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RECONCILIATION IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

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ABSTRACT

National reconciliation is a vague and ‘messy’ process. In post-genocide Rwanda, it presents special difficulties that stem from the particular nature of the Rwandan crisis and the popular participation that characterized the Rwandan atrocities. This article outlines the main approaches being used in Rwanda to achieve reconciliation, highlighting some of the major obstacles faced by these institutions. It then goes on to argue that certain ‘Silences’ are being imposed on the reconciliation process, including the failure to prosecute alleged RPA crimes, the lack of debate on, and the instrumentalization of, Rwanda’s ‘histories’, the collective stigmatization of all Hutu as génocidaires, and the papering over of societal cleavages through the ‘outlawing’ of ‘divisionism’. The role economic development can play in the reconciliation process is also discussed. Given the Government of Rwanda’s central role in the reconciliation process and its progressive drift towards authoritarianism, the article ends with a reflection on the worrisome parallels between the pre and post-genocide socio-political contexts.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the wake violence on a societal scale, finding the right balance between justice and healing, retribution and forgiveness, tribunals and truth commissions, remembering and ‘moving on’ is a messy if not impossible goal. As Martha Minow points out, “*no* response can ever be adequate when your son has been killed by police ordered to shoot at a crowd of children, when you have been dragged out of your home, interrogated, and raped in a wave of “ethnic cleansing”; or when your brother who struggled against a repressive government has disappeared and left only a secret police file, bearing no clue to his final resting place.”¹ If anything, this is all the more true in cases of genocide, where one has to factor in the “terrifying existential crisis faced by survivors of genocide”, their brush with the attempted annihilation of “not only your self, but also everything that constitutes your world, everything that makes your life worth living – your work, your family, your children – all that was on the point of being wiped out, too.”²

Reconciliation is a vague concept. In the wake of mass violence, there is no goal post past which ‘reconciliation’ has been achieved.³ My premise is that legal (prosecutorial) instruments, striking political compromises, publicly acknowledging the wrongs inflicted on victims, and other measures, as ‘messy’ as they may be, are all more acceptable than doing nothing. I label ‘doing nothing’ unacceptable first because of its “shocking implication that the perpetrators in fact succeeded”.⁴ Indeed, silence makes us complicit bystanders to the perpetrators of yesterday. Secondly, inaction is unacceptable because it leaves grievances, fears of reprisals, and cultures of impunity to fester, encouraging cyclical outburst of violence by the perpetrators of tomorrow. Sadly, this is an accurate description of the periodic violent crises in Burundi and Rwanda. ‘Reconciliation’, the umbrella term I will use to refer to this series of messy compromises, though it may be inconceivable or offensive to some, is

¹ Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 5.

² Gérard Prunier, quoted in Helena Cobban, “The Legacies of Collective Violence: The Rwandan genocide and the limits of the law” in *Boston Review* (Vol 27, No 2, April/May 2002), 16. Available online: <<http://www.bostonreview.net>> (date accessed: 10 February 2004)._

³ For the purposes of this paper, reconciliation will refer to a societal or macro-level process, the necessary groundwork for the very private process of individual reconciliation to become thinkable.

⁴ Minow, 5.

thus the only sustainable and genuine form of *prevention* in societies that have undergone mass violence.

In this article, I will outline Rwanda's attempts at striking the balance between justice and healing, vengeance and forgiveness. I will then describe the 'Silences' imposed on Rwanda's 'national unity' project and end with a reflection on the worrisome parallels emerging between the pre-genocide and post-genocide contexts. Throughout, I will emphasise that Rwanda's conflict is qualitatively different not only in its genocidal character, but also in the overwhelming receptivity, and initiative, the organizers of the genocide found from below.

II. POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA'S 'RECONCILIATION TOOL-KIT'

A. 'What' is to be reconciled?

One cannot say much about the prospects of reconciliation without first reflecting on exactly what it is that gives rise to demands for it. In the Rwandan case, the answer will invariably focus on the 100 days in 1994, during which 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu⁵ were murdered, mostly by their Hutu (peasant) neighbours and families, with the help of several militia groups allied to (extremist wings of) political parties⁶, the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR), the Presidential Guard and local 'self-defence' groups that had been armed by government authorities in the preceding months. This was genocide because the victims were chosen according to their membership of a specific group, the Tutsi. 'Hutu moderates' were slaughtered because they were perceived to be Tutsi co-conspirators. There is wide consensus that the planning and orders

⁵ I use the figure of 800,000 with some reticence and simply because it has evolved to be the figure most commonly cited. Among other figures sometimes cited is the Government of Rwanda's own figure of 'over one million'. All are extrapolations based on census data and all are rough estimates. The fact is no one knows exactly how many died from April to July 1994 in Rwanda, still less how many participated. In a telling passage of his book on the Rwandan genocide, Mahmood Mamdani describes how with each of his visits to Rwanda, the estimates of the numbers of génocidaires of the government authorities he interviewed ballooned: from three to four million in 1995, to four to five million in 1997, to 80% of all Hutu alive, also in 1997. See *When Victims Become Killers: Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 266.

⁶ The two most infamous militia were the Interahawme, allied to the ruling Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement (MRND), and the Impuzamugambi allied to the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR) party.

came from the very top of Rwanda's political and intellectual elite.⁷ But the level of popular agency that characterised the 1994 Rwandan genocide disrupts that easy avenue for attributing guilt to a relatively small, finite number of people.⁸

Also important to keep in mind is that the cataclysm that was the Rwandan genocide – the most efficient mass slaughter in recorded history – tends to eclipse the war crimes committed by the (then rebel) Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)⁹ before and during the genocide, reprisal killings by RPA soldiers and other individuals during and after the genocide, and the massacre of thousands of Hutu perpetrated by the RPA both in Rwanda – for example, the attack on the Kibeho camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in 1995 – and in eastern Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).¹⁰

Several overlapping, evolving and sometimes competing approaches are being used by the RPF-dominated Government of National Unity of Rwanda to deal with the 'legacy of genocide'. Part of this legacy is the prisoner population of ca. 115,000 living in jails and *cachots* (communal lockups) all over the country as of the end of 2002.¹¹ Many prisoners have had no charges

⁷ See Peter Uvin on the preponderance of the 'elite manipulation' explanation for the Rwandan genocide, "Reading the Rwandan Genocide" (Malden MA, USA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001 International Studies Association).

⁸ For examples of cases where individuals were found liable for genocide and other egregious crimes committed in Rwanda in 1994, see the web site of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda at <<http://www.ictr.org>> (date accessed: 4 May 2004).

