knowledge of what happened; they were hiding but they saw something or some persons. The survivors regret that a lot of people do not speak the truth.

One feels represented when you can appeal to the authorities and when they respond to your request quickly and in the correct way. In the time before the war I was even a local leader. I was tenth in the committee of the cell; this proves that things went well for me. There was the war after 1990 but it worked. Before that there was one single (political) party, afterwards the MDR was founded. They came to my place to make me a member, threatening me with words. I am currently not very well represented. You often assist at meetings with authorities where it is said that the released must be thanked for giving evidence etc. But the next day we hear that these released prisoners need to be kept an eye on. I do not feel very secure, when I sleep and the wind blows I think that they come to arrest me and throw me into jail.

For the future, I received a cow from my brother-in-law. The cow is going to calve and I am going to improve my situation. I have 4 children and will stay with this. I hope to stay out of prison. Sometimes, I sit down and think about what happened [during the genocide]. I hope that what happened will not return. I wish that the truth prevails.

(Interviews – Ntabona 2004-2007)

Box 4 – Cyrille, the (life) story of a Tutsi genocide survivor - Ntabona

I was born here in 1957. In 1978 I went to Kibungo. I spent three years there, but life was difficult, so I came back here: problems of drought and malaria. I realized that it was impossible to create a living there. We had bought parcels of land but we left everything behind, we did not even sell them. In 1982 I married here. Around 1986 I went to [the neighbouring sector] until 1994. The plot here was too small. It was small but fertile. Only to keep livestock I had to move. Life there was excellent. I left because of the war. I came back here. During the genocide I fled to [location somewhere in the sector]. After the genocide I returned here into this house. Since my birth until the beginning of the war I felt absolutely secure. Anybody could ever imagine that would happen what has happened. It was since 1990 that they began to kill the Abogogwe, members of a Tutsi clan. They were breeders. One has begun to kill them in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri.

Here the war [referring to the genocide] was not what it was elsewhere. Even if there were attacks, there were also counter-attacks. A group of Interahamwe came as I had quite a lot of property. They came and destroyed the house by burning it. They took 8 cows and ate them. We succeeded in escaping. The whole family fled except for my father, who did not have the strength. He was thrown into the river together with the children of my sister. I left with the family and we went to hide in families in Ntabona. Some were friends, other family members. They tried to hide us as they were family. We only asked to live, hunger and thirst were forgotten. Those who hid us are still alive. They were on the watch to see whether there were attacks and to organize resistance. And then we were saved because the Identity Card indicated that we were Hutu. We were lucky because our parents had changed that before. Part of the population knew we were Tutsi; they suspected us.

From the people who have attacked us and looted our house, there are some in prison but others are still free. They have done this because of the bad leaders; but those who have followed are also bad, otherwise they would not have accepted to do this. Those who are in prison have had their punishment, the others have to restore the goods. If they do this, I can accept it, otherwise they must be punished. Some of the people that have taken our property have restored it, others have not. At a certain moment the currency was changed. Then there were people coming with old money that we could no longer use. When they gave us the money, it was the period of change, but when we went to the bank with it, it was too late to change it.

On top of what happened in 1994 there was also the period 1996-1997 in which there were infiltrators [abacengezi]. We were desperate. We spent the night outside looking for shelter. We cultivated the land but during the night we went into the wilderness. That was 1997 and it lasted for a year. Afterwards the situation has ameliorated up till now; we organized nocturnal patrols to increase security.

The state had promised help but given nothing. In another district, people received something but not here. We got corrugated sheets from Caritas. I have a child in secondary school whom the fees are paid for by FARG. But those in primary school must be paid for as well.

If the current economic situation continues like this, it is ok. But we are not at ease. The Gacaca, judgements must come to an end. After that we will be at ease. In 1995 we were really down and out; we did not have anything. We lived from the help of the people, we only had a small house. And then we began to cultivate land and grow cattle. Recently we have had a problem of drought. Today my level is lower than before the war. Before I had cows, money and a nice house. Afterwards it was worse, but it begins to improve again. But, during the judgment phase of Gacaca it is going to be even more difficult. The implicated ones are going to be judged. That might cause problems between the Inyangamugayo and those accused. The majority of the people in the cell are implicated, so they do not want the truth to be clarified.

