Generation After:
Kinship in the Aftermath of Genocidal Sexual Violence in Rwanda

By

Sara Marloes Loning

Student Number: LNNSAR004

Supervisor: Prof Fiona C. Ross

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Anthropology, in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town, South Africa

February 2024

DECLARATION

I, Sara Marloes Loning, prepared this original work to meet the University of Cape Town's PhD requirements. In that regard, this work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my original work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation from, the work(s) of others in this dissertation has been attributed, cited, and referenced.

ABSTRACT

Thousands of women and girls experienced sexual violence during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, with many becoming pregnant as a result of genocidal rape. Based on two years of ethnographic research in Rwanda, this dissertation explores the dynamics of kinship in the aftermath of sexual violence by focusing on the lived experiences of young people conceived in genocidal rape. While working with organisations supporting genocide survivors, I traced how young people learned about the circumstances of their conception and how they interpreted their place within kinship relations given these circumstances. This dissertation examines the subtle work that goes into containing genocide memories in the everyday, revealing the affective efforts, 'attunement', and vigilance of young people and their mothers as they grapple with the past intruding into their present. Reflecting on subtle moments observed during fieldwork created an understanding of the delicate work that goes into young people's day-to-day control and creativity in managing their social worlds. The dissertation then delves into the shadowed ways that knowledge of violence appears in young people's worlds and how mothers purposefully shield their children from what Veena Das (2000) calls "poisonous knowledge". Exploring how young people live with fragmented knowledge about 'who they are', I analyse how they learn about their conception both formally, through the work of civil society organisations, and informally, through modes of exclusion in communities. I examine what this knowledge does to their relationships and sense of self, as well as its practical implications, such as rights to land. The dissertation then zooms out to the post-genocide landscape, investigating how the national commemoration slogan "*kwibuka twiyubaka*" (remembering and rebuilding ourselves) takes shape in the lives of young people as they engage in *kwiyubaka* (building oneself). It explores the public and the private spheres of remembering and rebuilding, including the role of NGOs. I also show the dangers of knowledge that had previously been carefully shielded as it enters the public space. Through *kwiyubaka* as well as parenthood, young people's apparent fixed connections to the past and their conception can be transformed by becoming a 'person of value' (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*) or 'the parent of someone' rather than 'a child of rape'.

Overall, I suggest that Veena Das' argument that violence is absorbed in everyday life rather than transcended helps us understand how the past sets the stage for kinship. My work shows how the 'generation after' absorbs memories of collective violence, including the knowledge of being 'of rape'. In the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence in Rwanda, violence is absorbed in everyday life and managed through affect and care, as well as possibly transcended by 'the generation after'.

KEYWORDS: care, genocide, kinship, post-genocide Rwanda, sexual violence, youth

DEDICATION

To my parents

This research on family relations made it ever more apparent how much my family means to me.

Voor mijn ouders

Dit onderzoek naar familie relaties heeft overduidelijk gemaakt hoeveel mijn familie voor mij betekent.

And, sincerely,

To all children, youth and adults conceived in wartime sexual violence.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

In this dissertation, I have written how sometimes feelings cannot be adequately put into language, and how in the translation of beautiful descriptive Kinyarwanda words, the embodiment of language can get lost. My gratitude towards all the people who have supported me and have been with me on this research journey does not easily translate onto a page. My gratitude and indebtedness live deeply within me, embodied. I thought about it often, when driving my scooter on the steep roads of Kigali, looking out over the typical Rwandan hills and considering myself incredibly fortunate and honoured to be able to conduct this research. In those moments, after returning from a meeting, an interview or a Kinyarwanda lesson, I thought about expressing my appreciation for all the people who made those moments, and this research, possible.

This dissertation is about care. Caring and being cared for were the analytical notions through which I grappled with this work, but this dissertation is also constituted by the care I received over all these years. I could not have done this work without the care of others, as it allowed me to care for and nurture this research project. I am deeply grateful to:

All the people who played a crucial part in bringing this research to life.

Professor Fiona Ross, for her unwavering support and guidance over these many years of thinking through this research. She has given me time when I needed it and was patient when I was silent and processing it all. This, I appreciate greatly. I thank her for holding this work when I needed a moment to breathe. Her guidance extended beyond the academic knowledge she shared with me, as her wonderful critical anthropological thought often made me reflect on life as a whole. Her wisdom shines through this writing. I could not have done this work without her.

Christian Ngombwa for all his support, his excellent translation and always having my back. I am grateful for his friendship, for being someone I could endlessly rely on, for his openness and commitment, for the countless fun car rides and debriefs, for helping me make sense of situations as well as my own reactions, and for truly understanding what this research meant to me as well as my hopes for what it could mean to others.

Denyse Umuneza for her Kinyarwanda lessons, helping me understand a complex language and its context. I thank her even more for her friendship and for being a constant in my daily life in Rwanda. In times where I felt lost in fieldwork, meeting for our lessons gave me a routine and moments of clarity.

Samuel Munderere, for his support from the first moment I planned this project, for his belief in the importance of the research and his belief in me. I am grateful for his wisdom and guidance, for

his understanding of what conducting this research meant for me and what it did to me, and most of all, for his dedication to his hard work in supporting genocide survivors and their families.

The women of SEVOTA. I thank Godelieve Mukasarasi for the exceptional woman and leader she is, a beacon of light, strength, and inspiration to others, including me. I thank her for welcoming me into the SEVOTA family, it means more than I can say. I thank Marthe Nishimwe for her friendship, for welcoming me into her home, for the time spent with her children, and for giving me a sense that I was exactly where I was supposed to be. My gratitude goes to all SEVOTA members for being with me, welcoming me, celebrating life with me, and for sharing a wonderful moment of togetherness doing yoga with me during the 25th anniversary celebrations.

Emilienne Kambibi for her support to me, the research participants, and all women and their children for whom she is a pillar of hope and strength. It was an honour to work with her and hear from so many what a difference she makes in their lives. It is a massive burden to carry, and she has my greatest respect.

Carine Ingabire for her support in what were the most difficult moments in my research, having her by my side made interviews with mothers possible. The work we did together was incredibly hard, and I am thankful for how she handled emotional situations with care and confidence.

All staff and members of SURF and SEVOTA, for being a part of this journey and showing me that living is possible after unimaginable tragedy.

Innocent Musore for his collaboration, flexibility, and hard work in Rwanda's reconciliation spaces. I thank him for his willingness to embark on a project together during challenging times.

Dr. Idi Gaparayi for his supervision of this research in Rwanda, for agreeing to supervise this research in a time where I thought I might not find a local supervisor, for turning my aspirations into reality, and his support throughout all the cumbersome administrative processes it took.

The institutions that approved and supported this research: RNEC, NCST, CNLG and UCT. Particularly, I thank RNEC for the careful protection offered to Rwandan citizens but also to researchers. The question asked in my approval process "How was I planning to protect myself?", showed me that bureaucratical processes that could be frustrating were human ones, that were looking out for me too. I am grateful for Valentine Ingabire's guidance and support in the RNEC process. I thank NCST and CNLG for supporting my research permit for an unusually long period of time, for understanding that I wanted the research to be conducted as rigorously and carefully as I could, and for allowing me to do it that way. I am grateful for the support of Jerome Birindabagabo and Vianney Kavutse at NCST and Jean-Damascène Gasanabo at CNLG. I thank the Anthropology department at University of Cape Town for giving me a home to return to in

South Africa, for their leadership in decolonial thought and discourse, and for encouraging young researchers. I will miss the iconic campus stairway steps, a symbol for the steps in this research, sometimes exhausting but with an ultimately beautiful view.

The funding I received to carry out this work: a PhD Fieldwork Grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation (2019), a Research Grant from the Toyota Foundation (2018), and a Peace Research Grant from the International Peace Research Association Foundation (2019). I am thankful to these foundations for their acknowledgement of the importance of this work. I also deeply appreciate their flexibility when I adjusted my plans during the COVID-19 pandemic. The support of these foundations was vital to the realisation of this research project. I thank the Toyota Foundation Research Grants Group for inviting me to the grant ceremony in Tokyo in 2019, an experience that widened my worldview. I particularly thank Chikaho Tamura and Yoko Terasaki from the Toyota Foundation team for their support and kindness.

Scholars Laura Pasquero, Kimberly Anderson, Henrike Donner and Victoria Goddard, who have engaged with this work and invited me to share it in publications. I am grateful to them and the anonymous peer-reviewers for their careful reading of earlier versions of my writing, their thoughtful feedback has helped the crystalisation of my ideas.

Kristina Hemon for being an extraordinary psychotherapist who acknowledged my encounters with trauma, helped me make sense of my feelings and allowed me to accept that sometimes writing this work was an impossibility. My work with her transformed it into possibility.

Thank you.

My friends.

Derek and Chris for giving me a home, for introducing me to life in Rwanda.

Charlotte, Maggie, Soetkin and Kristine for their friendship and creating moments away from fieldwork during my time in Rwanda.

Sam and Zarah for taking care of my home and making me feel at home in my house.

Lilo for being my guiding light in the maze of permits and approvals, and for the fun visits to you in your fieldwork journey.

Suvi and Allison for your companionship on the PhD research journey in Rwanda.

Tanya for bringing light to some of my darkest times and encouraging me to bring light to others by picking up teaching yoga, for making me feel capable in times where I felt I was falling short.

Yohann for the weekends by Lake Kivu, for getting away from it all in Calafia café, for bringing the chaos I needed across the border, and for being my home away from home.

Roni for bringing me back to diving so that the ocean could heal me, for the adventures where we expressed our 'mind blown' gestures while underwater, the rare moments *magnifique* where my mind was so present that I did not think about the research, for listening to my many stories and reflecting on life with me, sharing the presence of whales, always being there for me.

Noemi for forgiving me for my silence, for all our crazy adventures, for visiting Rwanda to see the gorillas with me, the start of many holidays together that always make me feel more like myself again. I thank her for her steadfast commitment to children in conflict, which is not always seen or appreciated, but inspired me to continue this work.

Vikki for the countless calls, the laughs and for being in this together, for always being part of it.

Anneloes for her encouragement and support, for always seeing and reminding me of my potential, and for crossing paths with me again at a time where I needed it most.

Erwin, Jet, Mike, Jeroen and Anne for being there for me even if I was not around, for being my home base that is not always seen but felt deeply.

Matt, Liron, Mehmet, Miki and Louisa, for celebrating the end of this journey with me and the start of others, for being there when it all started and being here still.

Thank you.

My family.

My parents Henk and Anneke for being my ever-present safety-net, for taking care of me when I am close or far, for visiting me wherever I go, for being my support centre SNK, for the countless calls and meals, for never doubting me, for listening to my many plans and ideas, for letting me go explore when I was young, and catching me when I came home.

My brother Kees for being my rock, for supporting me in faraway countries, for (surprise) visits and traveling with me, for your sense of humour, for building a loving home where I come to feel normality, for always making time to see me when I leave and return, for being a safe haven at home.

My sister-in-law Alie for all the Wednesday mornings that provided a relief from pressures of having to get things done, for giving me time and a place to recharge, for the memories and photos of our travels, for the listening ear and for the warmth.

My nephews Sam and Floris for taking me into a world of play, where we build Lego and create entirely new worlds, where darkness does not exist and where fieldwork memories fall away, where it is just us. For being my soul medicine and accepting me as “Tante Loes in Afrika”.

Geeske, Johanna, Sjaak, Wilma, Peter, Lise, Nino and other extended family, for their sincere interest and encouragement over the years, for checking in with me, for listening to my many stories and adventures, for their support, and for the family time spent together.

Heel erg bedankt.

Abantu bagize uruhare m’ubushakashatsi bwanjye. The research participants.

Some of the most important people who shaped this research project and shaped me as a person cannot be addressed here by name, as the protection of their privacy surpasses my wish to thank them by acknowledging each one of them individually. These persons, who should not be seen as a homogenous group of participants but in all their diversity, deserve to be acknowledged most. Without them this research would not have existed. This dissertation has become what it is because of them; the young people and mothers who have opened their homes to me, and thereby opened my heart. I am forever grateful for their knowledge and their trust, for sharing with me their joy, sadness, fears, and courage, for profoundly changing my understanding of life as it is and also, that all understanding has limits. Yet my appreciation to them is limitless. The following words are for the youth conceived in rape in Rwanda, the mothers and fathers they have become or may become, and their mothers and fathers.

Nshuti zanjye nkunda cyane,

ndabashimira ko mwanyizeye, mukansangiza inkuru zanyu, ndizera ko nazikoresheje uko bikwiye, zari inshingano zanjye zikomeye.
Ndabashimira ku bihe byiza twagiranye, nzahora mbizirikana ubuziraherezo.
Mpora mbazirikana, nkanabasengera, mwe n'imiryango yanyu, mbifuriza ibyiza mu buzima.
Ni iby'icyubahiro kuba narabaye agace gato, mu rugendo rw'ubuzima bwanyu, muri igice kinini mu buzima bwanjye.

Mwarakoze ku bucuti bwanyu.
Turi kumwe.

Murakoze cyane.

Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAA	American Anthropological Association
AERG	*Association des Étudiants & Élèves Rescapés du Genocide* – Association of Student Survivors of the Genocide
ASA	Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth
AVEGA	*Association de Veuves du Génocide d'Avril* – Association of the Widows of the April Genocide
CBOW	Children Born of War
CHIBOW	Children Born of War international and interdisciplinary research and training network
CNLG	National Commission for the Fight against Genocide
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARG	Genocide Survivors Assistance Fund
GER	Global Initiative for Environment and Reconciliation
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NCST	National Council of Science and Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RNEC	Rwanda National Ethics Committee
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RNEC	Rwanda National Ethics Committee
SEVOTA	*Solidarité pour l'Épanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins visant le Travail et l'Auto promotion* – Solidarity Association for the Development of Widows and Orphans to Promote Self-Sufficiency and Livelihoods
STS	Secondary Traumatic Stress
SURF	The Survivors Fund
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCT	University of Cape Town
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YCD	Youth Connect Dialogues
ZDR	The Forgotten Children of War Association

PROLOGUE

It was November 2020 when Emmanuel[1] invited me to visit his home in the Rwandan countryside. Emmanuel was waiting for Christian, my interpreter, and me by the road in front of his house. We met with his mother and her husband and talked pleasantly about the differences between Rwanda and the Netherlands. When we left, they gave me a bag of eggs from their chickens. We did not discuss the genocide or their family history, and I did not ask questions about topics that might be difficult – this was purely a social visit to see where Emmanuel lived to better understand his everyday reality. To our surprise, Emmanuel had prepared several other places for us to visit together with the intention of showing us parts of his world. We drove about 500 meters up the road when he asked to stop the car in front of a church. I saw a man sweeping the church porch as if preparing it for a special occasion, but before I could inquire further, Emmanuel directed us to a house on the other side of the road. He asked if we would be fine to meet his maternal grandmother. I told him that we would like to meet her, but only if it would be fine for him and that he did not have to put himself in a difficult position, as I knew that his relationship with his mothers' family was contentious. He responded that if his grandmother heard that he had visitors and did not introduce them to her, it would make a difficult situation worse. So, we walked up to her house on the other side of the road from where we parked by the church. The proximity to his mother's house stood out to me, noting how close family members live together in villages and that 'not being acknowledged on the street', as Emmanuel explained in his interview, would be a constant 'rejection' rather than an occasional occurrence.

We walked up to the house and turned into a small 'courtyard' where his grandmother sat on a sisal mat on the floor, with five young children next to her sitting by the side of the house. Emmanuel walked up to her to greet her, and we followed him. His grandmother stared into the distance in front of her and did not look at Emmanuel. Christian and I greeted her, but her gaze did not move, and she did not speak to us. She started mumbling words that I could not make out in a repetitive manner. I was taken aback by this encounter and did not know what to say. Emmanuel and Christian exchanged some words with her, to which there was no response, and then we left while she continued mumbling the same phrase. Christian translated what she said on the car ride home: "You killed me". She seemed to see Emmanuel as 'a killer', as he had explained in his interview, a 'son of *Interahamwe*'.[2] The *Interahamwe* were a Hutu extremist militia group that played a major role in carrying out the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Emmanuel was the first person I interviewed for this research project when we met at a youth camp organised by The Survivor's Fund in December 2019. During the interview, he told me that he lives with his mother, her husband, and her husband's three children. Emmanuel grew up living in the house of his maternal grandmother. His mother remarried when he was six years old, and

[1] All names are pseudonyms, and any names appearing as those in the research are purely coincidental.
[2] *Interahamwe* in Kinyarwanda translates to 'those who work together' or 'those who attack together'.

his mother's family chased them away, calling Emmanuel a "son of *Interahamwe*". He said he does not have a relationship with his mother's family now, giving an example of when his mother's sister, his aunt, would see him on the street, she would bypass him without any acknowledgement. Emmanuel explained that his mother told him about his conception when he was 14 years old. She said that she was raped by many men and does not know who his father is. In the community, people noticed a resemblance between him and a man they used to know, which made Emmanuel do further research. He found out that the man who people thought to be his father was living in a refugee camp in Uganda. At 21 years old, he travelled there alone to look for his father. Once he arrived there, people told him the person he was looking for had died. Emmanuel said he wanted to ask his father to live together because he does not feel at ease where he lives, commenting, "I do not have a family".

After meeting Emmanuel's grandmother, I understood what the word 'rejection' – a word that I had read about and had been told about for years at this point – actually meant. I felt it. The coldness emanating from Emmanuel's grandmother was almost of a spiritual nature as if she were mumbling a spell that left a palpable chill in the air and throughout my body. Emmanuel seemed unphased by it, but Christian was also quite disturbed. On the car ride home, we were both a little frightened by the encounter, and Christian turned to me, saying, "Please do not make me go back there later on in this research. I know you want to do more interviews". Though speaking in a joking manner, I knew he was serious. Christian explained that his association with visiting someone's grandmother was one of warmth, and the stark contrast of this encounter with his own experiences was shocking to him despite being a young survivor whose own family grappled with the destructive effects of the genocide. I told Christian how impressed I was by Emmanuel's bravery for entering that space but that I felt bad for him for having to endure such hurtful situations. Christian reminded me that we do not know what his grandmother had experienced to act in such a way and that she must be suffering in ways we might not be able to understand. I wondered what Emmanuel knew and understood and what 'knowing' means in such situations.

After meeting his grandmother, we drove to Emmanuel's field in a town about an hour away from his home village. He told us this field used to be his father's land and that he recently bought it. It was a large plot of land filled with plantain trees and beans. I asked Emmanuel how he discovered this was his father's land, and he explained that his mother told him when she took him to meet his father's family. This surprised me because initially, Emmanuel had said that his mother told him she did not know who his father was. I wondered if he chose not to disclose these details in our interview, and now that we were visiting him, he felt more compelled to open up. But more importantly, it gave a glimpse into the intricate layers that exist within the process of Emmanuel's mother telling him about his conception and connection, or lack of it, to others.