⁹ The RPA is the armed wing of the RPF – the Rwandan Patriotic Front. In this paper, I will subsume both under the RPF heading, except when 'RPA' appears in passages I cite integrally.

¹⁰ Government soldiers opened fire on the residents of the Kibeho IDP camp in April 1995 after they had refused to return to their communes of origin. The government cites security concerns for the forcible closure of the camp. To this day, the number of victims is disputed and no internationally recognised commission has investigated the incident. The government casualty figure is in the vicinity of 350 casualties; various independent estimates range from 2,000 to 8,000. As for the 1996 joint Rwanda-Ugandan campaigns in Zaire/DRC, which ended with the deposition of President Mobutu Sese Seko and the seizing of power by the then-Rwanda and Uganda backed Laurent Kabila, several reports place the number of Hutu 'refugees' (Kigali would call them *génocidaires*), who had fled during the genocide, at 30,000. It was well known that Mobutu was arming the ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces in camps in eastern-Zaire, from which they were launching raids into Rwanda. However, these *génocidaires* were using civilian Rwandans both as human shields and as a magnet for humanitarian assistance.

¹¹ The 115,000 figure is from Peter Uvin and Charles Mironko, "Western and Local Approaches to Justice in Rwanda", *Global Governance*, 9 (2003), 223.

brought against them and, according to Amnesty International, conditions in most prisons and lockups amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.¹² The government cannot afford to care for the prisoner population. Many prisoners rely on their families who may have to travel long distances on foot every day to reach the detention centre. The ICRC provides food to the central prisons, but not to *cachots*. “In the first three months of 1998, 405 detainees died in central prisons and communal lockups. [...] In the early months of 1998, UN monitors found that about two-thirds of the detainees were receiving no food from their families.”¹³ Inhuman treatment, specifically torture, has been reported by various international human rights organisations though such allegations are by their nature difficult to substantiate.¹⁴

B. Formal legal mechanisms

Perhaps the most well known legal mechanism in the Rwandan context is the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the ICTR, which started work in 1995. It is based in neighbouring Arusha, Tanzania.¹⁵ As of December 2003, the Tribunal had convicted 10 detainees (three of which had

¹² Amnesty International 2002 Annual Report, chapter on Rwanda, available at <<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/afr/rwanda!Open>> (date accessed: 2 March 2004).

¹³ Alison DesForges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (Human Rights Watch, March 1999), 763.

¹⁴ See among others: Amnesty International 2002 Annual Report as well as Amnesty International Press Release “Rwanda: Provisional release of genocide prisoners - priority should be accorded to the “sans-dossiers” (AI INDEX: AFR 47/001/2004, 3 March 2004) <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/engindex>> (date accessed: 10 March 2004); Human Rights Watch World Report 2001, online: <<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/index.html>> (date accessed: 10 May 2004).

¹⁵ The ICTR is the international community’s attempt, given its scandalously passivity (and even complicity according to more radical observers!) during the 1994 genocide, to (1) help in the process of national reconciliation in Rwanda, (2) bring the (high-ranking) architects of the genocide to justice and (3) contribute to preventing such atrocities from happening again. The ICTR’s mandate is the “prosecution of persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994. It may also deal with the prosecution of Rwandan citizens responsible for genocide and other such violations of international law committed in the territory of neighbouring States during the same period.” ICTR website, online: <<http://www.ictor.org>> (date accessed: 10 May 2004). On Rwanda-ICTR cooperation, “The tribunal takes precedence over national courts of UN member states [...] Persons tried by the tribunal cannot be charged for the same crime in national courts, nor vice versa, except if the national trial is deemed to have been only a charade.” DesForges, 740.

launched appeals) and had incarcerated 56 high-ranking officials and leaders of the former regime. It is nearly impossible to overstate the bitter disappointment and ill will the ICTR's alleged rampant corruption, bureaucracy, incompetence and above all, its meagre results – ten convictions in nearly ten years – all on a multi-million dollar annual budget, has generated with the RPF government, the Rwandan people and internationally.¹⁶ This ill will only compounded the general negative perception of the UN with Rwandans, given that body's failure to intervene as the genocide unfolded. Importantly, the RPF's animosity also stems from the ICTR's insistence that *all* war crimes committed from January to December 1994 be investigated, as per its remit. This would include war crimes allegedly committed by the RPF.¹⁷ The fact that the Tribunal has not been allowed to proceed has led some to rename the TPIR (the French acronym of the ICTR) the TPIH – le Tribunal Penal International pour les Hutus.¹⁸

A parallel prosecutorial approach is found in Rwanda's national court system. It is estimated that after the genocide, there were 10 Rwandan lawyers left in the country.¹⁹ Elites, unless aligned with the genocidal regime, were among the first victims. Once the massacres were over, Rwanda's judges and lawyers had either fled or had been killed. Court buildings were pillaged and

¹⁶ The ICTR's budget for 2002 was USD 177,739,400; Gacaca tribunals have an estimated annual budget of USD 2,200,000. Source: "Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda: la parole au peuple", Institute for Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDPA), Kigali, in partnership with WSP International, 2003, 85.

¹⁷ The RPF's moral outrage is illustrated in the 13 August 2002 statement by the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, an extract of which is quoted here: "Any crimes committed by individuals within the RPA were investigated and punished. They [the ICTR] know that very well. [...] How then does the ICTR attempt to place the RPA, who actually put an end to the genocide, at the same level as the génocidaires, the very perpetrators of the genocide? [...] They [the international community] simply ran away from responsibility and left people to be killed in the thousands. [...] So what moral authority do they have?" And again in a February 2004 interview on BBC World's Talking Point programme: "Shouldn't we be trying those people for allowing genocide to take place in Rwanda when they had full responsibility to prevent that, later on to stop it? If people stood by watching genocide take place why can't they be tried? Those of the UN who are saying that [the RPF should be tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity], they are ones who allowed the genocide to take place in Rwanda." Transcript of interview accessed on BBC World web site on 8 February 2004.