Before the war I had confidence in other people. We had confidence in others because we heard that there was war in other countries but not here. Since 1994 my confidence in other people has diminished. There is now a large part of the population that I do not trust. I trust only those persons who have not been involved in the genocide. The relations have improved a bit; for instance the persons who have been released testify, but these testimonies are not complete. Therefore, the relations are not good; they are mediocre. There is not very much truth. But, me, I have no great problems: I have given two daughters to Hutu families [for marriage].

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The important social relations date from before the war. The persons, the families that have hidden me during the war have a special meaning to me. We still have a climate of love between us. (...) is someone that has helped us. He has given money to the groups that came to attack us. The government is currently doing nothing special for those people, except drawing up their list at the Gacaca sessions. The conseiller [local authority – in 1994] also. He tried to say that there were no hidden families there; he organized meetings to calm the people down. He has also organized the resistance.

Here I am ok. The situation is good, except for the security that is not good because of Gacaca. It is better that Gacaca takes place, because the crimes must be punished but the hearts become more fierce rather than relieved. There are those who refuse to admit their crimes, the ideology of the genocide is still there. When people realize that they will be unmasked, they are getting angry at those who are about to testify. There are people having the ideology of the genocide, even if it is difficult to observe. But “you can not deny the eye that looks at you in an evil way”. If the Gacaca process is over, we can see afterwards.

Despite the limited security, the situation is improving. We currently have strong leaders, which was not the case before. From Nyumbakumi up to the level of the president of the Republic everything is fine.

We are currently secure; we have good leaders. During the presidential elections we were afraid that another person might be elected. If it had been anybody else, that would have been terrible for us. In 1994 I absolutely did not have any confidence in myself, we stayed concealed. Even when there were people bringing us food, we could not eat it because of the despair. Before the war I had a lot of confidence in myself. Now there are the uncertainties, the anxiety. The reasons of the political changes since 1994 are the lack of truthfulness and stability. I find that it works now. After the victory of the FPR lots of things have changed. The people who did not do their job well were removed from their posts.

I wish for security and I wish it also for the whole of Rwanda. Everybody should accept what the government expects us to. The problem is that we are asked to live in peace, but some said that they did not want to. I can't say anything about the future, but it is possible that the best times belong to the past, looking at the people. Only God can arrange things.

(Interviews Ntabona 2004-2007)

APPENDIX 2

Tabel 9 Overview Main Characteristics Selected Villages (Sectors)