Standing in Emmanuel's field, he told us that he knew his father's brother and sister. His aunt does not accept him, but he has built a good relationship with his uncle. The land is situated next to his

aunt's house, and his uncle lives a few houses further up the road. When Emmanuel first tried to acquire the land from his father's family, his aunt took legal action to prevent Emmanuel from claiming his rights to it since his paternity was not officially determined. Emmanuel's aunt had sold the land, so he approached the man who bought it. The sale had extinguished his aunt's rights, so she could not prevent Emmanuel from buying it from a third party. Emmanuel's persistence and inventiveness allowed him to then own the land. I told him I admired the lengths he went to get it and that this land must be very important to him to endure the conflict with his aunt, who lives next to his field. He responded that this land is all he has of his father, and even though others have a problem with him, he does not have a problem with them. He explained that he wishes to build a house for himself and his mother to grow old in. I asked him if he believed his mother was happy in the house she lived in with her husband, the place we had just visited. He replied that he could never be completely confident that his mother's husband would not leave her because they do not have children together. He explained that in the afternoon of the same day, Emmanuel's mother's husband's brother's son would get married in the church of his home village, but that Emmanuel's mother and her husband had not been invited because of their marriage. I remembered the man sweeping the porch in preparation for the celebration and the proximity of the church to their house, the proximity between celebrations and exclusion. It became clear that not only are the family relations of Emmanuel and his mother fraught but also those of her husband, apparently due to genocidal rapes. There could have been other reasons, too, and it is important not to ascribe all fractured relations to a genocidal past. Still, Emmanuel's conception in rape seemed to powerfully shape family relations even though Emmanuel's mother had married her husband 20 years prior when Emmanuel was six years old. It appeared that events from the past had long-lasting effects that became visible during this visit, 26 years after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Back to Emmanuel's field. As we talked, a woman appeared and asked Emmanuel, "So, you are finally selling this land?". Her tone seemed hostile, and she did not greet us first. It was his aunt. Emmanuel explained that we were his friends, and he was showing us around. From her question, I understood that she likely thought Emmanuel brought a white person to view the field so he could sell it. His aunt did not speak to us further but stayed with us, standing a few meters away, staring. We said goodbye to her when we left to pass by his uncle's house nearby. Emmanuel's uncle came out to the street to greet us with a genuine smile, shaking our hands. We exchanged brief pleasantries and went back to the car. In the car, I told Emmanuel that I was happy to meet his uncle and that he seemed like a very nice man. Emmanuel agreed, and we dropped him off at the bus station for him to return to his mother's house while Christian and I continued on to Kigali.

After dropping Emmanuel off, Christian said, "It is interesting that you say Emmanuel's uncle is a 'nice man' because he is accepting of Emmanuel and they have built a relationship, but don't forget that he is the brother of the man who raped Emmanuel's mother, and therefore you don't know what he has done or what his role was in the genocide". Christian's remark alerted me to

how people in post-genocide Rwanda are categorised as survivors and perpetrators and that this colours how people see others. I saw Emmanuel's uncle through the lens of him being one of the few people Emmanuel told us did not reject him, but Christian also saw him as Emmanuel's father's brother and a potential perpetrator. He reminded me of this, just as he reminded me that Emmanuel's grandmother is a genocide survivor. Of course, a person can both be an accepting uncle and someone potentially involved (in unknown ways) in genocide, just as a person can be suffering immensely as a genocide survivor and not be a loving grandmother to her grandson. This was the complexity I was confronted with that day: the ambiguity, fragility, contradictions, and unspoken feelings of people not quite living together 26 years after the genocide.

When we drove home, I felt overwhelmed with all the painful facets of Emmanuel's lived reality but was profoundly impressed by his navigation through all these interactions. He did not shy away from difficult confrontations. That day gave me a brief look into fractured kinship and the agency of a young person manoeuvring a web of fraught relations. It showed the proximity of kinship ties in the village environment, the importance of land ownership, the individual choices of family members within wider family structures, the unresolvedness in the post-genocide realm and, most of all, how rejection manifests. These are the themes that are further explored in this dissertation.

My experiences that day also showed how knowledge is scattered. As anthropologists, we learn different pieces of a story that may never be entirely complete since experiences with violence cannot be considered coherent nor expected to be shared in a consistent manner. When I first interviewed Emmanuel, he told me that his mother said she did not know his father and that he found out from community members who his father might be. He chose (whether consciously or not) to share this piece of information at that time.[3] This layered information (including denials, evasions, and silences) aligns with what Lee Ann Fujii (2010) calls "Meta-data", which are integral parts of the research process that "indicate how conditions in the present shape what people are willing to say about violence in the past, what they have reason to embellish or minimise, and what they prefer to keep to themselves" (231). During this visit, I was peeling back layers of understanding different relationships, just as Emmanuel continues to find different pieces of his own puzzle.

A month after the visit, when I was back home in the Netherlands for Christmas, Emmanuel sent me a photo with the description saying, "I'm happy because I see my daddy". He had found a photo of his father in his mother's house. Much like the community members had, I noticed a striking resemblance between them. I wondered why his mother kept a photo of his father, again coming to terms with the complexity of the research, leaving me with more questions. In a way, I was trying to find out how family works in the aftermath of (sexual) violence, trying to piece together different parts of people's lived experiences, while Emmanuel was doing the same. This

[3] In fear of assuming, I do believe there is a sense of protecting his mother and sharing knowledge that is not his to share – that his mother knew his father. After meeting his mother that day, he may have chosen to share this part of his mothers' experience.

dissertation traces what I came to learn from his and others' experiences of learning about their conception and living in the aftermath of genocide.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

From April to July of 1994, between 800,000 and one million men, women, and children were killed during the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The horrific nature of the genocide shocked the world as the combined brutality and intimacy of the violence raised questions about humanity and the complexity of evil (Williams, 2020). The genocide has been written about widely in the form of memoirs, human rights reports, and academic works. Scholars have analysed different aspects of the genocide that made it possible, such as the political, socio-economic, and colonial history (Jefremovas, 2002; Mamdani, 2001; Prunier, 1995), social networks and group dynamics (Fujii, 2009), local-level politics (Kimonyo, 2016), the regional geo-political context (Lemarchand, 2008), the role of the church (Longman, 2010) and the concept of fear (Straus, 2006). Alison Des Forges' study (1999) conducted for Human Rights Watch directly after the genocide in 1995 cumulated in *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, one of the most prominent texts for explaining the Genocide against the Tutsi. The account was used as a basis for prosecuting accused perpetrators and forms an indictment on the international community, who was "so anxious to absent itself from the scene, was in fact present at the genocide" (Des Forges, 1999: 3). Other works also provide insights into the failures of international intervention efforts (Barnett, 2003; Dallaire, 2003; Des Forges, 1999; Grünfeld, 2007; Jones, 2004; Kuperman, 2000; Melvern, 2000; Prunier, 1995). Additionally, many scholars have studied Rwanda's post-genocide recovery, transitional justice, and reconciliation mechanisms (Clark, 2010; Clark and Kaufman, 2009; Fox, 2021; Gahima, 2013; Gaparayi, 2001; Gasanabo et al., 2020; Gasanabo, 2019; Pottier, 2002; Rettig, 2013; Straus and Waldorf, 2011; Thomson, 2013; Wolfe et al., 2023; Zorbas, 2004, 2009). Other bodies of work have focused on the experience of women both during and in the aftermath of the genocide (Banyanga et al., 2017; Berry, 2018; Burnet, 2012a; Mutamba and Izabiliza, 2005; Taylor, 1999) and the intergenerational impact of the genocide (Benda, 2018, 2019; Ingabire et al., 2022; Kagoyire et al. 2023; Pells, 2011; Pells et al. 2014, 2022; Williamson Sinalo et al., 2021; Zraly and Kagoyire, 2021).

Among the countless horrors that the genocide entailed was the pervasive use of sexual violence as an instrument of war (Nowrojee, 1996). Hutu militiamen known as the *Interahamwe* "deliberately raped women to cause humiliation (to them and their families who were often forced to watch), to transmit HIV, to destroy the fertility of Tutsi women and to force pregnancies" – the latter two of which were employed as methods of ethnic cleansing (Nowrojee, 1996: 28). In a more general sense, Shanks and Schull (2000) state that the effectiveness of rape as a 'weapon of war' relies on cultural norms of 'public ownership' regarding the sexual virtue of women. The humiliation of one woman is felt in her family and community; thus, an attack against one woman is an attack against an entire group. The impact of this is prolonged when the women become

pregnant. This was the case in Rwanda, as Odeth Kantengwa puts it, "the attack is then passed on to the next generation" (2014: 7).

Although the exact number of women who were raped is unknown, testimonies from survivors confirm that rape was extremely widespread and that between 250,000 and 500,000 women were subjected to various forms of sexual violence (De Brouwer and Ka Hon Chu, 2009). Many were killed immediately after being raped. Other women managed to survive, being told that they were allowed to live so that they could "die of sadness" (Nowrojee, 1996: 2).

It has been documented that a large number of women became pregnant as a result of rape during the genocide. The National Population Office estimates the number of children conceived through genocidal rape to be between 2,000 and 5,000 (Donovan, 2002: 17). Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) supporting genocidal rape survivors provide a higher estimate of approximately 20,000 women (Russell, 2014). In her report for Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives,* one of the most detailed and authoritative accounts of sexual violence during the 1994 genocide, and its aftermath, Nowrojee (1996) reported that some women chose not or were unable to raise the babies or committed infanticide, whereas others decided to keep the children. Abortion was – and still is – illegal in Rwanda[4] and while a few wealthier women were able to get abortions in neighbouring countries, many women self-induced abortions, often with catastrophic results (Mukangendo, 2007; Nowrojee, 1996). For some women, pregnancies were too far along to attempt abortions. Other women decided to keep their babies. In certain cases, "the mother's decision to keep the child has caused deep divisions in the family, pitting those who reject the child against those who prefer to raise the child" (Nowrojee, 1996: 4). Many women lost their extended families and were "left alone", living in poverty with little support, which made it difficult for them to "start over" after the rapes (Mukangendo 2007: 44).

The Research Project

This research project explores the social worlds and family relations of children conceived in genocidal rape during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.[5] Sexual violence in conflict has increasingly received international attention in recent years, particularly since the start of this

[4] In June 2012, Rwanda amended its law on abortion to include specific exceptions under which abortion is now permitted. One of these exceptions is when the pregnancy is a result of rape (Umuhoza et al., 2013). Abortion is strongly opposed by the Catholic Church which has a powerful presence in Rwanda. In 2017, the Pope officially apologised and asked for forgiveness for the Catholic Church's role in the genocide.

[5] Hereafter referred to as the 1994 genocide, for ease of reading. In referring to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi as the 1994 genocide, I do not intend to eclipse the deliberate targeting of the Tutsi population. I also recognise that Rwandans from other ethnic groups were killed and raped, as well

project.[6] Countless women become – or rather, are made – pregnant as a result of wartime or genocidal rape in conflicts around the world. Though the consequences of this are felt by future generations, how these consequences take shape for the 'generation after' is still largely unknown – a clear knowledge gap. Therefore, this study reflects on how genocidal rape affects the 'generation after', the generation conceived in violence, as situated in their families, communities, and social worlds. The following questions have guided this work: In the aftermath of genocide, how are social relations constituted? How does kinship work? How is the notion of family understood, especially from the perspectives of young adults conceived in rape?

The Western model of tracing kinship through biology is firmly integrated into the way people in Rwanda conceptualise kinship relations, or at least how they have been made to do so since the relation of rape, conception, birth, and life have come into being through the genocide. Rwanda follows a patrilineal kinship system where, within lineages, the boundaries of membership are determined by descent and marriage (Pontalti, 2018). Though born outside of marriage, children conceived in rape are seen as belonging to the lineage of their perpetrator fathers, the 'enemy' from the perspective of their mothers' families. This study explored what these boundaries of young people's membership within kinship structures looked like and how belonging to 'the other' within their maternal lineages shaped their everyday social worlds.

This study is situated within conversations on the delicate construction of the social in the aftermath of violence, reconstruction, reconciliation, and survival. Engaging in this research with young people in Rwanda helps us understand how social worlds and family relations are created, reconstituted, and understood, and, hence, how worlds are made and remade – or rather, how violent worlds are continued. While not the direct aim of this study, it is my hope that the findings presented here can also contribute to a better understanding of the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence in other contexts and ongoing conflicts around the world and positively inform support programmes for children, young people, their families, and communities.

Justification

The idea for this research stems from events that took place in 2015. In Nigeria, Boko Haram had abducted girls, hundreds of whom were rescued in late April and early May of 2015. The events received much international attention. Many of these abducted girls were pregnant upon their release, and the communities they returned to rejected the girls and their unborn babies since the babies were seen as children of Boko Haram, thus being labelled "baby snakes" (Elbagir, 2015). At the time, I worked for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Zimbabwe on sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes. Working for the UNFPA, the agency taking care of the pregnant women, I became interested in knowing how they would handle the rejection of

[6] In 2018, Doctor Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad received the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon in war and armed conflict, bringing much global attention to this plight.

the girls in their communities, many of whom were told to have abortions. I found that there was little knowledge on this subject within the UNFPA. Although substantial research had been done on women impregnated during the Bosnian War and Second World War, this body of work primarily explored the individual psychological impacts on the mothers rather than the social consequences. This is when I decided to conduct this doctoral research so that, ultimately, we could learn and better help women and children such as those in Nigeria.

I found that this research could best be conducted in Rwanda, as the young people conceived through genocidal rape in 1994 were in their early twenties at the time I embarked on this study. Due to ethical challenges in conducting such research with minors (see Akullo and Ojok, 2022), the age of the Rwandan youths allowed them to consent to being participants, as well as reflect on both their childhood experiences and current realities. The small body of literature on children conceived in wartime rape at the time I began this project recommended further research on family relationships. For instance, in their study on community counselling groups for mothers, Hogwood et al. (2014) recommended that "it would be useful to better understand the depth of family conflicts related to young people born of rape and to find ways of resolving these" (17). Working on the intergenerational realities of sexual violence, Myriam Denov (2015: 66) stated, "noticeably absent from the literature are the voices of the children themselves, particularly their perspectives on the mother/father/caregiver-child relationship, experiences of community belonging and stigmatisation, as well as their unique and long-term needs". Charli Carpenter, in the conclusion to her second book on children "born of war" (2007: 223), closed off with emotive words on the need for more research to protect these children:

> The chapters in this volume have aimed to provide a set of basic information resources and conceptual thinking space for pursuing this agenda, which we argue is of vital importance for those attempting to build a protective environment for all children in conflict zones. Though many open questions remain, these should not be used as an excuse for failures to protect children born of war. Rather, the international community must rise to this challenge: filling knowledge gaps, identifying best practices, and challenging discourses of exclusion.

Rwanda has a robust network of survivors' associations and NGOs supporting mothers and their children (Anumol and Munderere, 2023; Bluhm, 2022; Bihigi Habintwari, 2021; Fox, 2014; Hogwood et al., 2014; medica mondiale, 2018, 2023; Mwambari, 2017; Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Nyirandamutsa et al., 2023; Rutsibuka, 2022; Schimmel, 2020; Sebatukura Gitimbwa and Philippot, 2019; Zraly, 2008). This allowed me to partner with organisations that could provide me with access to young people and their families in a safe manner, as well as psychological support to research participants. An additional factor in choosing Rwanda as a research site was that although sexual violence occurred before and after the 1994 genocide, the specificity of the event meant that support structures for young people were targeted at a population of the same age going through similar stages of life. This made access easier than, for example, in the ongoing

conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which I had also considered. In that context, I was hesitant about being able to protect research participants and conducting the research ethically. An important part of approaching research participants was that they must have been told about their conception in order to speak to me about it. Since many children and young people have not been told (which is not to say they do not know, but that could not be confirmed), asking questions in communities could potentially do immense harm to people's relationships due to the stigma associated with children conceived in rape – often, their conception is a carefully kept secret. Considerations related to the 'disclosure' of a child's conception are further discussed later in this introduction.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical approach to this research builds on the trilogy *Social Suffering*, *Violence and Subjectivity*, and *Remaking a World*, edited by Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. *Social Suffering* (Kleinman et al., 1997: xxiv) looks at social trauma and demonstrates how suffering cannot be examined as a "single theme or uniform experience". The contributors argue that suffering is profoundly social in the sense that it helps constitute our social worlds – which calls for a discussion on the meaning of social suffering in our moral, cultural, and political worlds. Importantly, the authors note:

> The manner in which knowledge and institutions are organised in the contemporary world as pragmatically oriented programmes of welfare, health, social development, social justice, security, and so on, the phenomenon of suffering as an experiential domain of everyday social life has been splintered into measurable attributes (Kleinman et al., 1997: xxv).

Thus far, the literature on the lives of children conceived in wartime rape has largely relied on measurable attributes such as health concerns, poverty, stigma, abandonment, and abuse. Most publications analyse findings according to themes concerning young people, where various topics are addressed under headings such as "constructing a positive identity", "belonging", "disclosure of birth origins", "stigma and marginalisation", "self-acceptance", and "roles in reconciliation and transitional justice" (Neenan, 2017; Rohwerder, 2019; Uwizeye et al., 2022). However, since these are etic categories, the question remains as to how these 'splintered' categories manifest together and variously in a more emic sense in the constitution of young people's social worlds. Examining how social worlds are created, contested, and challenged could provide valuable knowledge regarding the healing and recovery of communities in generations after violence. Exploring beyond measurable attributes of suffering and seeing how these attributes take form and are handled in the everyday gives new insights into how lives are made after violence (Das, 2007). These considerations raise a series of pertinent questions. For example, how are relationships established after a massive event of violence? How do violence and the memory of violence take shape within

everyday interactions? As Veena Das argues (2007:16), traumatic collective violence is absorbed in everyday life rather than transcended, and this argument is examined here in terms of the 'generation after'.

In *Remaking a World* (Das et al., 2001), the editors explore what is at stake in the everyday after overwhelming experiences of social suffering and how people learn to engage with it. Can a sense of 'normalcy' be (re)created for the 'generation after'? What happens to relationships that were, or were not, repaired? Additionally, are there limits to the reconstitution of the social? In the case of children conceived through such violence, can relationships that are conceived as broken from the beginning be repaired? While the literature on children born as a result of genocidal rape suggests that they are not absorbed in everyday family and community relations and may feel like they do not belong (Denov et al., 2020; Hamel, 2016), can their worlds be remade? In *Remaking a World,* the editors ask, "How does one contain and seal off the violence that might poison the life of future generations?" (Das et al., 2001: 4). This research reconfigures this question by asking what happens when this violence is *not* sealed off. How does the younger generation navigate the impositions of the past in their everyday worlds?

My work demonstrates that the 'generation after' absorbs memories of collective violence, and this violence as embodied in their being "of rape". In the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence in Rwanda, violence is absorbed in everyday life and managed through affect and care. I show that 'disclosure' of young people's conception is not a singular event with a distinct before and after, but rather as an uneven process characterized by concealing and revealing through modes of social interaction and hierarchy in Rwanda. While Veena Das (2007) has shown that violence is absorbed in the everyday, rather than transcended, my research argues that through *kwiyubaka* as well as parenthood, for young people, some elements of violence can also be transformed, and possibly transcended, by becoming a "person of value" (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*) or "the parent of someone" rather than "a child of rape".