¹⁸ A-E Gakusi and F Mouzer, *De la Révolution Rwandaise à la Contre-révolution: Contraintes structurelles et gouvernance 1950-2003* (L'Harmattan, 2003) footnote 7, p. 12

¹⁹ Amnesty International, "Rwanda – Gacaca: a question of justice", (AI, December 2002)

heavily damaged. Working with no equipment, low pay and sometimes no pay, very short training periods and no trial experience, the legal system struggled to get back on its feet and many serious mistakes, delays, and irregularities occurred.²⁰ To attempt to regulate this chaotic situation, Parliament passed in 1996 the *Organic Law on the Organisation of Prosecutions for the Crime of Genocide or Crimes against Humanity committed between October 1, 1990 and December 31, 1994*.²¹ Slowly, the judicial system has been restored and by early 2004, over 5,500 individuals had been tried.²² This is an enormous feat that should not be disparaged.²³ Nonetheless, some serious concerns remain regarding the independence of the judicial system from political interference.²⁴

Exemplifying this early emphasis on punishment and retribution are the controversial and public executions in April 1998 of 22 prisoners convicted by the Rwandan courts of genocide. These executions took place in several locations and included some very high-ranking former officials. They were the first death penalties handed down by the courts and according to observers that were there at the time, drew huge crowds of people, which “at times seemed overtaken with bloodlust.” Martha Minow, describing the executions,

²⁰ Among the irregularities was the summary arrest, based on accusations that were frequently not corroborated, of thousands of Rwandans by soldiers and others without legal training or authority and or regard for legal formalities or the rights of the arrested. This contributed to swelling the number of prisoners who still have no dossier after as many as 10 years in detention. Some of the prisoners in this situation were provisionally released in several waves, and most recently by a January 2003 Presidential decree.

²¹ In its second chapter, the law divides the persons accused of genocide-related crimes or crimes against humanity, into four categories. Category 1: Criminals whose participation placed them among the planners, instigators, supervisors and leaders of the crime of genocide, or of a crime against humanity, and persons who committed acts of sexual torture; Category 2: Criminals whose participation placed them among perpetrators, conspirators or accomplices of intentional homicide, or of serious assault against the person, causing death. Category 3: Persons whose criminal acts or whose acts of criminal participation make them guilty of other serious assaults against the person. Category 4: Persons who committed offences against property. Source: Official Gazette no. 9/96 of 30/08/1996

²² Figure quoted in Allison Corey and Sandra F Joireman, “Retributive Justice: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda”, *African Affairs* (2004), add volume number 103, 73-89.

²³ Pacifique Manirakiza “La répression des crimes internationaux devant les tribunaux internes” (Faculté de droit/these de doctorat, Univeristé d’Ottawa, octobre 2003)

²⁴ The May 2003 Constitution includes new measures to guarantee judicial independence. Their effectiveness remains to be seen. Nonetheless, it is a generally shared feeling among Rwandans that the judicial apparatus protects the interests of political authorities. See “Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda”, 76.

concludes that “[r]ather than ending the cycles of revenge, the trials [of the 22 high-ranking prisoners that were executed] themselves were revenge.”²⁵

C. *Gacaca* – Justice on the grass

Despite the passing of the 1996 law on the prosecution of crimes of genocide, it was estimated that the formal judicial system in Rwanda would require *more than a century* to judge the hundred thousand plus prisoners in custody. As early as 1998, the idea to revive the traditional, grass-roots courts, *gacaca*, was raised by officials. A recurring theme was alleviating the strain on the legal and penal systems but also, importantly, a desire to involve the population in ‘solving’ Rwandese problems and pride in Rwandese traditions, as embodied in *gacaca*. There was also a noticeable hostility towards ‘White People’s’, or Western, justice.²⁶

The *gacaca* law was passed in January 2001. The *gacaca* system faces a number of significant problems, which I will not explore in detail here. These include concerns about the violation of principles of ‘due process’, witness intimidation (especially in rural Rwanda where perpetrators presumably far outnumber witnesses), and judges’ competence and impartiality.²⁷

Gacaca’s overarching goal is to promote reconciliation and healing by providing a platform for victims to express themselves, encouraging acknowledgements and apologies from the perpetrators, and facilitating the coming together of both victims and perpetrators every week, on the grass. In this way, it resembles South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.²⁸ While it is a potential source of ‘truth’ on how the genocide was implemented, its provisions for confessions and guilt pleas represent one of *gacaca*’s most cited shortcomings. Indeed, under these provisions, if someone confesses before being denounced, he or she is liable for a substantial decrease in the length of the sentence. However, confessions are only acceptable if they include (1) all information about the crime, (2) an apology, and crucially (3) *the incrimination of one’s co-conspirators*. This system of confessions creates rife

²⁵ Minow, 124.

²⁶ As quoted in Noah Weisbord, “The Law and Ethics of Gacaca” (Law/MSW Thesis, McGill University, Fall 2002), 49.

²⁷ For an excellent, detailed discussion of the main challenges to the *gacaca* system, see African Rights’ report “Gacaca Justice: A Shared Responsibility”, (African Rights, January 2003)

²⁸ One important distinction is that *gacaca* tribunals were not given the jurisdiction to extend amnesties to the confessors.

conditions for vendetta-settling; some estimate that an additional 200,000 people could see themselves accused and imprisoned for genocide-related crimes.²⁹

Despite what may seem like insurmountable problems, *gacaca* presently represents the most suitable and only workable solution for bringing those responsible for atrocities to trial promptly, and ending the legacy of impunity. Moreover, prisoners who were consulted on *gacaca* were favourable to a system that would help speed up their hearings.³⁰ Genocide survivors, though some remain apprehensive, want to see perpetrators punished, even if their prison sentence is dramatically reduced.³¹

D. Poverty reduction as national reconciliation?

The RPF government has as its two overarching priorities the fostering of national reconciliation, as its name attests to (the Government of National Unity) and poverty reduction. President Kagame most recently reiterated this latter point in January 2004 at the close of a retreat where cabinet members and other top government officials discussed goals for his 7-year term. In a public statement, Kagame described poverty as a matter of ‘grave concern’ requiring ‘urgent attention’ and called for the prioritization of poverty reduction in all government programs.³²

In a small, land-locked, primarily rural country such as Rwanda, ranked 162nd out of 173 countries in the UNDP’s 2002 Human Development Index, government figures indicate that 60% of the population live on less than a dollar a day. Thus, poverty reduction is a key part of the answer to this widowed Rwandan woman’s question: “How can I forgive, when my livelihood was destroyed and I cannot even pay for the schooling of my children”³³ Her question is insightful because it implies that if someone would help her restore her livelihood, and help her pay for the schooling of her children, the groundwork would have been laid for the process of forgiveness and/or

²⁹ Mission d’Observation Electorale de l’Union Européenne Rwanda 2003, “Rapport final sur l’élection présidentielle et les élections législatives”, 5.