	Ntabona	Runyoni	Maran gara	Rukoma	Jali	Nyaki-banda
REGION						
	Central	Central	South-East	South	North-West	North
POPULATION						
Total Population 2006	3695	7950	10012	2373	9385	5114
Total Population 1994	3130	5940	8286	14984	7824	1370
Total Population 1990	2930	5391	9308	13608	6706	1571
Hutu Population 1994	2885 (92.2%)	4303 (81,7%)	6190 (74,7%)	1618 (10,8%)	7325 (93,7%)	1368 (99,9%)
Tutsi Population 1994	245 (7.8%)	1088 (18,3%)	2096 (25,3%)	13366 (89,2%)	499 (6,3%)	2 (0.0%)
GENOCIDE						
Starting Date	19th April	8th April	14th April	10th April	6th April	No Violence
Highest Intensity	20-24th April	14-25th April	14-20 April	10-14th April	6-7th April	No Violence
End Date	11-12th May	5th May	17th May	25th April	7th April	No Violence
RPF Arrival	4th July	15th June	17th May	25th April	10th July	No Violence
Genocide Promotors	6	59	20	10	66	0
Leadership Figure(s)	Demobilized Soldier & Teacher	Interahamwe Leader & Local Merchant	Merchant – Interahamwe leader from the Nord	Pastor (Intimate of Akazu) & National Authority	Soldiers & Conseiller	/
Meetings	No	In 6 out of 10 cellules	In 3 out of 12 cells	In 3 out of 5 cellules	In 2 out of 6 cellules	In 0 out of 5 cells
Arms Distribution	No	In 9 out of 10 cellules	In 8 out of 12 cells	In 3 out of 5 cellules	In 2 out of 6 cellules	In 5 out of 5 cells
Barriers	14	29	19	6	3	3
Interahamwe Inside Sector	In 2 out of 5 cells	In 6 out of 10 cells	In 9 out of 12 cells	In 4 out of 5 cells	In 5 out of 6 cells	In 0 out of 5 cells
Interahamwe Coming from the Outside	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
FAR Soldiers	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refugees	Nearby (From Byumba)	Yes (From Byumba)	Yes (From Byumba)	Yes (From Burundi)	No	No
National Authorities Came During Genocide	Yes Deputy	Yes Deputy	Unknown	Yes Deputy	No But: Heartland of Power Habyarimana	No
Communal Authority Came During Genocide	Yes Bourgemestre	Yes	Yes Bourgemestre	Yes Bourgemestre	No	No
Conseiller	Contra / Passive	Passive	Unknown	Killed (Tutsi)	Active	/
Responsables	Mix. 2 Active / 3 Passive	Mixed	Unknown	Mixed	Active	/
N° Local Authorities Implicated	2	34	70	7	11	/
Local Elite	Contra / Passive	Active	Active	Active	Active	/
N° Houses Destroyed	58	52	289	2210	N/A	0
N° People That Saved During the Genocide	32	71	54	2	9	3
Tutsi Inhabitants Killed	128	262	491	12758	346	0

Tutsi Inhabitants Killed Elsewhere	30	291	1284	70	70	0
Tutsi Passers-By Killed	55	155	472	108	12	0
Former Tutsi Inhabitants Survivor	87	535	321	538	83	2
Tutsi Inhabitants Currently Survivor	31	229	215	292	83	2
WAR - AFTERMATH						
War (1990-1994)	Low	Low	No	No	Medium	High
Insurgency War (1996-1999)	Low	Low	No	No	High	High
Military Attack	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Massacres (RPF)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Revenge Killings	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Terror	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
PRISONERS (genocide crimes)						
Released	9	149	374	41	0	1
Incarcerated (until 2006)	55	70	202	200	N/A	0
% Hutu Population ('94) in prison	2%	5%	9%	14,8%	N/A	0,0%
GACACA ACCUSATIONS						
Total Accused	833	1950	1526	1037	693	35
Category 1	79	115	77	N/A	76	1
Category 2	419	863	894	N/A	281	34
Category 3	337	581	558	N/A	381	0
Confessions (%) (2006)	42 / 5% of accused	123 / 6% of accused	565 / 37% of accused	3 / 0,2% of accused	43 / 6.2% of accused	0 / 0% of accused
% Hutu Population ('94) Accused	28,8%	45,3%	24,6%	64%	9%	2,5%
GOVERNANCE 1980s						
Bourgmestre	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu
Conseiller	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Tutsi	Hutu	Hutu
Responsables	Hutu	Mixed	Hutu	Mixed	Hutu	Hutu
Dominant Party	MRND	MRND	MRND	MRND	MRND	MRND
GOVERNANCE 1990-1994						
Bourgmestre	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu
Conseiller	Hutu	Hutu	Hutu	Tutsi	Hutu	Hutu
Responsables	Hutu	Mixed	Hutu	Mixed	Hutu	Hutu
Multipartyism / Dominant Party	MDR	MDR	MRND/CDR	PL	MRND / CDR	MRND
GOVERNANCE 2006/7						
Secretary-Executive (bourgmestre)	Tutsi	Tutsi	Tutsi	Tutsi	Tutsi	N/A
Coordinator (conseiller)	Hutu	Tutsi	Tutsi	Tutsi	Tutsi	Hutu
Responsables	Hutu	Mixed	Mixed	Tutsi	Hutu	Hutu
Dominant Party	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF	RPF



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