A Note on Interpreting "The Story"

It is important to reflect on the research topic, which constitutes an immensely sensitive, deeply personal, yet collective part of young people's lives. In conducting this research, I had to remember that what is important to me might not be important to the young persons with whom I spoke since these individuals do not comprise a homogenous group, and some would say that they do not feel they belong to such a 'group'. Some described their unwilling attribution to a 'group' of children characterised as 'the children of *Interahamwe*' as very painful when they were growing up. Therefore, although they are, willingly or unwillingly, the subject of this study in terms of the category of 'the generation after' and share many commonalities in their lived experiences, it is absolutely essential to view them as individuals. When asking them to share their experiences, translated in Kinyarwanda as asking for "your story" (*inkuru yawe*) or "your testimony"

(*ubuhamya bwawe*) because this is how the questions were culturally understood in a country where testimonies and stories of genocide are prominent in public and private life, I was careful not to demand stories of what they knew about their conception. Their life story might be influenced by it, but the research topic should not impose meaning onto what *their story* is.

Taking a step back, in most of our lives, we do not discuss our conception with others, neither with our parents nor with friends. Generally, children do not know the circumstances of their conception – as, indeed, may be the case for those who conceive them. We must, therefore, be careful to assume that this is the case for the young people included in this research. Ultimately, due to rumours and harassment when they were growing up, young people had questions for their mothers, but even in those conversations, the starting point was usually to ask why they did not have a father or what their father's name was. Seeing other children being picked up from school by their fathers raised such questions. While ideas about conception are a substantial topic in this work, I was careful not to place all young people's experiences under the umbrella of "they were conceived in rape". The stories told in this dissertation are what was shared with me, but there is a limit to my understanding or interpretation of why things are the way they are – this is also true for young people themselves, as it is in life.

There was a situation where I caught myself aware of this during my interview with Pascal. We sat in a quiet room in the back of a restaurant along with his 2-year-old son. We had met in the town centre because Pascal had come to town to buy medicine for his wife, who was sick at home. Pascal's interview was one of the most insightful that I had. It took a long time because Pascal's story was different from that of most other young people since he had grown up in close contact with his father's side of the family. I disregarded most of the prepared questions and tried to understand what it was like living on good terms with his father's extended family. It turned out they were no longer on good terms because Pascal had wanted to claim his rights to his father's land, causing conflict with his father's sisters. After about two hours, we rounded off the interview when the topic of Pascal's wife's family came up. I asked if his wife's family knew about his conception. He said they knew, and it was not a problem because his wife was also conceived in rape. I asked Pascal whether that played a role in their relationship because they have a certain understanding of each other. He immediately replied saying, "No, I just like her". And that was my answer. The topic had not come up before because Pascal had not mentioned it, even though he had opportunities to do so when we spoke about his family. However, to him, it did not carry the same importance as it did to me. He liked his wife for who she was, and it was not up to me to find a larger meaning in that. Their histories of violent conception were not the reason for their story or his story to me. It was a powerful reminder not to make assumptions about people's lives.

An Introduction to 'Disclosure'

The two organisations that facilitated my access to young people and their families, The Survivors Fund (SURF) and *Solidarité pour l'Épanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins visant le Travail et l'Auto promotion* – Solidarity for the Development of Widows and Orphans to Promote Self-Sufficiency and Livelihoods (SEVOTA), support young people and their mothers through psychosocial support programmes and provide financial support for education and vocational opportunities. Both organisations arrange 'youth camps' for young people conceived in rape and invited me to attend these camps. These camps became a significant part of building relationships with young people as well as understanding how they are supported and support each other. Thirty young people are invited at a time, usually for three nights and four days, to come together and attend a diverse programme that includes presentations about the history of Rwanda, psychological support and 'resilience' workshops, leadership and business skills workshops, and various activities, including games, sports, dancing, and time to be together and share experiences. The same groups of people are usually invited to two camps, one in July and another in December. Some young people are invited as 'role models' to attend additional camps. Samuel Munderere, SURF's Director, explained that the goal of the workshops was to impart life skills and coping strategies, offering a demonstration of what it means to look forward to a better future and how to leave the past behind (Anumol and Munderere, 2023). In spending time together, sharing stories, and listening to others' experiences, young people described the camps as very important to them, especially in learning that they are not alone in their experiences. Multiple young people told me that those they met at the camps were their only friends.

It is crucial to note that only those who know about the way in which they were conceived are invited to these camps. Munderere emphasised that "it is not our job to disclose to them how they were born, it's the mother's choice" (Anumol and Munderere, 2023: 259). While most of these young people grow up with an understanding that they are treated differently by the community or family members, often being called "child of *Interahamwe*" or other "bad names" by neighbours or other children, and sometimes treated with suspicion or as outcasts, not all of them have spoken about this with their mothers. In most cases, young people have had their suspicions and questions from a young age, but typically, their mother would be unable to answer their questions, often reacting in anger by crying or with other traumatic symptoms. Some young people stopped asking questions because of the effects it had on their mothers. In other cases, young people grew up aware of the situation because they were raised with their father's family. During the genocide, many women were raped by men who lived in their neighbourhoods and fled after the genocide ended. At times, the families of these men would claim the children as their own and play a role in their lives. In some of these cases, though the children grew up with an awareness, they did not necessarily have conversations or take part in a counselling process that psychologists call 'the disclosure process', the process of being told about how they were conceived (Hogwood et al. 2014).

Those invited to youth camps know about their conception because their mothers participated in a community counselling programme that provides women with a safe environment and resources to manage the disclosure of rape. In 2014, SURF and Foundation Rwanda, a US-based NGO working closely with SURF, designed this programme because women indicated that when their children reached adolescence, it became difficult to communicate with them and manage their questions about their conception – or rather, about their fathers and their treatment that then implicated the circumstances of their conception.[7]

The 'disclosure' programme was documented by Hogwood et al. (2014, 2018), who found that it allowed women to build mutual support systems and social networks while equipping themselves with knowledge and skills around "signs, triggers, and consequences of trauma, prevention of traumatic crisis, responsibilities of parenting, child rights, identity and adolescence, and managing conflict and disclosure" (Hogwood et al., 2018: 396). The programme resulted in women beginning to speak to their children about their birth stories. In 2017, the programme was evaluated from the perspectives of young people who had been 'disclosed' to. Attention was paid to how the process impacted the way they viewed themselves and (re)formed their identity. The evaluation showed that young people could now "construct a narrative that makes sense of their experience and connect with others in a similar social position. They could work toward reconstructing a positive identity and rework family relationships" (Hogwood et al. 2018: 14). The study also found that the process improved young people's relationships with their mothers, appreciating the courage it took to give birth to them and recognising the psychological factors that explained their behaviour when asked questions about their fathers (Hogwood et al. 2018). I, too, found that this process of 'disclosure' led to an increased understanding of their mother's situation, initiating a mending of their fraught relationship growing up. At the end of my interviews, I asked young people what their advice is for other people like them around the world, and many answers resembled this one from Angelique: "Love your mother, respect her, she chose to have you and did not have an abortion, she went through a lot and made sacrifices for you".

In terms of the research, this means that only young people who have been part of the 'disclosure' process with their mothers and who have a formal NGO-based support system in place could participate in this study. It would be a great risk to ask questions to young people who were not told about their conception but may have had their suspicions (or for whom my questions would raise such suspicions), prompting them to ask questions about this to their mothers. Such situations could prove distressing for both the mothers as well as the young people themselves since their mothers' trauma could easily surface, leading to further distress and arguments. The painful qualities of these arguments cannot be underestimated. A young woman, Mariya, told me that when she was ten years old, she had to write her father's name on registration documents at school.

[7] The project was implemented by Kanyarwanda, a local partner NGO of SURF. The programme consisted of four community counselling groups with 10 members each, all women with children conceived from rape in the genocide. The groups met twice a month at a convenient and safe place, facilitated by Rwandan counsellors (Hogwood et al., 2014).

She did not know what to write down, so she went home to ask her mother.[8] This question made her mother angry, and she said, "If it wasn't for you, I could find a job in Kigali, and I wouldn't have this life. I still have my ovaries, so I can have other children". So, Mariya thought, "Let me give you peace". She decided to commit suicide. She gave another child 500 Rwf (50 cents USD) to buy rat poison for her. She thought, "If this can kill a rat, it can kill me too". A neighbour saw the child trying to buy it and stopped her. She told the child to give the money back to Mariya's mother. Her mother locked Mariya in the house. Mariya slept and woke up feeling angry. She and her mother spent two days without talking to each other. After that, Mariya says, "she felt better". She and her mother never spoke about it again.

To avoid unintentionally provoking situations such as these and to prevent complicating or compromising interpersonal relationships between mothers and their children, I therefore excluded a substantial group of young people conceived in genocide rape from this research – those who were not involved in these support structures. While this was ethically necessary, it means that the experiences of people who participated in this research (who had support and were willing to speak about their experiences) might not reflect the experiences of those who did not and could not participate.

To close off, a note on language. The word 'disclosure' does not have a direct translation in Kinyarwanda, although it is commonly used in the literature on this topic. Researchers (including myself) have used the concept of 'coming to learn the truth' or knowing 'the truth' (*ukuri*). However, 'the truth' is not an absolute concept, and in situations of collective trauma, fragile interpersonal relations, and spheres of lingering violence, a person's 'truth' is conditional, negotiated and restricted by the environment. A person's 'truth' is not a factual but rather a fragmented experience used to navigate the post-genocide realm. In the case of 'disclosure' and 'the truth' about rape and conception from rape, these 'truths' are accompanied by subjective memories embedded in trauma, survival, and overwhelming grief and anger. These 'truths' consist of parts, each more difficult to tell than others. For example, women who were raped by multiple men may nevertheless still have their ideas about who the father of their child is. These parts are not always told as one single, coherent, or seamless narrative. This may have been the case with Emmanuel and his mother, as described in the Prologue. How mothers (and others) 'disclose' to their children is a process that takes considerable time and much more than a conversation about a specific event that happened. As I found, mothers had often told elaborate stories to their children, masking their conception. Are these lies? These are reconstructions of various experiences with genocide. The concept of 'truth-telling' suggests that any information deviating from 'the truth' is deception, whereas I see these stories as methods for protection and survival.

[8] Having to write a father's name on school registration documents was a common factor in prompting children to come home and ask their mothers about their father, leading to reactions rooted in trauma and, at times, conflict. Some mothers anticipated this situation and gave children the names of their own father, the children's grandfather, to write down.

Often, when mothers navigate boundaries of 'truths', they do so to protect their children (and themselves). Laura Eramian and Myriam Denov underscore this point:

> These youths' lives and experiences speak to larger and powerful conundrums at the heart of what it means to live with legacies of violence, including what should be said or remain unsaid, and how the very opposition between revealing and concealing can be confounded by social and cultural variances in the meaning of "truth" (2018: 372).

Some women who had participated in SURF's 'disclosure' programme indicated that they did not feel ready to talk to their children or had started 'disclosing' but felt they needed more conversations in supported environments first, resulting in the number of women who actually 'disclosed' being unconfirmed (Hogwood et al., 2014). Or, perhaps, 'disclosure' cannot be quantified. I found that women went to great lengths to protect their children from knowledge that would cause them pain. During my interview with Maurice in December 2019, for instance, I asked how old he was when his mother told him the truth about how he was born, and he replied, "She did not". I was surprised because if she had not told him, how could he have been invited to the camp? It turned out that his mother had told SURF's counsellor that she did 'disclose' to Maurice despite having not done so in actuality. Maurice explained that he had been invited to the July camp and had recognised his own experiences in listening to others. He spoke to SURF's counsellor and to his mother when he came home. Then his mother told him what happened to her, saying, "I thought you were still too young to know this. They helped me to tell you, but you were still so young".

Another mother, Mama Keza, told me during our interview, "You are still young to listen to such stories". As I am older than my young interlocutors, this suggests that it is not age per se that is at stake in women's strategies, but rather the desire to protect others, especially their children, from having to live with 'poisonous knowledge' (Das, 2000). As Das argues, women violated during the Partition of India kept the knowledge of the events to themselves, a fact that manifested in a submerged sensibility 'constantly mediated by the manner in which the world is being presently inhabited' (Das et al., 1997: 221). Similarly, my research in Rwanda shows that, indeed, mothers and young people make decisions for each other to keep the poison of genocide out of the home as much as possible.

Beyond "Born of War" Discourses

Language and terminologies are significant shapers of how we understand phenomena. In writing about the 'generation after', I engaged with various existing discourses about children and young people conceived in rape during genocide, conflict, or war. They are often referred to as "children born of war" (Carpenter, 2007, 2010; Lee, 2017; Lee et al., 2022) or "war babies" (Seto, 2013).

Scholars such as Charli Carpenter and Donna Seto have called for children conceived in wartime rape to be placed on global human rights agendas, and through their advocacy efforts, global discourses have brought attention to "forgotten children born of war" Carpenter, 2010). In recent years, further research has been conducted on children conceived in rape, and children and young people are increasingly involved as active subjects in the research being conducted about them (Denov and Lakor, 2017). With this progress, it is important to re-evaluate the discourses that were initially created to provoke global policy. As I built close personal relationships with young people in Rwanda, I became uncomfortable with reading about them as "children born of war" or "war babies". Besides the sensationalising tone – which was perhaps necessary in the early 2000s to generate global advocacy – calling children "born of war" eclipses their individuality and present being. This terminology centres on violence rather than the person or the child. It also side-lines their mother since children are not born from an event (war) but from their mother. Or, as Kimberley Theidon (2022: 40) emphasises, "war does not impregnate women, but men do"— a strong reminder that "born of war" discourses eclipse male violence (see Chapter 6). Moreover, the language around children "born of war" plays into ideas of them as symbols of suffering, "*les enfants mauvais souvenir*" (children of bad memories), as they were referred to in Rwanda. Do they have to be symbols or reminders? Can they just be children? Children are born from their mothers. Humans are born from humans, not from events. Linking the birth of a person, a human being, to a violent past event creates a basis for seeing them as representations of this violence rather than individuals with agency.

I asked Mariya what she was most proud of in her life. She answered, "I think I am a trustworthy person, I work hard to be independent, and people see me as a good person". Do we, as scholars, see her in that light? The discourse of "war babies" would emplace Mariya in a past event she seemingly cannot escape even as she "works hard to be independent". In the context of our interview, she meant that she works to be financially independent from her mother and her mother's husband, but in doing so, she also becomes less dependent on how she grew up being perceived as: a child of rape. Now, she says, people see her as a good person. Yet, in dominant discourses referring to young women like her, her hard work or character are masked by circumstances over which she had no control.

In Kinyarwanda, young people conceived in rape are referred to as "born of rape" (*yavutse ku ngufu*). While wishing to remain respectful of local terms and include these in the analysis, these terms can be seen as rooted in patrilineal structures related to women's roles in giving birth as well as the adoption of international discourses around genocide, sexual violence, and children "born of rape". The terminology "born of rape" assumes that the act of rape is still present at birth. While the *effects* of rape may still be present and the birthing process can regenerate traumatising experiences, there is a distinction to be made between the act of rape and conception and the act of birthing. Many of the mothers had actively chosen to give birth to their children, resisting pressures from their families, even when taken to hospitals for abortions. Therefore, many of the

children conceived from rape were born through maternal choice. The phrase "born of rape" bypasses this choice. The Kinyarwanda term *kuvuka ku ngufu* (to be born of rape) stems from the verb *gufata ku ngufu* (rape), which literally translates to "to take by force" (*ku ngufu* means by force); thus, *kuvuka ku ngufu* translates as "to be born by force". Some children were conceived by force but born because women resisted the attempts to force them to undergo abortions. Of course, having made a choice to have their children does not imply that raising the child was any less difficult or that everyday life was devoid of traumatic experiences. Thus, rather than using the term 'birth', I propose using 'conception' instead to clearly distinguish between the act of rape and birthing.

I first visited Rwanda in 2017 to meet with organisations supporting young people and their mothers and inquire whether the research would be valuable and whether they would be able to support it by providing safe access to families. A careful literature review rooted in "born of war" discourses had informed my perception of young people as "vulnerable", "hidden", "forgotten", and "traumatised", and I had developed a careful methodological approach to offset risk of the research doing harm to them. SEVOTA invited me to visit them at one of their youth camps. I was nervous but excited to test whether the research would be seen as valuable by young people. The camp, hosted in a school, consisted of about twenty people in their early to mid-twenties and the camp facilitators. I introduced myself in Kinyarwanda and, switching to English, explained that my research aimed to understand their lives with their families and inform how to better support them. Some nodded their head in agreement. When I asked them if they had any questions for me, a young, trendily dressed man raised his hand and asked, "Are you married?" We all laughed. I felt relieved. That single question shifted my perception that I was standing in front of a group of "vulnerable" and "traumatised" young people to standing in front of a group of 23-year-olds. The language we use to speak about them should reflect this while remaining cognisant of the specific vulnerabilities they face.

Young People vs Young Adults

It is vital to recognise that despite the common appellation of '*children* born of …", the young people in this study were, at the time of the research, aged between 24 and 27 years old. That is, they were young adults. In Kinyarwanda, unmarried youth are usually referred to as *urubyiruk*o, "young people". The organisations I worked with referred to the young people in their programmes *as urubyiruko rwavutse ku ngufu.* In the six years that have passed between the start of the research and this writing, some young people with whom I met married and started their own families. They would now not be considered youth in Rwandan society, while those of the same age who are still unmarried continue to be considered *urubyiruko*. Thus, nomenclature rests more on social roles than chronological age, as is common in much of the continent (Durham, 2000). Considering the widespread continued use of "children born of…" without considering these individuals' actual

life stages, I believe it is important to make these careful distinctions. Therefore, I chose to refer to the young adults in this study as young people.

"Rwandan Daughters" – An Introduction to Ethics

During my fieldwork, in the context where research participants' 'status' as 'conceived in rape' when publicly known had serious repercussions, ethical considerations did not only consist of methodological concerns but also everyday practices. What to say and what not to say, where and to whom, who I was seen meeting with and where, the names of people I knew, and even the possessions I had in my house were all an enormous responsibility. The following example illustrates why.