³⁰ UNHCR Branch Office for Rwanda Briefing Note on Gacaca, June 2003.

³¹ Weisbord, 81.

³² IRIN, Kigali, 20 Jan 2004, “Rwanda: Prioritise poverty reduction programmes, Kagame urges officials”

³³ Quoted in Ervin Staub, “Genocide and Mass Killing: Origins, Prevention, Healing and Reconciliation”, *Political Psychology* (2000), Vol. 21, No 2, 379.

reconciliation to become thinkable. At this level, some would argue that even a mildly successful program of ‘economic development’ would be beneficial. And indeed, these kinds of concerns, ‘you can’t eat peace’- type arguments, are widely shared in Rwanda and other countries emerging from conflict.

If, as Peter Uvin argues, poverty, inequality, exclusion and prejudice, cumulatively ‘Structural Violence’, fed into the dynamics of genocide, it follows that ‘national unity and reconciliation’ have as a necessary foundation the notions of economic development, equality, participation, tolerance, human rights and the rule of law.³⁴

E. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

The prominence of the government’s role in post-genocide reconciliation efforts is due to three main factors: (1) the lack of an independent civil society in Rwanda³⁵, (2) the pervasiveness and strength of the State apparatus, with the reach to engage with Rwandans all over the country, and (3) the political platform of the RPF-government, focused on the twin goals of poverty reduction and national unity.

The NURC was created in March 1999. Since its inception, it has organized several meetings, conferences, and workshops on the theme of unity and reconciliation. These culminated in two national summits where Rwandans from all levels of society, including representatives from Rwanda’s diaspora community, were present. The NURC has also been involved in workshops targeted at those segments of the population undergoing a ‘civic re-education’ or ‘solidarity’ camp – the *ingandos*. Demobilised soldiers (from the national army as well as from the ex-FAR), *Interahamwe* and other groups that have been repatriated to Rwanda mostly from eastern Congo, provisionally released prisoners, and others are required to stay at an *ingando* from 6 to 8 weeks. During that time, they attend NURC courses. The setting is formal, the style is that of a lecture, and the material covered is geared towards their socio-economic reintegration into society. The NURC curriculum covers topics ranging from the new administrative structures put in place to sexual mores. At ‘graduating ceremonies’ to which officials and the press are invited, the participants perform traditional dances for the audience, give speeches about

³⁴ See Uvin’s discussion of Structural Violence in Rwanda in his *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998)

³⁵ Filip Reyntjens, “Rwanda, ten years on: From genocide to dictatorship” in *African Affairs* (Vol. 103, No 411, April 2004).

their happiness at having been able to take part in the *ingando* and how they look forward to return to their communes of origin.

The NURC's mandate is an ambitious one. It therefore faces several challenges. A fairly common criticism is that its efforts are too 'vertical' – more grass roots work needs to be done.³⁶ A second and important shortcoming is the perception among Rwandans that the NURC is an instrument of the central authorities.

While I am not aware of a direct or institutional relationship between the NURC and *gacaca* tribunals, it could be argued that *gacaca* encourages more grass-roots participation and thus fills the void left by the too 'vertical' NURC. That said, as the full impact of *gacaca* tribunals is yet to be felt by Rwandans, only time will tell whether they offer a platform for genuine exchange and debate at the grass roots level about what happened in 1994.

Whatever its shortcomings, the NURC attests to the prominence the government attaches to 'unity and reconciliation'. Other, more symbolic evidence of this are the memorials and national days of mourning, to which we now turn.

F. 'Cultural' reconciliation and collective memory

Monuments, memorials and museums, as "institutional embodiments of collective memory", should also be thought of as part of the reconciliation process.³⁷ Cultural products of various kinds, films, novels, national holidays, are also part of this exercise in collective memory.³⁸ In Rwanda, genocide memorials pepper the country and new ones continue to be created. Some sites have been left intact, with remnants of corpses decaying in the same spot they fell ten years ago. Other sites have collected the bones of the victims and laid them out in neat rows on tables and shelves. Many memorials are housed in churches – sites of many group massacres. Because of the dense settlement patterns that characterize Rwanda, these memorials are seen everyday by

³⁶ IRDP, "Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda", 67.

³⁷ Michael R Marrus, "Overview" in *Dilemmas of Reconciliation: Cases and Concepts*, ed. Carol A Prager and Trudy Covier, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2003).

³⁸ The Holocaust is surely the most obvious example of a 'cultural reckoning' with the past. Philip Gourevitch describes the 'trendiness' of the Holocaust in today's popular history, using the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, visited by 2 million people per year, as an example. Describing a group of children on a school outing at the museum, he wonders what if any effect these exhibits have on them. Saul Friedlander speaks of the kitschiness of portrayals of Nazism and the Holocaust in Hollywood films in particular. See Marrus, 33-34.

Rwandans of all ages going about their daily lives. For the visitor, for whom a trip to a genocide memorial is expected especially if in Rwanda in any kind of official capacity, these memorials are an intense, abrasive and challenging experience.

Another institution created since the genocide and intended to refresh and foster collective memory is the national day of mourning for the victims of the genocide. At the national level, each year a new site is chosen from which bodies are exhumed and given a formal burial; the President leads the ceremony, which is broadcast on state television and radio. The day is also commemorated all over the country at lower administrative levels. National television and radio channels devote their broadcasts to the theme of the genocide. The month of April more generally is considered to be a month of mourning and parties or celebrations of any kind are discouraged.

It is insightful to reflect on how different groups interpret these memorials and annual national mourning periods. Some (Hutu) Rwandans consider the national day of mourning in particular as an obstacle to unity, perhaps implicitly taking the view that forgetting the past was the best way to 'move on'.³⁹ But if, as Martha Minow and others argue, forgetting constitutes a victory for the perpetrators, and memory the best safeguard against a recurrence of mass violence, this is both a morally and pragmatically unacceptable proposition. Others see the annual periods of mourning as "une affaire des Tutsis ou les Hutus ne s'y retrouvent pas".⁴⁰ The commemorations are only for Tutsi victims. They feel that the moderate Hutu who perished in 1994 or thereafter have been forgotten. They touch upon a deeper Silence, which I will turn to in the following section.

III. PAPERING OVER CLEAVAGES: RWANDA'S 'SILENCES'

The above outlines the approaches adopted by the Government of Rwanda and the international community, through the UN, to help deal with the 'legacy of genocide' in Rwanda. I have only briefly alluded to the enormous problems concerning the legal tools in particular. Nonetheless, a clear shift is discernable, from a purely prosecutorial, almost vengeful approach, as reflected in the chaotic imprisonment of thousands of alleged génocidaires in the frenetic 1994-1996 period,⁴¹ the decision in 1994 to prosecute and punish all those

³⁹ See "Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda", 68, and Gakusi and Mouzer, 90-91.

⁴⁰ "Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda", 68.

⁴¹ This was before the enactment of the 1996 genocide law.

accused of genocide and genocide-related crimes⁴² and the 1998 public executions of 22 high-ranking *génocidaires*, to a combination of trials, confession and community work schemes, and a more participatory, restitutive approach to justice, as embodied in the *gacaca* law and tribunals.

Despite the above, and taking into account the specific context of post-genocide Rwanda, there remain a number of what I call ‘Silences’, which have been imposed on Rwanda’s reconciliation process and which are grounds for serious concern. Symptomatic of these Silences is the fact that since 1994, no history lessons have been taught in Rwanda. Perhaps not surprisingly, there simply is no consensus on which ‘version’ to put on the national curriculum.

A. Alleged RPF crimes

I began this article by asking ‘what is being reconciled?’ and citing the most common answer, which is the genocide. Yet this is not all that has to be dealt with in order for ‘national unity’ to be achieved. The failure to investigate other, non-genocidal atrocities, such as the alleged RPF war crimes during 1994 in particular, as well as the alleged massacres in eastern-Zaire/DRC is imperative not only on moral grounds, but on pragmatic grounds as well. Indeed, “In the Hutu community [in Rwanda] today [...] the massacre of refugees in Eastern Congo in 1996 and 1997 has become the main source of ethnic conscious raising and justifies the latent or explicit denial of the genocide against Tutsis.”⁴³ What is at risk here is not only the resentment of the victims of RPF crimes, but also the perpetuation of the culture of impunity (which is regularly mentioned in Kagame's public statements as a characteristic of post-colonial Rwanda which directly led to the genocide) and genocide negationism. Indeed, by leaving these allegations unresolved, pro-genocide ideologues have free reign to “inflate the size and nature of RPA abuses in order to argue parity between the genocide and alleged crimes committed by the RPA.”⁴⁴

B. Rwanda’s histories

There are several ‘versions’ of Rwanda’s history. Where these usually diverge is in their account of the nature of the Hutu/Tutsi/Twa cleavages and the genesis

⁴² See footnote 5 on the ballooning of the estimated number of *génocidaires*.

⁴³ International Crisis Group, quoted in Eltringham, 145.

⁴⁴ Eltringham, 110.

of Tutsi privilege. Did the Tutsi emigrate to modern-day Rwanda from the horn of Africa and subjugate the ‘native’ Hutu and Twa – the so-called ‘Hamitic’ hypothesis? Or, did Hutu, Tutsi and Twa (pre-colonial socio-economic groups) live together harmoniously until the arrival of the white man, who manufactured local elites – the Tutsi – through which he could rule his colony indirectly? The former version of Rwandan history is the one espoused by the Hutu *génocidaires*. Indeed, genocidal massacres can only occur in a context where the very legitimacy of a presence is questioned. The latter version is the one espoused by, among others, the Government of Rwanda and features on the official website.⁴⁵ It is also the theme of a famous RPF song: “It is the white man who has caused all that, children of Rwanda. He did it in order to find a secret way to pillage us. When they [the Europeans] arrived, we were living side by side in harmony. [...] They invented different origins for us, children of Rwanda...but we have overcome the white man’s trap [...] So, children of Rwanda, we are called upon to unite our strength to build Rwanda.”⁴⁶

Peter Uvin argues that there is a third, middle-ground version between these two historical accounts – a version taking elements from both the ‘essentialist’ and ‘social-constructivist’ views and resulting in a non-polarizing narrative. According to this reading, Tutsi and Hutu did migrate from different regions of Africa, with the Twa being the only genuine ‘native’ group, and people were aware of these differences before the arrival of the white man (essentialist position). However, these distinctions became more rigid during the colonial period (social-constructivist position).⁴⁷

Today, the Hutu/Tutsi distinctions are more rigid than ever, especially as they were used as the basis for the genocide. During the nation-wide consultations to draft their excellent report “Reconstruire le Rwanda: la parole au peuple”, the (Rwandan) interviewers from the Institute for Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) reported that the vast majority of the respondents implicitly adopted the first, “essentialist” position by for example affirming that one can recognise a Tutsi from his or her physical traits alone, i.e. tall, skinny and with fine features. Alarming, these were the same criteria used to determine who would be killed during the genocide.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See the Official Website of the Government of Rwanda, <<http://www.rwanda1.com/government/>>_(date accessed: 6 November 2003)

⁴⁶ Quoted in DesForges, 693.

⁴⁷ Peter Uvin, “Reading the Rwandan Genocide”, 78.

⁴⁸ “Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda”, 22.

However, these polar-opposite versions of history, and all the ones that fall in-between, are not being challenged or debated inside Rwanda. Instead, the nicer, RPF-endorsed version is imposed, in the process papering over cleavages that cannot be ‘outlawed’.

C. ‘We are all Banyarwanda now’: les Ougandais and the fight against ‘divisionism’

“The RPF denies that there is any ethnic problem today with the same energy it used in denouncing the ethnic imbalance of the old regime [...] the RPF has simply installed a new form of Tutsi power... The radicals from the two sides reinforce each other”⁴⁹

Whatever inter or intra-ethnic fault lines there may be in Rwanda today, and in line with the RPF government’s nationalist ideology of promotion of Rwandan unity, references to ethnicity or any other ‘divisive’ or ‘political’ category – such as *‘les rwandais de l’extérieur’* or *‘les Ougandais’*, referring to the Anglophones Tutsis returnees – are substituted with the concept of the *Banyarwanda*, the people of Rwanda. References to identities other than the officially sanctioned *Banyarwanda* identity are regularly met with informal public shaming campaigns, labelling the individuals uttering these propositions as *génocidaires* sympathisers and even negationists, and can result in formal charges being brought against people on the grounds that they are promoting ‘divisionism’.⁵⁰ Indeed the

⁴⁹ The above is a quote from Jean-Damascène Ntakirutimana, a former (Hutu) member of Rwanda’s post-genocide transitional government who defected in June 1995. He, along with a significant number of other, senior and public Hutu personalities have been steadily leaving what, at least in the first few years after 1994, seemed to be a government with genuine power sharing ambitions. Quoted in Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1995), 367.