In 2019, I brought a photography book from the Netherlands to my house in Rwanda. I had lived in Rwanda for two years, and most of my belongings were there, so I did not consider any potential harm around my belongings in my personal space. I brought Olaf Heine's (2019) extraordinary book, *Rwandan Daughters*, which features photos of Rwandan mothers and their children conceived in rape photographed in the place of the rape.[9] One evening, I came back to my house after two days of conducting interviews in the south. The housekeeper, Theogene, who lived next door on the same property, welcomed me home. Unexpectedly, he said he liked my book, walked inside, and took it off the shelf. When I saw the book in his hands, I immediately tensed, feeling that I should not have brought this book to Rwanda. He said that his wife's mother was pictured in the book. He recently got married to Ange, and they lived next door to me. I asked, "Pictured with Ange's sister?" thinking that he would have mentioned it if he saw Ange, and I thought his mother would not be photographed by herself due to the nature of the book. He flipped through the pages, replying, "No, she does not have a sister". I was confused and alarmed. He showed Ange's mother in a group picture of women who were members of an organisation that supports rape survivors. He pointed out his mother-in-law. I was relieved. I also felt very uneasy about my research having entered my home in this unexpected way. This situation was very unsettling. Usually, I would have asked gentle clarifying questions, but in the moment, my concern was not to delve deeper into what my housekeeper understood about the picture, because I lived alongside Ange and did not want to know something about her and her family that she did not tell me herself. Until she told me, I would never ask about this.

Theogene flipped through more pages while I considered how to best handle the situation. He showed me another page of a young woman with her mother. He said, "I went to school with this girl. She was bullied a lot and was always crying". I thought about all the young people who told me about how painful their childhood was and how children at school called them "bad names",

[9] Some women were not raped in one specific place but multiple places, so I believe this was artistic liberty or the mothers' choice of location.

such as "child of *Interahamwe*". I tried to find out how much Theogene understood about the book's purpose and the meaning behind the pictures he saw. The book's introduction is in English and German, so I was hopeful he did not read it fully or connect any dots. He spoke about how the group of women pictured with his mother-in-law receive support because of what they went through during the genocide. He spoke about the effects of genocide that still linger in society, and I listened. He told me that he is Hutu. In Rwanda, public ethnic identification is discouraged, so this was also a strange moment for me. It was an honest moment of connection between us, but every piece of information he gave me provided pieces of a puzzle I did not want to solve – a puzzle I wanted to stay out of my home. I understand now that there is no such thing while living in Rwanda: there is no escaping the topic of genocide, which was a parallel that I discovered when writing Chapter 5 about how genocide lingers below the surface of everyday life and how memories can enter a space unexpectedly.

Theogene continued, saying that he met Ange when they were young, and he had wanted to marry her for a long time but did not think it would happen. He emphasised that his mother-in-law gave them permission, which seemed unexpected to him, though not to me since I now understood that he married the daughter of a Tutsi woman. While marriage across ethnic groups is more normalised now, many parents still do not allow their children to marry other ethnicities. I wondered, drawing on a local idiom, if Ange was 'half Hutu' because her mother was raped? I estimated her to be the same age as most young people in my research; her mother was part of a group of women supported by a particular organisation, so she could be conceived in rape. I wondered then if that was the case, if she knew about the book and, by implication, her conception. Did Theogene know? My mind was so full of questions and scenarios that I started to think I might be imposing my research on all situations and reading too much into it. Yet, I thought it was better to read too much into it than too little because 'reading into' situations determined my level of caution within my fieldwork. I never spoke to Theogene about the book again or to Ange about her family history, and they did not raise it.

Rwanda is a small country, and my housekeeper recognising someone in a book is not surprising. It illustrates the level of care required in research on this topic. It shows that ethical considerations permeate fieldwork, and there are no clear parameters that can be placed on the research setting. One must be constantly alert. Could it be that the young people were also constantly alert? This situation gave me a small glimpse into the lengths young people and their mothers go to in the everyday to protect themselves and their children from others knowing about their conception.

An Outline of the Dissertation

The following sections of this dissertation are organized as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertaining to rape as a method of genocide, children conceived in wartime rape, youth in

Rwanda, the intergenerational transmission of memories and trauma, kinship after collective violence, and the social everyday after war. Chapter 3 details the methodology of this research, including a commentary on working with organisations and considerations on translation. Chapter 4 comments on the ethics involved in research on sexual violence, reflections on anthropology and postcolonial Africa, the protection of participants, as well as reflections on vicarious trauma in the aftermath of fieldwork.

The following three chapters contain the ethnographic analysis of young people's worlds in family life, their communities, and Rwanda's post-genocide landscape. Chapter 5 explores the past and presence of the genocide in everyday life, revealing how young people and their mothers work to keep genocide memories at bay in the home through affective efforts and 'attunement'. Chapter 6 delves into the fragmented ways that knowledge of violence appears in young people's worlds and how mothers purposefully shield their children from what Veena Das (2000) calls "poisonous knowledge". It explores how young people 'come to know' and live with fragmented knowledge about 'who they are' and how they learn about their conception through formal and informal 'disclosure' processes. Chapter 7 zooms out to the wider post-genocide landscape, investigating how the national commemoration slogan "*kwibuka twiyubaka*" (remembering and rebuilding ourselves) takes shape in the lives of young people as they engage in *kwiyubaka* (building oneself), transforming their apparent fixed connections to the past and transcending being seen as "a child of rape". It also examines the public and private spheres of remembering and rebuilding and the dangers of knowledge that had previously been carefully shielded as it enters the public space.

Chapter 8 draws conclusions through an exploration of the perception of children and youth containing violence of the past within them that can erupt in the present while their social worlds are carefully protected – though not always successfully – from ruptures, too. Through a lens of kinship as "substances of relationality" (Carsten, 2011), the conclusion shows how this past violence is perceived as being contained in young people's blood, while other substances work to sever these past ties. It also questions our thinking of kinship as a whole in light of the fragmented knowledge young people, as well as anthropologists, live with, the limits of 'knowing', and the different 'truths' that make and unmake young people's worlds. Finally, I offer closing thoughts on the value of this research for young people's social and familial lives, their agency, and the importance of listening to what they have to say.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses literature that sets the stage for understanding the social worlds of young people conceived through genocidal rape in Rwanda. The first section introduces rape as a genocidal act and highlights the geographical scope of literature dealing with children conceived through conflict-related sexual violence. Here, I point out both an absence of literature addressing the lived experiences of these children, and the problematic language used in existing works. The second section further challenges discourses around "children born of war". The third section explores the role of youth in Rwanda's post-genocide society, as young people conceived in rape can be viewed as a group of young people with particular lived experiences, their realities are also shaped by 'just' being young persons in Rwanda. The fourth section shows that intergenerational trauma and the transmission of genocide memories are central to the lived experiences of young people. This section shows that, through a 'temporalities' lens of memory crossing and re-crossing past, present and future, intergenerational trauma plays a critical role in the continuation of past violence in the present day. Finally, the fifth section explores the familial context of youth in the aftermath of genocide through an exploration of kinship structures such as their biological ties, support organisations and peer networks, the 'state-as-parent' and the communities they live in. The literature in each of these sections provides context to how young people are perceived, by scholars and in their communities, how these perceptions are shaped by genocide memories and intergenerational trauma, and how these perceptions are both reproduced and countered through kin relations in which the violent past attaches itself to present everyday life.

Rape as Genocide

Sexual violence has been a prevalent occurrence in conflicts and genocides worldwide, such as the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, the Bangladesh liberation war, the Bosnian war, conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the South Sudanese civil war, the Yazidi Genocide, and the Rohingya Genocide, in addition to countless other wars. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 60,000 Muslim and Croatian women were raped in the first Yugoslavian genocide in the early 1990s (Mullins, 2009b). During the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971, between 100,000 and 400,000 Bangladeshi women were raped by Pakistani soldiers (Mookherjee, 2015). During the Asia Pacific War (1931–1945), between 50,000 and 200,000 women became "comfort women", young girls and women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese troops, many of them coming from colonial Korea (Soh, 2006). Accounts like Christina Lamb's *Our Bodies, Their Battlefield* (2020) and Anne Marie de Brouwer and Sandra Ka Hon Chu's *The Men Who Killed Me* (2009) have provided retching testimonies of conflict-related sexual violence in women's words. Many scholars writing about wartime sexual violence have distinguished between opportunistic and strategic sexual violence (Wood, 2006). During the Sierra Leone civil war (1991–2002), in contrast to Bosnia-Herzegovina, sexual violence was carried out

"indiscriminately" and did not involve explicit ethnic targeting, although it was extremely brutal in nature and widespread (Wood, 2006).

In Rwanda, rape was used as a specific tool of genocide (Mullins, 20009a). Christopher Mullins found that "in some prefectures, rape was as much of a weapon for the enactment of the anti-Tutsi genocide as were guns and machetes" (Mullins, 2009b: 773). However, Jennie Burnet (2015: 98) points out that sexual violence in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda "ranged beyond ethnic/racial dyads of Tutsi-victim and Hutu-perpetrator" as many Hutu women and girls also endured sexual violence, indicating "the full complexity of sexual violence, sexual agency, and militarised sex in the context of genocide and violent conflict". Thus, sexual violence in this context can be seen as both opportunistic and strategic.

One of the most significant developments in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide was the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in the landmark case against Jean-Paul Akayesu, determining that rape can be an act of genocide. According to the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (the Genocide Convention), "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group" and/or "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part" constitute genocide.[10] In her research on sexual violence and transitional justice in Rwanda, Usta Kaitesi (2013: 133) writes that the ICTR noted in its ruling that "rapes resulted in physical and psychological destruction of Tutsi women, their families and their communities". Yet, she also notes that "the prosecutorial record relating to rape and sexual violence as genocide is generally disheartening, less than a handful of cases have included indictments for genocide on the basis of such acts and even fewer have been convicted" (2013: 124). Cases of rape as genocide and a war crime have also been successfully tried in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), including the case against Duško Tadić for the first-ever conviction of sexual violence against a man. A large body of scholarship exists around the legacies of both the ICTR and ICTY (Adams, 2018; Eboe-Osuji, 2007; Kaitesi, 2013), laying the foundation for analyses of rape as genocide in other contexts, such as the rapes of Yazidi women by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Castellano San José, 2020; Cooke, 2019; Jaffal, 2020).

Despite increased international focus on sexual violence in conflict and genocide, there is still a noticeable knowledge gap and lack of attention given to the children conceived in wartime and genocidal rape – be it in policies on war-affected children, peacebuilding processes, or academic scholarship. It is estimated that tens of thousands of children were conceived from mass rape or sexual exploitation during times of war "whether as an accidental by-product or strategic campaign of violence" (Seto, 2013: 2). While sexual violence has historically been a pervasive part of conflict and warfare, with many children being born as a result, it was only during the Bosnian war in the

[10] Article II, sections b and c, of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, December 9, 1948.

early 1990s that the children 'conceived in rape' first became subjects of human rights discourses. As a group, these children came to symbolise a kind of atrocity that was seen as unprecedented in its scope and brutality (Carpenter, 2010). In the former Yugoslavia, rape and forced impregnation were systematically and deliberately used not only against women themselves but the nations they were assumed to represent. In the Darfur region of Sudan, media and human rights organisations have shed light on the systematic use of rape by Janjaweed militias as a means of ethnic cleansing by creating "light-skinned babies" (Nieuwoudt, 2006; Polgreen, 2015). Other conflicts where children have been conceived in war include the First and Second World Wars (Grieg, 2001), the Bangladesh Liberation War (Ashford and Huet-Vaugh, 1997; Mookherjee, 2007, 2015) and the civil wars in Peru (Theidon, 2015, 2022), Cambodia (Braaf, 2014), Sierra Leone (Denov, 2015) and Uganda (Akello, 2013; Apio, 2007, 2016; Veale et al., 2013).

In 2022, a collection of essays was published as part of the Children Born of War international and interdisciplinary research and training network (CHIBOW).[11] The book contains the work of 15 doctoral researchers on the lives of children conceived in rape in 20th-century conflicts (Lee at al., 2022). Sabine Lee published a type of 'overview' of *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century* (2017), where she calls Children Born of War (CBOW) "a global phenomenon" (244) and asks the questions "Who are they? Where are they? Why are they ignored? And why do they matter?" (1). While her work shines an important light on "the phenomenon", and these questions are likely well-intentioned, it is my hope that this dissertation demonstrates that having to ask a question of why children matter perpetuates the dehumanisation of these individuals; children, or anyone, should not have to prove that they matter (see Chapter 7 on redemptive narratives). Alen Muhic, a young man conceived in rape and co-founder of the Forgotten Children of War Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina, spoke at the United Nations in New York: "We are called by various names that are often inhumane and stigmatising" (Koji, 2018). As I have already introduced, language shapes our imagination and how we relate to these children; thus, existing literature must be reviewed with these considerations in mind.

Children Conceived in Wartime Rape

Since the start of this research project, research on children conceived in wartime rape has grown. Charli Carpenter, the pioneering author on "children born of war", has played a pivotal role in placing the situations of these children on research agendas through her analysis of the (lack of) international policy response to "war babies" (2007, 2010). She argued that the lack of systematic research on these issues is the first obstacle to successful advocacy and policy change. In 2013, Donna Seto pointed out how a limited number of studies had been conducted on these individuals, noting that when they were done, only a few interviewed the children when they were older. Akullo and Ojok (2022) reflect on methodological considerations in conducting research directly with

[11] See: https://www.chibow.org/

minors conceived in rape in Northern Uganda, which Ojok did in classroom settings whilst not 'singling' out those conceived in rape. Though studies have become more prominent recently, ethical challenges relating to research with children have caused many of these examples to be with youth and adults. Myriam Denov et al. (2022: 1241) explored the ethics and related power dynamics of conducting research with Rwandan youth conceived in rape as they saw a "tension" in "speaking for or about youth and actually hearing from young people themselves". Denov's research in Rwanda, where youth conceived in rape joined as co-researchers, "underscored young people's desire to be heard, recognised, and included in research processes" (2022: 1251).

Most early work on children conceived in wartime rape comes from the field of politics and international relations (Carpenter, 2007, 2010; Seto, 2013). Carpenter (2010) argued that the rights of these children are limited by the structures of human rights discourse, where their needs are overshadowed by a focus on social cohesion. She notes that, at times, children's rights might conflict with women's rights, that is, the rights of their mothers. The Convention on the Rights of the Child can be conflicting in cases where protecting a child against mistreatment mitigates their right to know their biological origins. Thus, Carpenter explains that human rights discourse might not be useful in combating social exclusion. Clinical psychologists Elisa Van Ee and Rolf Kleber (2013) also alert us to the competing rights and interests of mothers and their children. They state that children's needs "intertwine – and sometimes interfere – with the needs of their mothers or their cultural community", which prevents "the development of a simple and coherent framework related to victimhood, and which contributes to the silence surrounding children born of rape" (2013: 394). Seto (2013: 177) argues that these children and young people may serve as political agents, writing that they "are created from violent modes of politics and are therefore seen as political agents". She further states that they can be seen as reminders of the past or as an opportunity for communities to reinvent themselves.

These early discourses were problematic because they consistently portrayed children as something other than themselves, as symbols of suffering or hope. Early works found that children conceived in wartime rape can symbolise the political tension that the victimised and perpetrator communities embody. To a receptor group, children conceived by enemy soldiers in war are symbolic of war atrocities (Apio, 2007; Carpenter, 2007; Weitsman, 2008). This suggests that communities re-imagine the aggression of their fathers in these children. They may then reject the children as they would the aggressor and his group. This is exemplified in how children are referred to in Rwanda as "devil's children" (Human Rights Watch, 1996), as "children of shame" in Kososvo (Smith, 2000), as "children of the enemy" in East Timor (Powell, 2001), and as "monster babies" in Nicaragua (Weitsman, 2003: 11). Theidon (2015: 193) found that children in Peru are not only labelled as a group but also given names by their mothers, such as "nobody's child", "stray cat", or "danger" (see also Theidon 2022). She found that naming practices demonstrate intricate dynamics of how private and hidden memories are made public through the projecting of violent pasts onto these children.

However, scholars have shown that rather than considering these children to represent only one side of the conflict – that of the perpetrator – these children can also offer a way to reconcile communal and even national differences. McEnvoy-Levy (2007: 161) notes that their "hybridity in their status as children of two cultures leads to greater insecurity, but it also holds the potential for them to shape new definitions of community, citizenship, and belonging that support human rights culture". Marie-Eve Hamel's doctoral research (2016) explored the ethnic belonging of young people conceived in rape in Bosnia and Rwanda. Whereas McEnvoy-Levy's work signals that these children are able to transcend their assigned symbols (as neither "enemies or friends, but both" (2007: 169), Hamel's ethnographic findings show that the values of patriarchal and patrilineal society often impose the father's ethnic identity onto children, thereby casting them as "the other" and justifying their exclusion from their maternal ethnic group (2016: 301). Her research suggests that sexual violence is extremely effective in ensuring the continuation of the ethnic conflict in the aftermath of violence by undermining these children's sense of belonging. As these children are prevented from fully integrating into their mother's ethnic group, they are suspended in what Hamel calls "ethnic limbo" (2016: 288). While this might lead to opportunities to shape new definitions of identity, current research illustrates this limbo as "not fitting in" rather than a space where reconciliation is created (Denov et al., 2020). Denov and Kahn (2019) asked young people in Rwanda directly, about their perspectives on current programmes and policies in terms of their collective experiences, and they responded, "Society should consider us [children born of genocidal rape] as a symbol of reconciliation" (165), advocating for their acknowledgement in transitional justice processes.

In this discussion on children as seen as 'of the other', it is important to note scholarship that has investigated the experiences and perspectives of their mothers. Myriam Denov and Antonio Piolanti (2019: 817) explored how stigmatisation and marginalisation serve as important themes that characterise the aftermath of genocidal rape for women through the forms of rejection and exclusion from family, "as well as being subjected to verbal and physical harassment". The stigma mothers faced from their parents, siblings, husbands, and extended family members "was twofold", that is, the stigma attributed to genocidal rape as well as the stigma related to bearing and living with "a little killer" (2019: 817). Leah Woolner et al. (2019: 708) state that "indeed, the overwhelmingly negative attitude attached to their child's identity was sufficient to challenge a mother's own right to belong within families and communities". They elaborate that avoiding social stigma "was nearly impossible" for women who lived in communities where they lived prior to and/or during the genocide, as sexual violence often occurred in public spaces or in front of family members. Hence, "many mothers reported facing enormous pressure from family members to have an abortion, as well as being subjected to or threatened with physical violence and at times forced to leave the family home" (2018: 709). Van Ee and Kleber (2012: 642) illustrate this through the story of Arya:

> When Arya was asked about the effect of the violent sexual assault she had endured, she reported that she suffered from nightmares and feelings of intense distress when she was reminded of the rape. The memories made her anxious but also depressed. A tear rolled down her face as she whispered that she had lost everything. We asked her how she had managed to live with these symptoms and raise her son by herself. Arya stared out of the window and remained silent. Then she spoke. Arya told us how the nightmares were not the worst reminder of that horrendous morning. Day and night, her son served as a living reminder of her ordeal. "Anselme is like a shadow", Arya said, "a shadow of a past that will haunt me forever".
>
> Arya told us that she could not stop wondering which of those five soldiers had fathered her child, and she kept comparing her child's face with her horrible memories of the soldiers' faces. Maybe she was not even conscious when the rapist father of her son had defiled her. Arya described her complex feelings for her son: she loved him because he was her own blood, but she also hated him since he resembled the rapists. She told us how sometimes she was tender towards Anselme, yet on other occasions, she was harsh and wanted to beat the rapist part out of him. Most of the time, though, she just did not notice him, so consumed was she with her own memories and sorrow.