⁵⁰ Divisionist charges were recurrent in 2003, a pivotal year for Rwanda’s electorate, which was invited to vote on a new Constitution via referendum and to participate in the country’s first ‘democratic’ presidential and parliamentary elections. The most relentless ‘public shaming’ campaign focused on former MDR leader and independent presidential candidate Faustin Twagiramungu, who had returned from exile in Belgium after having served as Prime Minister in Rwanda’s post-genocide transition government. Rwandan political opposition, unless directly aligned with the RPF, thus faces a non-negligible potential threat in the nebulous definition of divisionism. This was compounded by the very negative image of multi-partyism in post-genocide Rwanda, given the direct role played by political parties that emerged as multi-partyism was first being introduced to Rwanda in the orchestration of the genocide – a negative association exploited by the RPF. See Mission d’Observation Electorale de l’Union Européenne, “Final Report”, 49.

major recommendation made by the EU Electoral Observer Mission on the Presidential and legislative elections is *the clarification of what constitutes 'divisionism'*. The law on discrimination and sectarianism adopted on 18 December 2001 is vague and therefore leaves the door open to selective and politically motivated enforcement. It also severely curtails freedom of expression, a concern that became all the more obvious during 2003.⁵¹

A survey conducted by Gakusi and Mouzer in April/May 2002 starkly contrasts how the RPF have used the defence of the *Banyarwanda* identity to mask a 'tutsification' of power in Rwanda.⁵² A careful reading of their findings show that the fault lines appear not to overlap strictly with ethnicity, hinting that, much like in the pre-genocide period, intra-ethnic regional and socio-economic tensions are more prominent. So, though Tutsi enjoy a disproportionately large representation in the higher echelons of political and economic (and military) power in Rwanda, it is more specifically the *Tutsi returnees*, in particular those with close affiliations to the RPF, that form the inner clique. To illustrate this point, a few of the Gakusi/Mouzer figures are cited here (it bears reminding the reader that the Tutsi represent an estimated 15% of Rwanda's population):

- Of Rwanda's 12 préfets, 7 are Tutsi, there are 5 'returnees', and 11 of the 12 préfets are members of the RPF;
- Of the 12 Commissioners on the NURC, 9 are Tutsi, and there are 4 'returnees' (no political affiliation is cited);
- Of the 22 Supreme Court judges, 14 are Tutsi and 15 are 'returnees' (no political affiliation is cited);
- Of the 28 heads of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), 23 are Tutsi, 24 are members of the RPF (no figure available for returnee proportion);

⁵¹ Did supporters for the sole female Presidential candidate violate the discrimination law by encouraging women to vote for her on the basis of gender alone, as the NURC argued? Were the two political parties, the Parti Démocrate Chrétien and the Parti Démocratique Islamiste, who changed their names because they were worried they would be labelled divisionist, correct in their interpretation of the law? Was the Parti Liberal, which was told not to campaign on the theme of the rescapés (survivors) of the genocide because that emphasises the differences between their experiences and that of some of the top leadership in Rwanda that grew up in exile (and have no direct experience of the civil war and genocide) justly accused of having a divisionist agenda? Examples cited in the Mission d'Observation Electorale de l'Union Européenne, "Final Report", 7.

⁵² Gakusi and Mouzer, 28: "Tableau 2: Appartenance ethnique et politique de hauts fonctionnaires et de responsables d'entreprises."

- Of Rwanda's 15 Ambassadors, 13 are RPF members, 12 are Tutsi (no figure cited on 'returnees').

The well-respected Rwanda specialist Gérard Prunier also makes the point that Rwandan political power is in the hands of a few key men, *les Ougandais*, who grew up as refugees in Uganda, are former RPF officers who maintain close business and political ties with a circle of (civilians) friends, family and associates monopolizing all key posts in the country.⁵³ Pasteur Bizimungu, in a national radio address before he left his post as President in 2000, echoed this view when he said "tous les segments de la population ne participent pas à l'exercice du pouvoir." Indeed, he later elaborated that he himself was a "Hutu de service" and that he served "encadrés par des fidèles de Kagame."⁵⁴

D. Collective Hutu guilt

*"Not all the Hutu had wild hearts ... I cannot say that all the Hutu killed. There is a difference between Hutu and assassins."*⁵⁵

To summarise the points raised so far, the Gakusi and Mouzer study shows that not all Rwandans have equal access to political representation or top jobs in SOEs/ the private sector. This process of accumulation of the reigns of power in the hands of a small inner circle is masked by the government-enforced 'version' of history, which dismisses the terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' in favour of the all-encompassing *Banyarwanda* identity. Importantly, this shows that the RPF is also *instrumentalizing* history - using it as a means to consolidate their hold on power, much like the former Government did themselves. This has led some to conclude that "It is clear that the history of Rwanda has yet to be written"⁵⁶, implying that there is one 'true' account of Rwandan history 'out there'. Conversely, Nigel Eltringham argues that our faith in a unitary, absolutist, accurate account of history is misplaced, as the narrator, or historian, is engaged in an interpretative, selective exercise, where the present moulds the past. "Although there is a profound truth in the axiom that "Those who cannot

⁵³ Prunier, "Rwanda: the Social, Political and Economic Situation", quoted in Gakusi and Mouzer, 66-67.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Rémy and Smith, "L'ancien président rwandais Pasteur Bizimungu est en prison", *Le Monde*, 21 May 2002 edition.

⁵⁵ DesForges, 748.

⁵⁶ Eltringham, 149.

remember the past are condemned to repeat it' [...], a persistent appeal to absolute history (one that misconstrues the nature and capacities of historiography) has been a central element in instigation violence and ultimately genocide in Rwanda."⁵⁷ Taken together, these arguments reinforce the line of reasoning that the RPF, which won a decisive military victory on the one hand, and is benefiting from the moral authority derived from being the only force willing (and able?) to put an end to the genocide on the other, is erecting a veiled regime of victor's justice and collective Hutu stigmatization.⁵⁸

Mahmood Mamdani also critically re-examines Rwandan history and how the current government's interpretation is used as a vehicle to propagate collective Hutu guilt. He speaks of the dropping of the ethnic labels in favour of a 'genocide framework' from which an alternate, equally damaging categorisation of the population emerges. The five categories he distinguishes are summarised below:

1. The *returnees* are mainly Tutsi exiles who returned to Rwandan after the RPF came to power in July 1994. They have not experienced civil war or genocide and their English (or Swahili) is frequently better than their Kinyarwanda.
2. The *refugees* can be either Old Caseload (OCL) refugees, pre-1994 mostly Tutsi refugees, or New Caseload (NCL), post-1994 mostly Hutu refugees.
3. The *victims* are both Tutsi and moderate Hutu. However, surviving victims are only Tutsi (see below), who either survived the genocide or who had survived previous anti-Tutsi massacres (OCL refugees). *NCL refugees are not considered victims, or survivors.*
4. The *survivors are only Tutsi.* The logic here is that the genocide was aimed only at Tutsi. It follows that any Tutsi who was in Rwanda at the time of the genocide and who is alive today is a survivor. The word is not used for any Hutu who was in the country during that same period.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 178.