Whereas these children have acted as reminders of suffering to their mothers and their communities in some situations, research has also shown that the rejection of children born of rape by their communities is not uniform (Kantengwa, 2014; Liebling et al., 2012). Liebling et al. (2012: 9) found that in Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), young women struggled with an "extremely complex and conflicting" love/hate relationship with their children. For example, one 17-year-old girl said, "I love the child, but all the responsibilities are burdens to me. Sometimes, I think when I see the father of the child on the road, I will put it in his arms, and I will run away. But then I think, the child is innocent, it has no fault" (2012: 26). Another said, "I have nothing to give the child. How can I return to school?" (2012: 27).

Various scholars have found that while these children may serve as reminders of painful memories, the pressures of caring for a child, exacerbated by socio-economic hardships, is what often leads to tensions in the mother-child relationship or even fosters resentment towards the child (Liebling et al., 2012; Woolner et al., 2019). However, Kantengwa (2014: 24) found that even though mothers of children born of rape face stigma and isolation, motherhood is "the major reason for living after genocide". Maggie Zraly, Sarah Rubin, and Donatilla Mukamana (2013: 424) noted similar dynamics, remarking that "being a mother and mothering gave some genocide-rape survivors a life purpose". In their ethnography on motherhood and resilience among Rwandan genocide-rape survivors, they give the example of Alicia, a woman who "found satisfaction in surviving with her children, particularly when she compared herself to other women who were raped during the genocide and either died or lost all of their children" (2013: 421). The authors

propose that Alicia's "gratefulness for being a mother and still having her children was part of what made it possible for her to accept genocide-rape as a part of her past and to imagine that it had never occurred at all" (2013: 421). In their psychological study on parenting among refugee women in the Netherlands with children conceived in conflict-related sexual violence, Anderson and van Ee (2020: 7) also found that, despite many challenges, being a mother was a source of strength, quoting a mother that said, "[My child] is my motivation in life. [My child] gives me purpose in life, [they] give me an idea of the future, of what will happen tomorrow. I think all mothers feel this way". Sarilee Kahn and Myriam Denov (2022: 731) mention that mothers experienced depression, helplessness, and numbing, with mothers describing a "profound powerlessness and helplessness that they felt during the violence itself and at the moment that they gave birth". However, they also found that for some mothers, "pregnancy provided a sense of strength and purpose or was regarded as divine compensation for the losses associated with the genocide", and they quote a mother saying, "When I saw the baby, I was so happy. I thought it is a gift from God to counsel from the pain I had due to my children that were killed during the genocide" (2022: 731).

Much of this early research on young people conceived in rape has focused on 'disclosure': how and whether they are told about their conception. Various scholars have looked at how the disclosure of their stories of origin has affected the identity formation of these young people (Erjavec and Volčič, 2010a, 2010b; Hogwood et al., 2018). In Bosnia, Erjavec and Volčič (2010a, 2010b) considered how young girls conceived in rape viewed themselves. Seventeen of the nineteen young girls interviewed used metaphors like "cancer" and "shooting target" to describe themselves, while two girls said they were "warriors for peace" and wanted to use their story of origin to make positive change. The majority of these girls felt immense pain when talking about the moment they found out about their stories of origin and referred to it as "the most traumatic event of their lives" (2010a: 381). Overall, the girls had very low self-esteem and struggled to understand themselves, feeling like they did not "fit in". Erjavec and Volčič's findings contrast Hogwood et al.'s (2018) findings that showed more positive experiences with disclosure, as the process supported young people to build their positive identities (as discussed in the Introduction).

More recent research has explored the psychosocial circumstances of children and youth conceived in rape. Myriam Denov's work in Rwanda and Northern Uganda has been at the forefront of a body of knowledge on the intergenerational realities of youth conceived in rape (Denov, 2015; Denov et al., 2020; Denov and Kahn, 2019; Denov and Lakor, 2017; Denov and Piolanti, 2019, 2020; Denov and Shevell, 2021; Kahn and Denov, 2019). Other research on young people's lived experience in Rwanda has included studies on trauma and mental health, identity formation and sense of belonging, stigmatisation and social exclusion, support structures for them and their mothers, and ambivalent feelings about their fathers. Scholars have found that social exclusion involved the denial of access to family resources and inheritance rights due to Rwandan laws and regulations (Musafiri et al., 2023), as well as exclusion and rejection by extended family and stepfathers treating them differently than their own biological children (Banyanga et al., 2017).

Some stepfathers were reported to commit physical and sexual abuse against the children (Kahn and Denov, 2019). Mental health risks and psychological problems included hurtful name-calling linked to one's birth origins (Neenan, 2017), alcohol and drug use (Uwizeye et al., 2022), and negative feelings towards the absence of a father (Denov and Piolanti, 2020). Consequences of mental health concerns included poor school performance (Nikuze, 2013), while the consequences of children's non-recognition as victims entitled to reparations led to a lack of financial, medical, and other support (Neenan, 2017). Whilst these studies present an overview of various struggles that young people experience, their offer limited insights into why and how these experiences come about.

Stigma looms large in psychological assessments of these children. As Kimberley Theidon notes, "The concept of stigma is frequently applied to these children and given wide-ranging explanatory power." She also adds, "From an anthropological perspective, however, stigma is a thin explanation for a thick phenomenon, and forecloses a broader repertoire of potential meanings and motivations for the acceptance or rejection of these children by their mothers, families, and communities." She further asserts that "stigma seems to be a placeholder in the literature rather than an analytically nuanced tool, almost commonsensical in its usage" (2023: 4).

A recent study by Nyirandamutsa et al. (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of support programmes in Rwanda. Their work indicates that psychosocial support through peer groups, financial support for school fees, and training on finding jobs all had a positive impact on young adults' sense of belonging and self-acceptance, providing relief from distress and emotional pain and instilling a sense of hope in these individuals. In their published conversation on "moving beyond Rwanda's 'children of bad memory'", Dipali Anumol and Samuel Munderere, director of the Survivors' Fund, discuss a way forward for Rwandan young people conceived in rape, in which Munderere highlights "three main areas of focus: Identity and national registration for youth, psychological support for mothers and youth, and skills training for jobs" (2023: 264).

In this section I have shown that early discourses around "children born of war" were, and continue to be, problematic as children are portrayed as symbols rather than human beings. Additionally, much early literature focused on the perspectives of their mothers, further obscuring the children's own views and perspectives. More recent research has explored the psychosocial circumstances of children and youth conceived in rape, highlighting issues they may face in more practical terms, such as alcohol and drug use, denial of inheritance rights and lack of other reparations. However, these studies provide an 'overview' of issues rather than in-depth ethnographic explorations. The use of 'stigma' as an explanatory term adds to a lack of depth in understanding of what it means to live with 'stigma' (however understood by young people themselves) and how it unfolds in their daily realities.

Youth in Rwanda

In his study on Rwanda's youth who work as *motari*, or motor-taxi drivers, Will Rollason (2017: 1278) emphasises that "youth, and especially the burgeoning urban youth population, is almost completely neglected in social studies of Rwanda" and that ethnographic accounts of Rwandan youth are "almost completely lacking". The Government of Rwanda defines 'youth' as individuals between the ages of 16 and 30 years old, comprising 27.1% of the nation's population (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2023). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates the percentage of Rwandan youth to be significantly higher, with 73.8% of Rwandans being below the age of 30 (UNDP, 2023). Hence, it is important to explore the lived realities of youth in Rwanda further.

Youth features prominently in Rwanda's peacebuilding, unity, and reconciliation agenda, as "representations of children and youth as the future of the nation —*U Rwanda rw'ejo*— are a mainstay in political discourse and the popular imaginary" (Benda, 2019). Whereas many scholars have explored the Rwandan state's 'top-down' reconciliation agenda (Longman, 2020; Purdeková, 2015; Thomson, 2013). Richard Benda (2018, 2019) challenges this idea by explaining that the Youth Connect Dialogues (YCD), a series of youth dialogues that were held with young people in 15 of Rwanda's 30 districts in 2013, formed the basis for the *Ndi Umunyarwanda,* "I am Rwandan" programme with the aim to unify and "de-ethicise" (Purdeková, 2015) Rwanda. Benda (2019 asserts that the dialogues were a "transition from a 'rear-view mirror' to a 'windshield' perspective", shifting the focus "from exclusively survivor-centred accounts to alternative stories". Hence, while all Rwandan youth aged 18-35 were invited, the YCD focused predominantly on the children of genocide perpetrators and their stories. Benda explains that both the YCD organisers and participants located their political agency in "the sort of temporality that wants to turn away from past-saturated narratives (rear-view mirror) to focus on new stories of change (windshield)" (Benda, 2018). He aptly quotes one of the participants, who said, "If you drive with your eyes glued on the rear-view mirror, how will you avoid accidents and collisions?" (Benda, 2018). Pells et al. (2014: 306) reiterate that "the lives of Rwandan children and youth are situated at precisely this juncture between the past and the present". The YCD was an initiative that originated from an association of young Rwandan artists called Art for Peace. Benda details their vision in the *Kinyarwanda* context (2018):

> The founders of Art for Peace had a vision for their generation: a future of peace without machetes. The twisted irony of the poetics of this vision will not be lost to speakers of the Kinyarwanda language: *amahoro* (peace) rhymes with *imihoro* (machetes – singular form *umuhoro*), by far the tool of choice in the technology of genocide against the Tutsi. This is not just a vision of the future; it is, first and foremost, a clear indictment of the past. Transitional temporalities from the perspective of

> emerging and second generations operate from this stark dichotomy that functions like a truncated caesura: past is *imihoro*||future is *amahoro*.

Importantly, during the dialogues, these children conveyed that a collective identity and "(hi)story" were forced upon them as children born of Hutu parents through concepts such as 'children of perpetrators' or 'Hutsi' children of mixed parentage (Benda, 2019). Benda explains that "in a culture where genealogical affiliation and generational ties play a crucial role in social interactions, there is a natural tendency for Tutsi survivors to assimilate children to their progenitors through a blanket transfer of transgenerational or collective blame" and that the stories told at the dialogues revealed a "deep-seated guilt born out of a sui generis post-genocide context where political socialisation and genealogical association are intricately connected" (Benda, 2019). The 'blanket' collective identities and blame forced upon children indicates that youth conceived in rape, who do not 'fit under the blanket' due to their mixed ethnicities, might experience what Hamel (2016) called "ethnic limbo", and hence a place of social limbo among their peers. (The top-down approach of Rwanda's reconciliation narratives is commented on in the next chapter on Methodology.)

Further, as part of young people's identity-making process, Tugce Ataci (2022: 1328) found that many youths "shared narratives about family backgrounds without mentioning their ethnicities, which created a binary of 'survivor' and 'non-survivor'". In her study, youth who had genocide perpetrators in their family and identified as 'non-survivors' "took up the position given to them by the official discourses and practices that collectivise the 'Hutu guilt' by staying silent" (2022: 1330). These identity-making processes and binaries, as well as a sense of 'Hutu guilt' experienced by youth conceived in rape through their relation to their biological father, will be explored further throughout the upcoming chapters.

Pells et al. (2014) explored youth dynamics in Rwanda's post-genocide vision in their aptly titled article "Promising developments?", which signals the double meaning of the word 'promising'. The RFP's (Rwanda Patriotic Front) post-genocide policies recognised the value of investing in children and youth, "conferring promises of development, social mobility, and dignity" while simultaneously 'promising' as they opened up new possibilities for youth and instilling "a sense of hope and aspiration for the future" (Pells et al., 2014: 304). They found that "the rapid developmental transformation achieved for young people under the RPF is largely unparalleled in any post-conflict country in the Global South" and that young people appeared to have internalised the government's vision: "Many even seemed burdened with a personal sense of urgency to improve themselves and their families [to] overcome the legacies of the genocide" (2014: 307). Yet, they also note that "being a 'good Rwandan' by the RPF's standards is almost impossible to achieve for many" (2014: 307). This led to a sense of desperation emerging within many young people as the government's visionary approach contradicted their daily realities, where opportunities were attainable to some but not others, who were not able to move out of poverty

"despite their best efforts" (Pells et al., 2014: 307). Pells et al.'s findings further explain the statement quoted in Denov and Kahn (2019), where young people said, "Society should consider us [children born of genocidal rape] as a symbol of reconciliation" (165). This would give them a solid position within the post-genocide societal binary of 'survivor' and 'non-survivor' as explored by Ataci (2022).

One of the shared experiences of young people conceived in rape is that they are now growing up and starting to consider moving out of their mother's houses, studying at university, and getting married (Paquette, 2017). Pells et al. (2014: 302) describe how "young men historically signalled readiness for marriage through the action of building a home on land from their father. It demonstrated to both families that they were serious about marriage and economically capable of providing for a wife and children". Yet, their study "produced strong evidence to suggest that formal marriage is increasingly unattainable for many" (2014: 302). In Rwanda, rights to land are passed down through the father's family, which, as Emmanuel's story demonstrates, makes it particularly difficult for young people conceived in rape to acquire land. Marc Sommers (2012) concludes that many young people are "stuck" in their transition to adulthood. He argues that Rwanda's severe housing crisis means that most male youth are on their way to fail at obtaining land and, therefore, at risk of failing to secure a stable livelihood. However, Pells et al. (2014: 303) state that "contrary to what recent scholarship has suggested, young people's illegal modalities of starting a family do not leave them 'stuck' in the social status of youth". They explain that couples are generally recognised as adults, particularly when they have children. The concept of 'having children' as a transformative experience is explored in Chapter 7.

In an earlier study, Kirrily Pells (2011: 598) explored youth's and children's agency in their everyday lives in the aftermath of the genocide and found that participants "presented the legacies of the genocide, such as lack of parental support or difficulties in accessing education due to caring for siblings, as more problematic than the 'traumatic memory' of the genocide". She gives the example of a girl who heads a household of eight siblings and other relatives, as she stated, "We've got used to the genocide, it's daily life that is the problem" (2011: 598), emphasising present, everyday concerns, such as access to education and economic livelihoods. Pells (2011: 599) found that "youth presented education as 'the only way out' of the difficult circumstances in which they were living" and "was associated with being able to get a job and so provide for themselves and their families" (599). In relation to this, young people expressed their agency through their future aspirations in wanting "to become someone important", "to be in a position of authority, where they would have a voice and be able to bring about change" (Pells, 2011: 602). The concept of becoming "someone important" or a "person of value" (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*), as well as young people's aspirations to provide for themselves and their families, is also discussed in Chapter 7.

This section has shown that ethnographic accounts of youth, particularly urban youth in Rwanda, form a gap in literature. While Rwandan youth do feature prominently in Rwanda's peacebuilding,

unity, and reconciliation agenda as they are viewed as the nation's future, this agenda also complicates the positions of young people conceived in rape, who are ethnically mixed and neither seen as 'perpetrators' or 'survivors'. Studies suggest that young people express their agency by wishing to "become someone important", obtaining land and starting their own families. Importantly, studies on young people conceived in rape entering adulthood and becoming parents themselves have not yet been conducted – this research does offer some perspectives on this, particularly in Chapter 7.

Intergenerational Trauma and the Transmission of Memories

Intergenerational trauma profoundly shapes the way children grow up. Intergenerational trauma was first observed in 1966 by clinicians who were alarmed by and concerned about the number of children of Holocaust survivors seeking treatment in clinics in Canada. Clinicians in the US and Israel later explored the realities of the "second generation". While it was a phenomenon that was recognised following the Holocaust, it is one that has likely existed across time and contexts. Research on Holocaust survivors and their children has shown that the effects of trauma can be transmitted in terms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic anxiety and depression, and disturbed family relations (Van Ee et al., 2012). Results also "show that higher levels of maternal post-traumatic stress symptoms are associated with higher levels of insensitive, unstructuring, or hostile, but not intrusive, parent-child interactions" (Van Ee et al., 2012: 459).

Berckmoes et al. (2017a) found direct and indirect pathways of intergenerational transmission of violence in Rwanda. The direct pathways concern the "ways in which the genocide, its aftermath (gacaca courts, imprisonment) and related events (displacement, exile) are reflected upon, reconstructed, and explicitly communicated or silenced to children" (2017a: 2). The indirect pathways of intergenerational transmission of violence are the ways in which the genocide and its aftermath affect the second generation's social environment. These indirect pathways include a) family structures (e.g., missing family members due to death or imprisonment), b) family functioning and parenting (e.g., the suffering of parents makes them less sensitive to the needs of their children), c) family socio-economic situation and status (e.g., poverty), and d) community relationships (e.g., processes of stigmatisation and shame). Berckmoes et al. (2017a) found that transmitted legacies of the genocide and its aftermath manifest themselves through the conditions in which the children grow up. Research has also shown that in environments of chronic and cyclical violence, family dynamics and caregiving can impact children's functioning and their role in reproducing violence (Berckmoes et al., 2017b). Family conflict, harsh parenting, physical and psychological abuse, and neglect may worsen the negative effects of exposure to community violence and contribute to the processes that reproduce violence. Intergenerational trauma thus plays a critical role in notions of structural violence and the reproduction of violence in the everyday.

Studies on the intergenerational memory of the Holocaust have shown that trauma is passed on by parents to their descendant's generation as they become "burdened by memories that are not their own" (Auerhahn and Laub, 1998: 22). Eva Hoffman (2005: 66) described this process as the inheriting of "shadows" of the parents' past as "something that is both very alien and deeply familiar, something that only the unconscious knows". Marianne Hirsch (2008, 2012) refers to the traumatic memory of second generations as "postmemory". She explains (2008: 106-107):

> Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.

Hirsch explains that the effects of past events continue into the present through memory in its affective force: "Postmemory is not identical to memory […] these 'not memories' communicated in 'flashes of imagery' and 'broken refrains', transmitted through 'the language of the body', are precisely the stuff of postmemory" (2008: 109). The images and stories the second generation grows up with are "so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch, 2001: 9). Kagoyire et al. (2023: 8) found that children "may develop trauma through imagining what unknown genocide experiences might have been like" and conclude that "this imagination sometimes leads descendants to feel as if they lived through the events themselves, thus developing trauma symptoms very similar to those common among adult survivors". Kagoyire and Richters' (2018: 35) study on the intergenerational transmission of trauma amongst youth conceived in rape in Rwanda describes these languages of the body as youth were exposed to their mothers' "howls and screams" of their mothers' nightmares. These mostly occurred during the annual genocide commemoration period, when mothers suffer from "severe traumatic crises" as they "isolated themselves, looked anxious, and struggled to hide their emotional pain from their children" (2018: 35). These moments of "broken refrains" are thus one of the pathways of transmission of traumatic memory.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela has produced exceptional works on the "intergenerational ripples" and "lived memory" of trauma in the next generation after mass violence, particularly in the context of post-Apartheid South Africa (Gobodo-Madikizela and Orange 2016). She has argued that although the study of recent histories of mass violence and genocide on the African continent can broaden the scope of theories of trauma after mass atrocities, such work has remained underdeveloped (2021). She explains that the several generations of Apartheid rule in South Africa continue to be felt by the generations after its demise, with each generation experiencing "these multigenerational impacts of the oppression, exclusion from economic and educational privileges, and

marginalisation directly" (2021: 23). She contends that Hirsch's description of the experiences of the Holocaust's second generation as "imaginative […] projection and creation" does not capture the realities of South Africa's post-Apartheid generation, arguing instead that (2021: 23):

> For South Africa's post-Apartheid generation, the effects associated with the misery and suffering of previous generations belong to the current generation themselves; they are personally confronted directly with the consequences of a life of oppression and depravity that their forebears were faced with under Apartheid. The intertwining of narratives and memories of pain and suffering across generations, the layers of transgenerational entanglements in the lives of the younger generation as they face their troubled present while at the same time living their parents' "present past", is the parents' past re-wound. To characterise their experiences as "postmemory" would be to deny a reality faced by the younger generation in countries with centuries of violent histories of colonial oppression.

Additionally, Gobodo-Madikizela has called for a rethinking of transgenerational trauma in terms of a "tri-telescoping view of the temporalities of traumatic memory" in which memory crosses and re-crosses past, present, and future temporalities, rather than memory solely experienced as a "return" of the past (2023: 83). This understanding offers a recognition of the lived reality that exists beyond Hoffman's notion of inheriting "shadows" of the parents' past by acknowledging the sustained continuities of violent histories. She concludes that this conceptualisation of transgenerational collective trauma offers reparative opportunities as it names what is repeated from the past in the present, "creating space for new relational experiences for the sake of the repair of futures" (2023: 83).

Pells et al. (2022: 649) echo the focus on temporalities in their study of intergenerational and childhood trauma in Rwanda, arguing that "a shift from focussing on 'transmission' to multiple 'connectivities' would enable a deeper appreciation of the multidirectional linkages between generations; between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural forms of trauma; between temporalities, and between multiple modes of expression". This shift facilitates a "questioning of which social and institutional structures enable or constrain the possibilities for intergenerational encounters and the sharing, rather than the transmission, of knowledge and experiences" (Pells et al., 2022: 649). The notions of sharing knowledge and its transmission are explored in Chapter 6.

Kagoyire et al. (2023) found that genocide-related trauma in Rwanda is often triggered by both everyday life in homes as well as the annual genocide commemoration events. Respondents in their study "described a change of mood in the familial milieu during the genocide commemoration period" (2023: 6). The authors state (2023: 6):

> Observed changes were associated with a deep sorrow amongst parents and family members remembering the loss of their loved ones killed during the genocide. Isolation of parents, silence within the family, and harsh behaviours towards children are the main characteristics cited. Despite physical parental presence at home, regular life routines are often disturbed, as parents tend to emotionally return to their past in ways that are more or less visible to their descendants.

This change of mood in the home and the degrees of visibility to children are further explored in Chapter 5.

Another finding of Kagoyire et al. (2023) is particularly relevant for discussions around how young people conceived in rape are perceived. In their study, parents and mental health professionals reported that one of the transmission mechanisms of trauma could be the transmission of maternal trauma through blood during pregnancy or through breast milk. The authors explain (2023: 11):

> This finding has resonance with the cultural notion of valuing blood and milk as the foundation of life. In Rwandan cultural cosmology, a parent gives life to her child through blood before birth and through breastfeeding, a parent may transmit bad or good behaviours and attitudes to their children. This milk-giving is not limited to literal breastfeeding but extends to the parenting style as a determinant of who the child will be in the future. From our understanding, the perceptions of respondents also reflect how vital milk and blood are in the Rwandan life and context.

The idea that trauma, as well as "bad or good behaviours", can be carried across generations through human substances forms an important basis for understanding how youth conceived in rape are perceived as carrying substances of their father – their fathers' blood – and hence their "bad attitudes" could be transmitted to them.

Williamson Sinalo et al. (2021) explored the cultural practices of Rwandan parents related to exposing their children to their accounts of the genocide in both the private and public realms. They found that parents considered it difficult to speak to their children about their experiences during the genocide but tended to share stories at home before exposing their children to the widespread public information so that they could learn about the genocide in "the trusted relational context of home where the parent can control the narrative" (2021: 652). The authors note that their findings contradict the notion that Rwandans are "silent" people who have "cordoned off" the genocide (Burnet, 2012: 78, quoted in Williamson Sinalo et al., 2021: 652). Yet, other studies that asked youth about conversations with their parents showed the hesitancy of parents in discussing the genocide with their children. As Ataci (2022: 1325) observed, "They were often told 'you're too young' to discuss those issues" or "their conversations were often about the history of the genocide in general, not about their family members' personal stories". Ataci (2022: 1325)

states that "the lack of conversation in households complicated and added difficulty to these young people's active participation in discussions about the genocide, reconciliation, and development in Rwanda". Ingabire et al. (2022: 349) explored how youth negotiate "a myriad of social and interpersonal dilemmas around silence and disclosure of genocide-related experiences of their parents". The authors conclude (2022: 358):

> Children experience the little or fragmented communication by parents about the genocide-related familial past as often confusing and bypassing their need to know more about this past. Reasons they construed for parental non-disclosure from the side of parents include trauma, feelings of guilt and shame, concern for their children's current and future well-being, and prevention of feelings of revenge among their children. The complex of factors that drove children in their wanting to know includes exposure to parents' suffering; missing family members; poverty at home; information about the genocide they gather from memorialization initiatives, gacaca, school, media, neighbours, extended family members; and being able to share the family past with their own children once they have them. […] At the same time, they also report a deep ambivalence, that is: reasons for not wanting to know the truth. These reasons include concern for the well-being of their parents; fear of being too much emotionally affected; and wanting to go on with their lives without being burdened by knowledge of a past that could stir feelings of revenge in them.

Ideas around young people's desire to 'know the truth' and their mothers' hesitancy to tell or 'disclose' their experiences during the genocide and their child's conception are specifically discussed in Chapter 6, but conversations touching upon this topic appear throughout all the chapters. The intergenerational impacts of genocide memories are central to the lived experiences of young people in relation to how they are viewed and, thus, substantially shape their everyday realities.

To conclude this section, I have shown that intergenerational trauma plays a role in structural violence and the reproduction of violence in the everyday. Concepts such as Hirsch's postmemory provides context to intergenerational transmission of memories through 'the language of the body' but does not take into consideration their own present suffering whilst also living with their parents' 'present past' – a double wounding. Gobodo-Madikizela (2023) and Pells et al. (2022) call for a shift in focus from a one-directional concept of transmission to an understanding of the temporalities of traumatic memory across the past, present, and future, rather than a sole return of the past. Moreover, besides languages of the body, studies have shown that trauma is transmitted through bodily substances as well as cultural practices of speech, silence, concealing and revealing of traumatic knowledge and information. All these dimensions of (multi-dimensional) transmission of trauma shape young peoples' childhoods as they grow up with their own trauma, 'postmemory', their mother's traumatic memories, and collective memories.

Kinship after Violence

Kinship can be thought of as a cultural structure that consists of a "system of units and parts which are defined in certain ways, and which are differentiated according to certain criteria. These units define the world or universe, the way things in it relate to each other and what these things should be and do" (Schneider, 1980). Kinship is not only a system of beliefs and practices; it is also a site of material exchanges where food, shelter, love, and support, as well as neglect, abuse, and hate, are intertwined. Anthropologists believe kinship relationships to be potentially biological or fictive – or both. Understanding that families can extend beyond biological boundaries accounts for the multiple community members that take part in, for instance, raising a child or how family friends, teachers, and caretakers factor into one's relationship networks. In many contexts around the world, who takes care of whom and the kind of care that is given and reciprocated is assigned by gender and age-related roles (Manderson and Block, 2016). However, when such contexts are disrupted by conflict, people who used to take on certain roles may no longer be present, thereby forcing others to take on unusual and/or multiple roles. The roles that once determined relationships of care often become fluid and malleable in post-conflict settings. Therefore, when studying kinship, one must account for the different circumstances of caregiving, inheritance, lineage, belonging, and rights and consider the complexity of kinship relations, the meanings of relatedness, and the responsibilities, duties, and obligations that flow from them (Manderson and Block, 2016).

Sociologist Nicole Fox explored the impacts of sexual violence on kinship networks in Rwanda (2011). In her interview-based study with 14 men and women in the US diaspora whose siblings and cousins experienced sexual violence during the 1994 genocide, she found that "many of the strains on kinship relations resulted from the traumatic images and memories of gender-based violence during the genocide" (Fox, 2011: 297). Fox noted how a brother and sister reunited after the genocide soon after the sister's sexual assault. The brother recalled, "I was the one who found her and she had no clothes on; we never talked about that. We don't look at each other's eyes much now" (Fox, 2011: 297). Not being able to talk about these events caused strain on relationships in the family. Fox concludes that (2011: 299):

> Rape, particularly genocidal rape, has devastating consequences for kinship relations and networks of care, resulting in isolation and fractured familial relations. These consequences may further lead to economic hardship, additional trauma, and disruption of historical familial duties and exchanges of care.

Fox's argument that traumatic images of violence, and particularly not being able to speak about them, strain kinship relations is particularly interesting considering the earlier discussed literature around languages of the body as the pathways of transmission of memories (e.g. siblings not

looking each other in the eyes). Hirsch's notion of 'postmemory' referring to images and stories that the second generation grows up with comes into play here, because the effects of these images shared between siblings – possibly young people's aunts and uncles – shape their interactions with kin.

Building on Fox's findings around the strained relationships between siblings and cousins, rape also affects the "social harmony" in society, resulting in continued harm to women and children as the space they occupy challenges the 'moral order', leading to exclusion, difficulties with belonging, and continued violence.

Holly Porter (2017), in her extraordinary ethnography of rape in Northern Uganda, explored Acholi beliefs around male and female sexuality in relation to marriage, parenting, and kinship ideologies, showing that the consequences of rape are social and cosmological. She argues that the ultimate goal in the aftermath of such violence is to restore "social harmony" damaged by the abductions of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Her notion of social harmony here refers to "a state of normal relations among the living and the dead, linked to an idea of cosmological equilibrium and a social balance of power and moral order" (2017: 3). She writes how children conceived in captivity of the LRA, upon their return, "occupy an ambiguous social space, belonging to and having full rights in neither their mother's nor their father's clan" (2017: 197). Porter further explains that "under ideal customary circumstances, children are a kind of social glue for the mother's and father's families and clans, as well as the source of an accepted social place and identity for women" (2017: 197). This social acceptance is reversed for women who gave birth while with the LRA. Porter highlights an example of the kind of harm women experienced after 'forced marriage' in the LRA (2017: 196):

> [A woman who] was a 'wife' in the LRA for eight years and came back with two children. One of them died some years after she had returned and remarried. "I had nowhere to bury him," she said. Her new husband's family refused to allow him to be buried on their land. He was eventually buried in her paternal village, but only after difficult negotiations with her clan relatives. It was painful for her, since she had started a new life and wished to have the grave of her child on the land of the clan she married into. In the midst of grief over her lost son, she experienced rejection as well, in essence being sent the message from her community that she and her child did not belong – that they were somehow outside of the moral community.

Another example she provides demonstrates the continued violence women and their children experience after their return (Porter, 2017: 197):

> One woman was 12 years old when she was abducted by the LRA and stayed there for five years. She came back pregnant with one child. Her family did not accept the child. She married soon after she returned, but her new husband also rejected her child and would insult them both regularly, continuing to call them rebels. He was sexually

> violent toward her, but as in other situations of marital rape, this alone did not drive her to separation. Eventually, the extensive cruelty he showed to her child became too much to bear and she left him and found another man.

The above examples show how children conceived in rape by the LRA pose a challenge to familial equilibrium and society's 'moral order', which can cause profound suffering to women and their children. Although Porter studied Acholi society, her concept of social harmony resonates with this study's findings around women's and young people's experiences with rejection in their families and Rwandan communities, as discussed in Chapters 5 through 7.

Zooming out and building on Porter's findings around women and children falling outside of the "moral community", Veena Das and Nayanika Mookherjee have explored the notion of 'illigitimate' children within the nation-state. Veena Das (2007) has reflected on children born as a result of the widespread rapes and abductions that took place during the Partition of India in 1947. The state labelled any children born after March 1st, 1947, an abducted person if their mother was also an abducted person, reasoning that they were children born through "wrong" sexual unions (2007: 30). Das questions what determines the legitimacy of a child and the contradictions between state-defined legality and community-based legality when customary norms around sexual unions are standardised into law in which illegitimacy is defined. Das asks, "How are we to understand this moment as foundational in terms of the relation between the social contract and the sexual contract in defining the nation-state?" (2007: 32). Das' work forms a basis to explore different types of social contracts in Rwanda that factor into children's sense of belonging. As Rwanda has not recognised those conceived in rape as survivors, excluding them from state-assisted support, their legitimacy in the nation-state is limited. Yet at the same time, youth play an important role in post-genocide state-building.

Nayanika Mookherjee's powerful work (2007) on women raped during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 also comments on the presence of the nation-state in these cases, particularly the "parental role of the state" in dealing with "war babies" conceived during the war (2007: 342). Her research showed the state's effort to protect women from "the emotions of motherhood". In enforcing a post-war "state of exception" around abortion and adoption laws, the state aimed to limit "illegitimate motherhood" (that is, mothering illegitimate children of rape) as central to nation-building, as women then became available "for legal marriage alliances and motherhoods" (Mookherjee, 2007: 349–50). In Rwanda, the state has not implemented laws responding to raped women's "illegitimate children", although scholars have analysed the state in establishing itself as a parental figure of sorts. Benda and Pells (2020), for example, have shown that the institution of *umuryango* (family) has changed in relation to changing modes of governance during the colonial and pre- and post-genocide periods, developing into a "state-as-parent" phenomenon. For instance, the authors argue that the state provides assistance with schooling costs and young people are told that "the country becomes your family" (49). Thus, "in positioning itself as a parent for the future, the state seized the post-genocide moment to invoke its credential as saviour of the nation in

stopping genocide as a guarantee for the restoration of an ethnicity-free *umuryango nyarwanda* (Rwanda family)" (50). The Rwandan government relies on various NGOs and civil society organisations such as SURF and SEVOTA to provide assistance to survivors and their families too, hence in the conversation around the "state-as-parent" phenomenon, non-state actors play a part too. Mookherjee (2015) has commented on the role of social workers as state mechanisms in their care for raped women in Bangladesh. The role of social workers in Rwanda is also significant, as they play a central part in the county's recovery through their care for survivors.

Returning to Northern Uganda, Atim et al. (2023) further explore kinship and children's sense of belonging. The authors contend that the war challenged and strengthened already existing patriarchal gender norms that reinforced the exclusion of children born in the LRA's captivity, specifically ideas around "the perceived transgression and circumstance of their birth in the bush, the taboo around sexual violence, perceived 'rebel blood, contamination/pollution,' and the potential criminalisation of their LRA fathers" (Atim et al., 2023: 131). Yet, the authors emphasise that despite the debilitating impact of the war on children's lives and their families, "through trusted and supportive relations, peer support, schooling, work, concealing and protecting war identity, and a belief in the supernatural being, some children were able to maintain a sense of purpose, balance, and belonging outside traditional cultural kin ties" (2023: 131). The authors state that programmes and policies should take into consideration the different ways in which children and youth situate themselves outside dominant frameworks and exercise their agency, as their "shared memories of wartime suffering and also their shared struggles to deal with stigma with their peers helped them to maintain a close relationship and network" (2023: 131).

In Rwanda, young people have also found "trusted and supportive relations" and peer networks through survivor organisations such as SEVOTA, SURF, Solace Ministries, and AVEGA (*Association de Veuves du Génocide d'Avril*—the Association of Widows of the Genocide). In the aftermath of the genocide, these organisations have created and operated as 'families'. Jean Gakwandi, the founder of Solace Ministries, states (2015: 40):

> In Rwanda, the life of an individual is always seen as being part of a family and not individualistic. No events, such as weddings, births, funerals, are conceivable without the entire family being involved and taking part. Solace takes that place as the new family and represents the missing ones at each event in the lives of each individual whether in happy or sorrowful times.

Women survivors' organisations have organised regular visits to each other's homes to express solidarity and combat loneliness. Innocent Rutsibuka (2022) conducted a case study of AVEGA, where the president of the AVEGA sector committee president expressed that "these friendly social networks were a very enjoyable opportunity to share a lot of their past/current life experiences. These continuous home visits had a true healing effect" (2022: 71). Members of Solace Ministries also engage in visits, as Gakwandi explains, "The family concept is evidenced

by the fact that visits have become regular. These are invaluable times of personal contact. To be together, to share in fellowship together, to sing and pray together creates a bond of touchable love" (2015: 85). He emphasises the importance of these visits: "A visit is not only about sharing stories. It can also mean working together to build houses for the homeless or work on the farms. […] Furthermore, sleeping in the modest houses of the survivors and eating the same food together is a powerful indication of a genuine love within the family of God" (2015: 87).

Literature from Uganda and Rwanda thus suggests that children conceived in rape can find a sense of social belonging through the personal contact offered by organisations and support networks as a "family concept", through which their 'legitimacy' is established despite limited recognition from the state.

Caroline Williamson Sinalo (2018) has shown that women often took on new roles after the genocide. As countless women had lost their husbands, in order to survive, they created and took on new roles in society that were not accessible to them prior to the genocide, including forms of leadership in civil society through women's associations. Reflecting on family in the foreword to *After the Genocide in Rwanda: Testimonies of Violence, Change and Reconciliation*, Esther Mujawayo-Keiner, co-founder of AVEGA, states (Grayson et al., 2019: xii-xiii):

> At the time, we didn't know much about trauma and healing. But it was our reality. So, we decided to make a family because we needed to make a family. You cannot live alone; you have to belong somewhere. Here in Rwanda, we don't have family names, so my relatives are not called Mujawayo like me. Everyone has their own name and presents themselves as the sister of so-and-so, the daughter of so-and-so, etc. until you arrive at the oldest member of the clan. But after the genocide, there was no one left. This meant we had to make our own new family. Our family is called AVEGA, and, as a family, we are really stubborn. […] AVEGA in French means Association des Veuves du Génocide d'Avril [Association of the Widows of the April Genocide]. In Kinyarwanda, we call it *Agahozo*. *Agahozo* is a very beautiful, gentle song that is sung to console someone who is crying, to dry their tears. We decided that this was our consolation. This was our family. This would dry our tears. […] Making families again was really important for us. I am so happy that not only the widows did that but also the young people, the children, the orphans. They also started making families. You can find families where the father is only a few years older than the youngest child, because they didn't have anyone else.

Thus, traditional kinship structures in Rwanda were transformed in the aftermath of the genocide as social families "were made" by women's organisations.[12] The role that these organisations play in the social worlds of young people conceived in rape is discussed in Chapter 7.