⁵⁸ An interesting alternative to presuming that all Hutu are morally, if not legally, guilty and that all Tutsi are victims and therefore entitled to assistance is the Mozambican example. All Mozambicans who had lived through the civil war were seen as "affected" people or *afectados*, needing to be "purified from its [violence] effects and ritually welcomed back into the state of being fully human – in a productive community with other humans." In the Rwandan context, this would entail a genuine assault on the Hutu/Tutsi dialectic, and the presumptions of guilt or innocence that are imbedded within it. All Banyarwanda who were in Rwanda at the time of the genocide would thus become 'survivors'. See Cobban, 21.

5. The *perpetrators* category is perhaps the clearest evidence of the endurance of the Hutu/Tutsi dialectic, despite the official national unity ideology. “The assumption is that every Hutu who opposed the genocide was killed. The flip side of this assumption is that every living Hutu was either an active participant or a passive onlooker in the genocide. Morally, if not legally, both are culpable. The dilemma is that to be a Hutu in contemporary Rwanda is to be presumed a perpetrator.”⁵⁹

These five terms, used frequently in public discourse and adopted by many international organisation in the formulation of their policies and programmes, have a misleadingly neutrality about them, appearing to be nothing more than ‘technical’, a-political, a-historical, non-ethnic terms. Nonetheless, they are not benign descriptions and carry with them a considerable amount of received assumptions, not to mention access to various forms of (material) assistance.⁶⁰

E. Lack of systematic empirical data

The ‘Silences’ around which Rwanda’s reconciliation process must weave are compounded by the difficulty with which the levels of inter-ethnic cohesion in post-genocide Rwanda can be gauged without any degree of empirical clarity, and all the more so in rural settings. This is partly due to the nebulousness of the concepts of ‘cohesion’ and ‘polarisation’ and partly due to the striking lack of systematic, micro-level (academic?) investigations. The abundant and growing body of literature on Rwanda tends to neglect the post-genocide period in favour of trying to explain the Great Lakes crises in general and the Rwandan genocide in particular.⁶¹

I have come across very little ‘scientific’ or ‘theoretically informed’ work on post-genocide Rwanda. Some scholars who are interested in this period use patchy pre-1990 statistical data, and anecdotal evidence from the post-1994 period, to substantiate their claims. For example, comparing the levels of inter-ethnic polarisation in pre and post-genocide (rural) Rwanda, Gakusi and

⁵⁹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 267.

⁶⁰ For instance, in 1998 the *Fond National pour l’Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide*, the FARG, was created. This is a national fund for the most destitute genocide survivors into which all Rwandans must pay a percentage of their wage. This financial assistance goes only to Tutsis, as they are the only ones who fit the ‘survivor’ description.

⁶¹ Uvin, “Reading the Rwandan Genocide”, 99.

Mouzer use the proportion of mixed marriages as a proxy. They claim that interethnic marriages were following an upward trend until 1990 and cite one study in two communes in 1993 to back their argument up. Since that time, they argue, “it is plausible to maintain that the preference for prospective husbands and wives has shifted to a partner of the same ethnicity” [my translation]. They back this up by referring to the collective stigmatization of Hutu as *génocidaires* but provide no empirical or other proof. They add that, as result of the genocide having destroyed (mixed) family and community links of trust, certain areas and establishments (restaurants, bars) are now frequented by members of one ethnic group only.⁶² These assertions may or may not be true. For now, they remain more gossip than fact. Occasionally, more systematic reports are published, such as UNHCR's external evaluation of its Shelter Programme. The report states that of the 29 *imidugudu* visited by the evaluation team, ten were inhabited by members of one ethnic group.⁶³ Precisely because of the sensitive nature of the information – no government publications include ethnic breakdown in their statistics for example – it is difficult to find reliable sources of information, with consultancy reports being perhaps one exception. This feeds into an environment where speculation and politically motivated rumour mills are rife.

IV. DEVELOPMENT AND RECONCILIATION: A CLOSER LOOK

“Nul n’a sans doute de solution miracle à la pauvreté. Cependant, l’histoire récente de notre pays, jalonnée de conflits, montre que les politiciens opportunistes exploitent le contexte de pauvreté pour manipuler les différents groupes sociaux afin de légitimer leur pouvoir. Comment sortir de cette impasse?”⁶⁴

In the first part of this paper, I include the government’s poverty reduction strategy as one of five tools in Rwanda’s ‘reconciliation toolkit’. This would imply that part of the legacy of the genocide is of a *socio-economic nature* and indeed, people’s properties were destroyed or confiscated and productive

⁶² Gakusi and Mouzer, 91-92.

⁶³ Chantal Laurent and Christian Bugnion, “External Evaluation of the UNHCR Shelter Programme in Rwanda, 1994-1999”, UNHCR Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, 2000. Imidugudu is a government-sponsored and very controversial ‘villagisation’ scheme. See Human Rights Watch’s Uprooting the Rural Poor in Rwanda, (HRW, May 2001).

⁶⁴ “Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda”, 90.

members of families are either dead or in prison. This also echoes the current debate in South Africa, where political apartheid may have been abolished ten years ago, but its economic twin lives on. Indeed Alex Boraine, Desmond Tutu's deputy at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is one of the most prominent proponents for the urgent need for economic justice/redistribution in South Africa.