In her ethnography on the resilience of genocide rape survivors who were members of women's organisations, Maggie Zraly (2008) found that social connections women create in these groups help them "bear" living. She found three processes that enabled ongoing social connections between women in order to make meaning, establish normalcy, and endure suffering in daily life: withstanding (*kwihangana*), living again (*kwongera kubaho*), and continuing life (*gukomeza ubuzima*) (Zraly, 2008: 308). Zraly explains that this resilience is characterised by an experience of joining others like oneself to be together and connect, to feel free and express problems, and to receive guidance from each other, all while normalising experiences of extreme hardship. Zraly refers to Das et al. (2001: 27) to illustrate that membership in an association represents "creativity in everyday life" as a matter of survival (Zraly, 2008: 399). Zraly concludes that survivors remake their worlds when they narrate stories about their shared experiences. This is in line with the earlier mentioned study by Nyirandamutsa et al. (2023) who found that psychosocial support through peer groups had a positive impact on young people's sense of belonging and self-acceptance, and with previously mentioned Atim et al. (2023) who pointed out that shared memories of suffering helped maintain close relationships and networks. The questions remain – does the 'generation after' also remake their worlds through these associations and narration of stories? How does the 'generation after' withstand, live again, and continue living?

In the context of women raped during the Bangladesh liberation war, Nayanika Mookherjee (2015) explores how women live their everyday life within their families and communities, folding away their traumatic memories and encoding them not only in their bodies but also in social and everyday relations, which can erupt at times and disappear at others. Her work shows that "sexual violence means neither one moment of violation nor a lifetime as a pariah" (2015: 251), as she asks, "What would it mean for the politics of identifying wartime rape if we were to highlight how the raped woman folds the experience of sexual violence into her daily socialities rather than identifying her as a horrific wound?" (2015: 251). Similarly, Veena Das (2007: 1), in her expansive work on violence in the everyday, describes how past acts of violence find their way into the everyday as "the event attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recess of the ordinary". Ultimately, this dissertation shows how the genocide has attached its tentacles to everyday life as it is folded away within kinship relations. Building on Mookherjee's

[12] As indicated in the above quote, young people, such as those in the student association *Association des Étudiants & Élèves Rescapés du Genocide* (AERG), have also "created families", as Christian explained. He belongs to a family unit as part of AERG, consisting of a father, mother, and siblings. These roles are socially determined and not based on age. These families attend weddings, graduation ceremonies, and other special occasions and encourage each other in their studies. As many survivors lost their families during the genocide, the AERG families function as replacements. Families continue after members graduate and become AERG alumni.

question, it aimed to portray the daily socialities of young people conceived in rape rather than identifying them as a horrific wound.

To conclude this literature review, I have shown that, first, language around children conceived in rape needs revision. Second, a knowledge gap around children conceived in conflict-related sexual violence still exists and bodies of literature could benefit from ethnographic studies providing in-depth insights into psychosocial issues that children and young people face in their daily lived realities. Third, there is a knowledge gap on Rwandan youth's experiences beyond their role in the national post-genocide unity and reconciliation agenda. As young people conceived in genocidal rape in Rwanda are now adults and are starting (or already have) their own families, these realities need to be explored further. Fourth, the literature review has shown that young people hold complex positions within Rwanda's post-genocide society as they do not ethnically fit in or fit into the perpetrator/survivor binary. Studies indicate that young people are seen as 'the other' and struggle with finding a sense of belonging and self-acceptance. Yet, the context around young people's position as kin within their families, communities, the state, organisations and peer networks, suggests that by creating 'families' through shared experiences, young people are able to find a sense of belonging despite being perceived as 'illegitimate' or perceived as posing a challenge to the familial and societal equilibrium. Fifth, the literature review has shown that traumatic memory moves among kin and across generations in non-linear and affective ways, through bodily language, bodily substances and through speech and silence. It is in this context that young people make sense of their place in the world, and (re)make meaning of their past and present in their everyday lives.

3. METHODOLOGY

Methods Overview

This study was conducted over 30 months of fieldwork in Rwanda from January 2019 to June 2021, preceded by three pre-fieldwork visits (five months in total), which were conducted in August 2017, April and May 2018, and July and August 2018. During these preliminary visits, I met with organisations to seek their opinions regarding the feasibility and relevance of this research. They not only confirmed its feasibility but stressed its importance. In 2017, SEVOTA invited me to attend a day at a youth camp organised for young people conceived in genocide rape.[13] Here, the young people themselves confirmed that they valued this research as well. I presented my ideas to them, explaining that this research would be focused not only on their individual experiences but also on their family and social worlds. When I said this, some of them nodded in agreement.[14] During my preliminary fieldwork, I visited genocide memorial sites and began developing relationships to deepen my understanding of the country and context. Based on these observations and insights, I designed my methodological approach. In August 2018, I applied for a research permit with the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST), which I obtained in February 2019. The permit was issued for one year and extended in June 2020 for another year.[15] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fieldwork was conducted remotely from April to September 2020.

The methodology I adopted reflects a careful consideration of the sensitivity of this research topic. A holistic, ethnographic approach was used through participant observation and in-depth interviews. The research was planned for 24 months to allow sufficient time to build relationships of trust with research participants and solidify my Kinyarwanda language proficiency. Interviews were conducted from December 2019 onwards, after almost a year of intensive fieldwork, so that the questions could be based on an apt understanding of the context. Though research had to be suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, by that time, I had built friendships that I sustained and continued through WhatsApp. I continued my research into how social and family

[13] Youth camps have been organised by SURF and SEVOTA to bring young people born of genocidal rape together so they can share their experiences and participate in workshops related to healing, resilience, and the building of self-acceptance. The young people participating in these camps have been disclosed to by their mothers, who themselves were part of counselling groups with these organisations.

[14] In my understanding, some young people had previously been involved in research conducted by psychologists, but the anthropological nature of my research was new.

[15] As discussed by Jesse (2012), obtaining a research permit in Rwanda can be a lengthy and tiresome process. I had applied for a 2-year research permit, but only one year could be granted. It took 10 months to obtain the initial permit, and another 6 months to extend it. While I respect Rwanda's due diligence in protecting research participants, the process can also be understood as an attempt to limit researchers conducting research on politically sensitive topics. While my research was not necessarily aimed at Rwandan governance, it has to be noted Rwanda has been criticized for not supporting young people conceived in genocidal rape – my research population.

relationships work – particularly during a time when some people could not physically be together, and others were forced to be together. This added a valuable dimension to the work.

Through keeping in touch with research participants remotely, I came to understand how the COVID-19 quarantine situation in Rwanda had eerie parallels to the start of the genocide. The quarantine protocols began at the end of March, while the genocide started at the beginning of April, overlapping with the onset of the rainy season. The rains substantially change the landscape in Rwanda, along with the smells, sounds, and how people move around. This sensory experience evoked feelings of insecurity; it was quiet on the streets, with a pervasive sense of uncertainty – all present during the start of genocide and the COVID-19 quarantine. It was a particularly difficult time for people who struggled with these yearly changes because of the memories they contain, which was emphasised during COVID-19 quarantine.

During COVID-19, commemoration events were held as usual, but through online and televised events. Support groups continued as counsellors were trained to conduct sessions on the phone, and people adapted. The effects of this time came up in conversations when I returned, and I asked counsellors to conduct phone counselling sessions when needed for this research, too. In collaboration with the University of Cape Town and the funders of the research, I had a COVID-19 protocol in place when I returned to minimise risks of infection for the research participants and myself.

Research Site

Originally, I planned to conduct this research in Kamonyi district, South Province. Half an hour drive outside of Kigali, Kamonyi is where the women-led organisation SEVOTA was founded and has its headquarters. I believed it would be easier to immerse myself in local life in a rural setting, as well as speak Kinyarwanda consistently and, through this, build closer relationships with people. However, I soon understood that the topic of my study was not a localised issue; that is, I was investigating a phenomenon rather than a specific geographical community. The families included in this research also did not necessarily live together since young people often attended universities in different places or worked away from their hometowns. Therefore, I decided to live in Kigali and visit my research participants where they lived. On occasion, the study provided an opportunity for family members to visit each other with me. ‘Visiting’ appeared to be an important cultural concept that aligned seamlessly with this approach, and through this, I was able to study this concept as an important tool for creating, building, and nourishing social connections. I explore this further in Chapter 7.

Living in Kigali was also crucial for my own well-being. Conducting this research ethically meant working not only to protect my research participants but also myself. At times, the research was

emotionally demanding, and it was important to come home to a safe space where I could recharge and reflect. Donald E. Miller (2020: 13) described being "deeply shaken" after visiting the Murambi memorial site, writing that "it is one thing to read about genocide, it is another to meet it face-to-face". It is a feeling that resonates with me. Overall, living in Kigali turned out well, as all the organisations that I worked with had offices in Kigali and it allowed me to build closer connections with colleagues by visiting them at their homes in the city. Additionally, a group of young people in this research studied in Kigali or visited Kigali as their hometown.

Participants

In Rwanda, the young people conceived in genocidal rape are integrated into broader post-genocide recovery and support programmes, mostly as members of organisations that initially brought widows, survivors of sexual violence, orphans, and other vulnerable children together. These young people are the same age, in the same phases of their lives, and could form connections about their situations which could be more difficult in other contexts, such as when conflicts are ongoing, and children are conceived through rape continuously over prolonged periods of time, such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo.[16] This reasoning is also reinforced by research conducted in Northern Uganda, where children born in LRA captivity are reintegrated into communities (Apio, 2007, 2016; Denov and Lakor, 2017). These children also have a common background and are supported through wider reintegration activities, making research more feasible. In contexts where these structures are not available, the risk of further stigmatising these children by singling them out is substantial. Additionally, programmes might not be as widely available due to the same risks as those involved in conducting research – to unintentionally 'group' children as 'conceived in rape' may lead to conflict in their communities.[17] While ethically necessary, I note that working within support systems excludes a group of people who fall outside of these structures. Inherently, those who participated in this research (who have support and are willing to speak) might not reflect the general population, which is a bias that must be taken into consideration. Young people who have experienced 'disclosure' may already have different relationships and experiences than those who have not.

I was open to speaking with as many people as were willing to open up about their experiences with me. I attended youth camps where I observed how young people were brought together to

[16] This does not mean that there is not a strong response from organisations such as the Mukwege Foundation and World Vision, who have programmes supporting survivors of sexual violence and their children conceived in rape. Yet, in this setting, asking questions in communities where many children conceived in rape are too young to be part of programmes related to disclosure of their conception would present too many ethical challenges.

[17] Communication with War Child explained, "While working in Kosovo, we did try psychosocial interventions with children born out of war/rape, but realised that it actually stigmatised the children more, for being identified as born out of war/rape. Therefore, we have ceased to do so specifically". (20 Feb 2019)

connect and share their experiences. Here, I presented the research project to them and read out the consent form in a plenary session so that everyone understood the purpose of the research and the voluntary nature of their participation. Thirty-two young people agreed to be interviewed. I then interviewed seven of their mothers, whom I met at a counselling group session where I introduced the research and asked for their participation. In addition to these interviews, I conducted thirteen interviews with genocide survivors and perpetrators whom I met through a 'testimony project' conducted remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, as I explain below. Rather than trying to work with a larger sample, I made efforts to build close relationships with those who participated in my research, staying in touch, and visiting some of them multiple times to gain a deeper understanding of their lived realities.

Testimonies

From March to October 2020, while in the Netherlands due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was worried about not being able to complete my fieldwork. Although I had been in Rwanda for over a year, I had only started interviews in December 2019 and planned to continue these in 2020. At the start of 2020, the extension of my research permit was delayed, so when I left Rwanda in March 2020, I had not yet been able to continue interviews, and my experiences with the initial interviews taught me that conducting these remotely would be nearly impossible. I did not consider it ethical to ask sensitive questions that could potentially elicit emotional reactions with people who were alone, as I (or social workers) would be unable to provide sufficient comfort. I continued my daily Kinyarwanda lessons with my teacher, Denyse. I expressed my concerns to her, and she told me that she provides translation services for community reconciliation meetings organised by an NGO, Global Initiative for Environment and Reconciliation (GER). This NGO had plans to collect written testimonies about reconciliation and life twenty-five years after the 1994 genocide with the intention of publishing them in a book. She connected me with GER, and we collaborated on the collection of the testimonies – I provided the funds and they organised the logistics. I considered it a welcome opportunity to analyse data remotely (through scanned testimonies, both the Kinyarwanda versions and those translated into English by my interpreter, Christian) and observe what people would write about without being prompted by interview questions, free to write what they wanted others to know and what they deemed important. We collected thirty written testimonies of genocide survivors, perpetrators, and young people. Two of the latter were conceived in rape. While these testimonies varied in detail and coherence, in the end, they gave me an opportunity to learn about the experiences of individuals who were not necessarily in my initial sample population.

Most testimonies described people's lives before, during, and after the 1994 genocide. It was striking to me that in describing the 'after genocide' parts, the national narratives around reconciliation were repeated, which I wanted to understand better. For instance, one woman wrote,

"Some of us decided to continue working together so that we may build unity and reconciliation among us". I was curious to understand how this was done. A male perpetrator wrote:

> The pain of the crime which I committed does not end. I want unity and reconciliation more than anyone else because I have destroyed the unity of innocent Rwandans. I need it so that it may reconcile me with the people whose families I killed; so that it may also reconcile me with the Rwandan society and the world.

I wondered what this reconciliation looked like for him, what he understood it to mean. A young man conceived in rape wrote, "The first thing that GER taught me is to accept myself, building myself and helping others to build themselves. It helped me to build myself and helped me to move from the bad things I was in and reconcile with myself". In each of these quotes, what left me continuously curious was what this reconciliation looked like, how one builds oneself and helps others "build themselves". I explore this further in Chapter 7. As I was left with many questions after reading these testimonies, I asked thirteen of the writers if they would be willing to be interviewed upon my return to Rwanda to speak about what they had written and their experiences with writing the testimonies. These interviews were conducted in November and December 2020.

Working with Partner Organisations

This research could not have been conducted without the generous support of The Survivor's Fund, SEVOTA, and GER. They welcomed and supported this research by offering advice for my proposed plans, connecting me with research participants, and providing psychological support services. I am most indebted to them and their hospitality to researchers.

In my publications (Loning, 2023a, 2023b), I chose not to name the organisations I worked with, partially to limit the risks of participants being identified through their association with the organisations and partially because it was unnecessary to do so for the sake of the arguments in these texts. As in this dissertation, I changed all names, places, jobs, and other identifiers since the protection of participants comes first. However, I do feel compelled to give the organisations I worked with the credit they deserve here, as they have been such an instrumental part of making this research possible. In naming these organisations, I do not believe participants' privacy and confidentiality are compromised. As key organisations in Rwanda, they are well-known, have hosted researchers before, and are named in publications. Further ethical considerations are extensively discussed in the following chapter.

The Survivor's Fund (SURF) provided technical advice on the research and connected me with young people to be interviewed. One of SURF's social workers was available for psychological assistance to research participants, particularly during interviews with mothers. SURF was

founded in 1995 by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt, a British citizen of Rwandan origin who lost over 50 family members in the 1994 genocide. SURF's mission is to rebuild the lives of genocide survivors, partnering with seven Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in providing economic and psycho-social support programmes. They organise youth camps for young people conceived in rape and group counselling sessions for raped women, both of which I attended.

SEVOTA is a well-known women-led association in Rwanda, founded by Godelième Mukarasasi after the 1994 genocide. She has since won multiple international awards and became an *Umurinzi w'Igihango* (Guardian of Peace) in Rwanda, a rare status awarded by the government to people who have played key roles in protecting people during and after the 1994 genocide. Five women of SEVOTA testified at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1997. These women's testimonies in the trial of Jean-Paul Akayesu, the mayor of Taba (now Kimonyi), led to his conviction as the first to establish rape as a crime against humanity and a form of genocide. Initially, the organisation focused on widows and orphans but has since expanded to include vulnerable women, men, and young people, including those conceived in rape. SEVOTA has created community groups that come together to support each other in various ways around different topics, such as gender equality, reproductive health and rights, and microfinance. Throughout the country, these groups meet regularly and are part of the wider SEVOTA network – or SEVOTA family. Godelième is the *mama mukuru* (elder mother) of SEVOTA and is referred to by this moniker by the youth. She is also referred to as *coordinateur* by members, a French term of respect as the director of SEVOTA.

SEVOTA invited me to visit their members, community activities, and events such as International Women's Day. I developed close personal relationships with SEVOTA's staff and became part of the SEVOTA 'family', as they call it. The women who work at SEVOTA are *abakobwa* (daughters) and refer to each other as *abavandimwe* (siblings). I became a sibling, too. The young people I formed friendships with at SEVOTA who were conceived in rape called me their friend and, more recently, making use of local kinship idioms, sister.