Yet, until the mid-1980s, Rwanda was considered to be an ideal pupil of the international development community, achieving impressive annual rates of GDP growth -- a model to be emulated by other predominantly rural countries with 'limited absorptive capacity'. This prompts one to wonder "If Rwanda's [pre-1990] economic progress was real, how and why could it have suffered such a dramatic reversal?"⁶⁵ We need to unpack the concept of 'economic progress' or 'development' and ask, as Uvin does, "What does *development* mean if a country that is seemingly succeeding so well at it can descend so rapidly into such tragedy?"⁶⁶ In the Rwandan context, according to Uvin, 'development' meant a process by which poverty, inequality, exclusion, prejudice, humiliation – Structural Violence – fed directly into the dynamics of genocide. Indeed, according to Human Rights Watch, the same complacency that the international community displayed in Rwanda pre-1990 is present today. This complacency is reinforced by the guilt of inaction during the genocide.⁶⁷

Mark Duffield touches on a related issue which he dubs 'the merging of development and security'. On his view, poverty is re-conceptualised as the source of insecurity globally. The 'reinvention of development' (to Duffield) meshes well with 'construction notions of manageability' (as stated by Uvin), whereby contemporary (civil) wars (and terrorist activities and criminal networks) are represented "... in such a way that they appear *responsive to properly managed development assistance*. In this way, development actors can attempt to head off isolationist tendencies, new barbarism anxieties and budgetary

⁶⁵ Greg Duly, "Creating a Violence-Free Society; The Case of Rwanda", Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, (10 July 2000) <<http://www.jha.ac/greatlakes/b002.htm>> (date accessed: 10 November 2003).

⁶⁶ Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, 2. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Human Rights Overview for Rwanda", 1 January 2004, online <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2003/12/31/rwanda7009.htm>> (date accessed: 16 February 2004). Which states that "Burdened by guilt over their inaction during the genocide, many foreign donors have generously supported the Rwandan government – credited with having ended the genocide – while ordinarily overlooking its human rights abuses, whether at home or abroad."

cutbacks. It also assuages development's unenviable record" [emphasis added].⁶⁸ This re-problematization of poverty as dangerous then reinforces the myth of a-political development by proposing technocratic solutions to technical problems, tempered more recently with calls for 'good governance'. Imbedded in this merger is also a fundamentally economic understanding of the causes of violent conflict. In the Rwandan context, the idea is that development cooperation, with its emergency development silos, can help alleviate the 'resource crunch' that motivated (some of) the killings, and thus help reconcile Rwandans, or at least prevent a recurrence of violence.

This is not to detract from the urgent need, and significant potential beneficial impact that poverty reduction programmes represent for the bulk of Rwanda's citizens. Uvin and Mironko cite evidence from a survey published in 2001 that ranks the 'perceived major social problems in Rwanda': "the trial of genocide suspects is mentioned by only 12.6 percent of the respondents, after poverty and economic hardship (*81.9 percent*), insecurity (20.6 percent), and lack of trust/insecurity (14.8 percent)" [emphasis added].⁶⁹ The point is that there is danger in subsuming 'reconciliation' under the label 'poverty reduction', as the World Bank, an institution which at its inception had the sole purpose of promoting poverty reduction, is increasingly doing.⁷⁰ Second, as we are now learning, the *kind* of economic growth matters: presumably, economic development of a different kind than the one described in Uvin's Structural Violence framework would be required. However, this is not necessarily what is happening on the ground in Rwanda today: development interventions are still reported to be top-down in style, not allowing room for local, creative problem-solving. No real solutions have been found to modernize Rwanda's subsistence farming such that it can offer a real way out of the 'poverty trap' though this is a priority highlighted by Rwandans themselves. Many rural Rwandans have little or no knowledge of the government's Vision 2020 or

⁶⁸ Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 118.

⁶⁹ Findings of Simon Gabisirege and Simon Babalola, "Perceptions About the Gacaca Law in Rwanda: Evidence from a Multi-Method Study", Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Centre for Communication Programs, Special Publication No. 19, Baltimore, April 2001, quoted in Uvin and Mironko, 226.

⁷⁰ The World Bank has begun considering conflict management and conflict prevention as an integral part of its poverty reduction mandate, as civil wars and other violent conflicts are seen as the main sources of human misery and poverty. See "The Economics of Civil Wars, Crime and Violence" policy papers and the work of Paul Collier in particular, online: <<http://econ.worldbank.org/programs/conflict/>> (date accessed: 22 January 2004).

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and feel largely alienated from the authorities in Kigali. While their daily struggle for survival continues unabated, the Kigali elite's affluence, rumours of corruption and the pillaging of eastern-DRC reinforce the already prevailing notion that the Rwandan State is little more than a vehicle for elite wealth-accumulation, with little or no heed paid to the needs of the poor rural masses.⁷¹

V. CONCLUSION: PARALLELS WITH THE PAST

“The new Rwandese regime is a bizarre construction. Outwardly it still fits within the tattered remnants of the Arusha agreement. A majority of ministers are Hutu. There is no proclaimed theory of ethnic exclusivity [...] But the whole thing is largely a make-believe exercise. First of all because, as in many authoritarian governments, there are two channels of authority: one is the official administrative structure [...]; the other is the RPF network, both civilian and military, which [...] makes up an unofficial government of the shadows”⁷²

I have painted a dark picture of Rwanda's future, and perhaps unnecessarily so. Many may quite rightly say that Rwanda is a safe and stable island in the Great Lakes ocean of carnage and political insecurity. Others will also quite rightly point out that the Rwandan case is qualitative different – and thus that the ‘Silences’ I describe are perhaps warranted and wise. Others still will say that ten years is not nearly long enough for ‘national reconciliation’ to have occurred. I agree with all these statements. But I believe that the ‘Silences’, coupled with the faith in economic development, and a number of emerging parallels between the pre- and post-genocide contexts, amount to grounds for serious concern. These parallels are summarised in the Rwandan government's progressive creep towards authoritarianism as seen in the curtailing of political space for opposition groups and freedom of expression, but also in the strong government grip on the national press, the maintenance of a strong, centralized State structure, and the creation of civilian self-defence forces (the Local Defence Forces – LDF) among other things.

The international community, by not insisting on the prosecution of RPF crimes, by its complacency in the face of an increasingly authoritarian regime, and by its preoccupation for assuaging its guilt over its shameful role in

⁷¹ “Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda”, 90.

⁷² Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 369.

the events of 1994, may be repeating the mistakes of the past. Through their funding of justice-related initiatives (the ICTR, national courts, and more recently and tentatively, the *gacaca* courts), bilateral donors, UN Agencies, the World Bank/IMF, INGOs and other members of the international community exert significant influence in Rwanda. Despite periodic chastising by President Kagame and others about their inaction in 1994 and their lack of 'moral authority', what these actors say and do matters. Given Rwanda's delicate and multi-faceted 'legacy of genocide', some rethinking of development interventions along the lines outlined in this paper is urgently required.