In anthropology, working with NGOs and CSOs demands a discussion on the role they play as producers of social worlds and how working with them influences the position of the researcher in the field, as well as their research findings. NGOs and civil society actors can be interpreted as mediators between global discourses and local contexts and are accountable to different stakeholders, such as donors, the state, their beneficiaries, and their staff. Therefore, while NGOs are often viewed as benevolent, trustworthy, and benign actors, they do always have their own interests (Hielscher et al., 2017). The NGOs and CSO I worked with operate in a similar political landscape and have commitments to people in communities as well as funders – and the state. Academic work on NGOs and civil society actors has challenged the assumed dichotomy between civil society and the state as connected and continuous (Igoe and Kelsall, 2006). In Rwanda, women's associations have been supported by The Ministry of Gender and Promotion of Women's

Development (Migeprofe), particularly by establishing a ministry representative in each prefecture and commune to work alongside the CSOs (Newbury and Baldwin, 2000). These organisations, such as SEVOTA, also receive funds from UN agencies and international donors. Though SURF is an NGO, it provides funds and technical support to CSOs. Therefore, the lines between NGOs, CSOs, and the state are blurred, and importantly, beneficiaries of organisations are often members of multiple organisations as well. In their "anthropology of NGOs", Lewis et al. (2017) characterise NGOs as an "unstable" category, defined by what they are not – governmental. The "NGO" category assumes a universal identity with boundaries implied by the term 'non-governmental', but, as I have shown in the previous chapter through the discussion on the 'state as parent', the boundaries between non-governmental, civil society, or governmental are often not clear – hence 'unstable'. Importantly, this research was not an "anthropology of NGOs"; I did not study NGOs, but rather studied *in* them since the organisations were *in* my research participants' lives, and their processes made up substantial parts of their social worlds through youth camps, counselling groups, social networks, and friendships created through them. I was aware that these organisations did have their own agendas, which I believe did not affect the personal relations I created with people they brought me in contact with – no more than me being an *umuzungu* (foreigner) usually affected interactions. However, the blurred lines between the non- and governmental forces within organisational realms did influence the spaces in which I met participants and the discourses these spaces created that, in turn, were conveyed to me by participants. These were ideas and language that strongly mirrored national narratives about forgiveness, unity, and reconciliation. It struck me that the state is particularly careful around expressions of anger and so too were my participants. It struck me that the state is particularly careful around expressions of anger and so too were my participants. I seldom witnessed research participants express anger in my interviews. There was, however, an interview with a young man, Robert, whose body language contrasted with the words he spoke when asked about his father. I wrote a fieldnote in my notebook to say that his body stiffened, and I detected anger in his eyes, but his words were calm and collected, saying he did not care about knowing his father. There was no space for anger, if he may have felt it, as the feelings recognised in society are grief, sadness, and other passive feelings.[18]

NGOs influence the nature of narrativisation and testimonial culture by providing platforms where people make sense of their suffering. These spaces function as extensions of Rwanda's top-down approach to reconciliation, influencing what can and cannot be expressed. Christopher Colvin, in his work on traumatic storytelling in post-Apartheid South Africa, states that "stories about the agonies endured are often mobilised – both by those who suffered and by later generations – to create narratives of historical injustice, moral superiority, and shared historical identity and purpose, as well as to justify present-day social and political projects" (2018: 30). He continues to explain that "law and other forms of social regulation have often complemented historiography in

[18] This can be attributed to the political system in Rwanda, in which anger and resentment can be seen as dangerous and destabilising to society.

this task of meaning-making by providing a way to name the causes and effects of suffering and to enact corrective measures" (2018: 30). In Rwanda, NGOs take up important roles in this social regulation where meaning-making takes place, where the ways to name suffering (as well as healing, unity, and forgiveness) are passed on, and stories are mobilised to create shared identities as "Rwandans". In these spaces, national narratives shape what is and can be expressed, but also provide tools such as language for these expressions. As a researcher, this meant that I was conscious about the language I used, what I could ask and should not ask; a certain amount of self-censorship was necessary. Understanding this dynamic, I also observed how language was used and in what ways participants may have self-censored when speaking to me. Nayanika Mookherjee's work on 'irreconciliation' (2022) proposes the position of non-forgiveness on the part of survivors as not against the aspirations of peace and reconciliation, but as an understanding of the past where there is space for survivors' emotions of injustice. In NGO-regulated spaces, I observed if, and how, emotions of injustice and non-forgiveness were expressed, conscious of the fact that these may be concealed and in conflict with reconciliation narratives. Ultimately, due to their role in how young people make sense of their worlds, and tell their worlds, it was vital to be reflexive of the NGOs/CSOs that connected us and how they were significantly entwined with the research participants' lives. I further expand upon these considerations later in this chapter.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was conducted through visits to members of SEVOTA and travelling with their staff to community group meetings. In Kigali, I attended national memorial and commemoration events as well as liberation and Independence Day celebrations. These experiences shaped my ideas around remembrance and healing from the national to the individual level, allowing me to position people's experiences within a wider lens of transformation in the country 25 years after the 1994 genocide. I had daily conversations with my Kinyarwanda teacher, who understood my research topic and informed me of relevant current events, as well as the related vocabulary. I read a variety of newspapers (The New Times, Igihe, Light Magazine, and Taarifa) and followed discussions on Twitter, which is an important mode of communication in Rwanda widely used by government institutions and the president alike. SEVOTA invited me to participate in community visits and events such as women's group meetings, celebrations of International Women's Day, home visits to SEVOTA members and community meetings in different parts of the country. Here, I observed how organisations build solidarity among its members, but also use public forums to spread awareness about various topics such as women's rights, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence. I usually travelled by car or public transport such as moto taxis or buses to the events, together with SEVOTA staff members. This gave us time to debrief the various experiences in the community.

I used my time in Kigali to establish friendships with Rwandans and learn how relationships are built, friendships are formed, and social interactions work in the given context. Studying social relations allowed me to examine my own expectations and cultural background regarding what friendship means to me. In a social context where trust and closeness are expressed vastly different to my own, I was forced to become aware of my own assumptions and beliefs embedded in and shaped by my own upbringing and formative experiences. Therefore, besides providing valuable reflections and insights into the research topic, building friendships in Rwanda was, for me, an anthropological undertaking in its purest form.

Positionality

Participant observation proved more challenging, as I found it difficult to view experiences "with new eyes". As I was moving to Rwanda for two years, I did not see this fieldwork as a distinct period separate from my personal life. Over the past 15 years, I have moved to different countries every few years, and this seemed like just another such move. The feeling of trying to blend into a new culture or being viewed as an outsider has come to feel very natural to me. I had to remind myself that in this space where the outsider tries to understand new situations, insights become apparent. Without these reminders, I may have found certain circumstances ordinary when they were not. Having lived in nine different countries since I was seventeen years old has fostered an intrinsic ability in me to adapt to different social environments. Six out of those nine countries have been in Southern and Eastern Africa. I have become used (in so far as it is possible) to being a white European woman living on the African continent, along with what this represents and encompasses.[19] Yet, in saying this, I had not lived in a post-genocide context before. I may have underestimated this distinct difference, although I wonder how much one can prepare to be confronted with the aftermath of genocide. In participant observation, we try to bridge the gap between the researcher and participants. At times, this meant actively engaging with and acknowledging the fact that I was "the other" despite having grown accustomed to feeling comfortable in that place of otherness and how it determines my interactions with others. I worked hard to not let this feeling of comfort cloud my observations. Yet, at other times, I was confronted with the reality that being a white European woman living on the African continent cannot be homogenised, and feelings of discomfort in Rwanda were of a different nature than I had experienced before; being a foreigner meant that I was a reminder of the people who historically left Rwandan's during the 1994 genocide, which continues to be a painful collective memory. I had also previously worked for the United Nations (who failed to prevent or end the genocide), which added an additional layer to this historic connection – one that was brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic when, just before the airport closed and all foreigners (including myself) had to leave within 24 hours, feelings of 'received' historic guilt resurfaced, as detailed above.

[19] These considerations will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with young people conceived in rape, along with their family members and support systems. While participant observation provided me with a solid foundation for understanding how these young people's lives took shape 25 to 27 years after they were born, these interviews allowed me to explore their experiences of growing up in a more intimate manner, yielding a comprehensive overview of their difficulties, transformations, and growth, as well as their own reflections on their childhood and adolescence.

Interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda, which is one of the four official languages of Rwanda and is spoken by nearly the entire population. Though my level of Kinyarwanda is advanced, it is not fluent. I began taking classes in 2017 and had daily classes with my teacher throughout the entirety of my fieldwork period", which we continued over Skype during the COVID-19 fieldwork suspension. Kinyarwanda is a difficult language to master due to the use of symbolic and descriptive language, which is the reason my translator, Christian Ngombwa, assisted during interviews and visits. Especially since interviews could be emotional and follow-up questions and probes were not prepared beforehand, Christian made sure that spontaneous questions were formulated and 'packaged' in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. I did, however, translate the initial interview questions and consent forms myself. I was also able to pick up on nuances in the language used. Importantly, during interviews, I was able to comfort participants and build rapport with them in their own language, often to their surprise. Carine Ingabire, a female translator, assisted during my interviews with mothers. A counsellor whom the women have known intimately for many years spoke to them after each interview to ensure their well-being. Counsellors were also available to speak to young people after their interviews with us, either in person or over the phone.

The interviews with young people had twenty prepared questions. The first and last questions were always, "How are you feeling?" In most cases, responses to the third question — "Can you tell us about your family?" — would instigate specific follow-up questions, such as whether they were married or had children or if they knew their biological father or his family. The first section of questions inquired about their family and social worlds, while the second section was about their childhood. The third section of questions revolved around their experiences with finding out about their conception. These questions would be adjusted when young people knew about their conception without having had a specific conversation with their mother, such as when they grew up with their biological father's family or in tight-knit communities where this information was distilled when the child comes to 'know' the world. The final section included questions directed towards positive experiences, such as "What are you most proud of?" and "What are your wishes for your future?" The final question before concluding by asking how they were feeling was, "There are many children and young people conceived like you in the world. Do you have any advice for those children in other places?" This question often elicited passionate responses, with

young people emphasising they hoped this research would help others like them. Participants were invited to stop if they felt uncomfortable and could withdraw from the interview at any time.

Interviews with mothers had a similar structure, focusing on their present lives, families, social worlds, and relationships with their children while avoiding discussions about their lived experiences during the genocide, a point I emphasised when I presented the research to them and asked for their participation. Some women did speak about their experiences during the genocide, having come prepared with what they wanted to share – their testimony – and I allowed them to speak without interruptions or following the structured questions. In these cases, it seemed to me that the women wanted to take this opportunity to share what they wanted to share, and I listened accordingly.

Language and Translation

SURF recommended Christian to assist me with translation. He is the same age as the young people with whom I planned to work. His mother was pregnant with him during the 1994 genocide, and he was born shortly thereafter. Being personally and professionally involved in multiple survivor organisations as a lawyer, student, and translator, he was familiar with talking to survivors about their experiences and could connect with them easily, although the topic of this research was new to him. It is very likely that Christian's gender influenced certain answers we received, as did my own gender and racial background. We tried to remain conscious of this throughout the work.

Though language use and translation are central aspects of any anthropological inquiry, the role that they play in ethnographic processes is still too often addressed as a methodological side note. In this study, it became apparent that translating the cultural meaning embedded in linguistic expressions was a methodological as well as an epistemological and political issue and should be treated as such. When working with translators, the translator's personal background, position in society, gender, beliefs, relation to trauma, political views, and level of comfort with asking questions about a given topic inevitably shape the translation of words, ideas, and meanings. In understanding cultural processes through speech and translation, the translations themselves become interpretations that generate meaning. Therefore, to justify understandings of the meanings (created by both the interviewee and Christian) embedded in symbolic expressions in Kinyarwanda, I continuously asked for clarifications and noted the original wordings, which I would later discuss with my Denyse, my Kinyarwanda teacher. I also noted the way certain words and phrases were translated. My language skills allowed me to understand deeper linguistic meanings in the context in which they were used. An example is the use of the verb *kumvikana* (to agree, to understand each other), an adaptation of the verb *kumva* (to listen, hear, understand, feel), which I often used to say that 'I learn Kinyarwanda so we can understand each other better'. However, when used in interviews, *kumvikana* expressed a much more profound understanding

between people that is not easily described in English, possibly as "to feel each other" or "to get each other". In my article about the aftermath of gendered violence (Loning, 2023b), I describe *kumvikana* in my analysis of how young people are 'attuned' to memories of the genocide living in their mother. Another verb often used was *kubana* (to live together, cohabitate) from *kuba* (to be) and *na* (added after a verb to express the verb is performed with someone). During my interviews, the deeper meaning of *kubana* (to be together) was expressed to describe how you go through life with someone, how your relationship is with a person in its essence, the essence of being, an intense conviviality. I would usually verify my own understanding of answers by rephrasing and describing them in English and asking Christian for confirmation. Sometimes, before he had a chance to do so, the interviewee would nod in agreement since most young people I interviewed understood or spoke some English, depending on their educational background.

Another inherent issue with language and translation that arose in this research is that one cannot assume certain emotions related to severe trauma are translatable in another language, or if so, that English terminologies and grammar would be sufficient (Pillen, 2016). Therefore, I did not want to rely solely on language in interviews, so I took extensive notes on how questions were answered, which questions were difficult to explain and answer, where silences fell, and how these silences were expressed. An example of this was a question we asked about a good memory from the interviewees' childhood: *"Ushobora kumbwira ikintu cyiza wibuka cyabaye ukiri muto?*" (Can you tell me a good thing you remember about your childhood?). On multiple occasions, interviewees paused and repeated to themselves, "*Cyiza?*" (good?), paused again, and then said, "*Ntacyo*" (nothing). Interpreting these silences and repetitions made me wonder if the question made sufficient sense to them or aligned with their way of thinking about the world. Yet, the following interview question asked about a bad memory in their childhood with the same sentence structure. This question was answered relatively easily in terms of it making sense and finding answers, even if the answers themselves were not easy at all. Therefore, it seemed to me that the pauses and repetition of *cyiza* showed a genuine effort to think of an answer and that it was not straightforward to find a good memory while we discussed bad childhood memories quite extensively. Maybe they were also surprised by the question, or maybe they were more prepared to speak about bad memories, given that we had connected through the NGOs established to support them. I also used cues in language, silences, and gestures to stop lines of questioning when interviewees seemed to grow emotional. For example, sometimes they would cross their arms in front of them as if trying to hide from answers not yet given. We would immediately tell them they did not have to answer, and we could move on because their non-verbal answers spoke loudly.

The rich descriptiveness of Kinyarwanda is often lost in English translations. For instance, the word for genocide survivor is *umucikacumu,* which is comprised of *umu (*person), *gucika* (to escape), and *icumu* (spear) – literally, "a person who escaped the spear". The word *gucika* means to escape, but it also means to be broken, torn, or cut, as in the verb *gucika integer,* which literally means to be cut (*gucika*) by the back of the knees (*intege*) but is translated as to lose hope, be

discouraged, or give up. Translating this in English as "to give up" negates the imagery inherent within it of someone being unable to go on because they dropped to their knees, thereby losing the incredibly embodied sense that the original term offers.[20] By losing this imagery, it also loses some of its power when people express it; it is used more reservedly than people in English would say they are giving up. The word for emotions is *amarangamutima,* from *kuranga* (to show) and *umutima* (heart)— literally, to show your heart. In Rwanda, showing emotions is treated as a very personal expression that one does not often do, and this difficulty is embedded in the imagery of exposing one's heart, an organ that can be felt and heard in the body that fundamentally keeps you alive; thus, exposing it is risky. In English, the term emotion connotes a more abstract state of being, something that can be felt but does not have a physical presence in the body (although emotions can lead to very physical reactions, such as elevated heart rate, breathing and tears), again pointing to the loss of a sense of embodiment through translation.

Nayanika Mookherjee (2015) has emphasised that language used in narrating the traumatic memory of sexual violence is not linear or coherent, but fragmented. She has shown that the semantics of rape are held and encoded in women's bodies. Everyday experiences can trigger bodily memories and speech may arise. This embodied experience of suffering, of holding words that express pain, is at risk of getting lost when these fragmented pieces are placed into written narratives, in order to analyse them. In drafting the written component of this study and interpreting people's experiences that were conveyed through speech, I have tried as much as possible to maintain the essence of words and how they were used, taking into consideration the semantic complexities of Kinyarwanda and its culturally bound terms, as well as the embodied nature of traumatic memory. I will, at times, use the original wording in Kinyarwanda with its closest appropriate translation.

The role of NGOs in how language is produced and reproduced is another crucial aspect worth noting. In my interviews, ideas around healing and reconciliation were described by words that are embedded in national narratives used by people to describe their personal experiences and feelings. In order to place their feelings and experiences that might be difficult to describe or express, young people and their mothers are assisted in talking about their experiences through counselling. In this process, certain concepts, such as forgiveness, are taught to them. When interviewees said, "I forgave them", it was not always clear to me what it meant to them. I would ask follow-up questions, but interestingly, the vocabulary was often very clear to Christian, which led to some confusion between us, where I wanted to ask more, but he said they had already answered it clearly.

In Rwanda, these concepts are not only used by NGOs; they are also reflected in the national agenda of unity and reconciliation. This national narrative and the concepts contained within it were often repeated in interviews and not questioned by Christian since he had internalised the

[20] This also addresses the suggestion that more attention needs to be paid to the body in relation to healing, such as dance and ritual being incorporated in healing practices.

same understanding of this vocabulary as most Rwandans had. This way, what these concepts of forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation mean on a personal level gets lost through their homogenisation and normalisation in state-directed discourse. As mentioned above, the personal background of the translator determines much of the way terms are translated. I was aware that Christian is a genocide survivor and has gone through his own personal process of healing and experiences with reconciliation. His own understanding of this may have caused him to believe that these terms had similar meanings to our interviewees. Especially since he has been involved in supporting and being supported by other survivors for most of his life, these discourses may have been difficult for him to question.[21] When I then questioned what these meant on a personal level or to further explain answers, it became difficult for him to phrase these questions or convey them differently to interviewees due to this accepted meaning that was already there.

[21] Christian has attended *Ingando* solidarity camps organised by the Rwandan government to bring citizens belonging to various social groups together for reconciliation activities. Additionally, Christian has been an active member of AERG, the student genocide survivors' association, and he has worked as a lawyer for NGOs such as SURF assisting orphaned people with their claims to land.

4. ETHICS

The Ethics of Writing about Sexual Violence and Genocide in Rwanda

In conducting research of this nature, there is a real danger of reinforcing representations of 'Africa as a Dark Continent', a place characterised by tragedy, brutality, and senseless violence. Remarking on this historical tendency in Western scholarship, Caroline Williamson Sinalo refers to a "narrative of ethnocentrism which sees Africa as a troubled, indescribable, unknowable place in which sexual violence is inevitable and can only be prevented by Western civilization" (2023: 30). Achille Mbembe (2001: 1) argues that the discourse about Africa has become largely trapped in Western imaginations in which Africa is rarely "seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of 'human nature'" and when so, these are considered "of lesser value, little importance, and poor quality". He explains that when Africa is analysed in terms of "lack" and void rather than presence, the discourse about Africa becomes distorted because the continent is evoked primarily for the purpose of commenting on the West than for its own reasons and own purposes. As James Ferguson (2016: 2) frames it, "'Africa' has served as a metaphor of absence, as a 'dark continent' against which the lightness and whiteness of 'Western civilization' can be pictured". In this context, "discourses on Africa are almost always deployed in the framework […] of a meta-text about the animal – to be exact, about *the beast*" (Mbembe, 2001: 1). Much of this language portraying Africans as unhuman bestial creatures stems from colonial texts (Hodgen, 1964; Kuper, 2005) Dominant discourses within the literature on the 1994 genocide solidify these images of savagery and the absence of 'human nature'. In multiple accounts, genocide is linked to dehumanisation and describes the loss of humanity through people being referred to as becoming animals (Nowrojee, 1996; Prunier, 1995; Straus, 2006).[22] Additionally, media portrayals of sexual violence in Africa contribute to the reproduction of images of the African male as a barbaric, brutal, and vengeful killer and rapist who mutilates his victims as an 'animal' or 'wild beast' (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010; Kirby 2012). Sexual violence and the person who commits it "appears foreign, other, unethical, and ultimately unhuman" (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 30).

Since this study explores the intrinsic humanity within the constitution of social worlds, I aim to counter the 'Africa as a Dark Continent' narrative by focusing on reconstruction and survival. The research was conducted at the time of the #MeToo movement, which began in 2017 as I embarked on this project.[23] The #MeToo movement brought "attention to the importance of understanding

[22] Survivor accounts detailed by Nowrojee (1996) state, "We were like hunted like 'wild animals'" and "They killed many people. They even raped the corpses. They were like wild animals" (28, 29). Tutsi were referred to as *inyenzi* (cockroaches), with the term becoming "ingrained in the public sphere as almost every single Kangura [magazine] edition, hate radio RTLM, and outspoken politicians claiming to defend Hutu power referred to human beings as cockroaches" (Ndahiro, 2014).

[23] Although #MeToo as a social media phenomenon appeared at the end of 2017, "me too" as a social movement has a much longer history. Tarana Burke, founder of the youth organization Just Be Inc., is widely credited as the originator of the "me too" movement beginning in 2006 (Ohlheiser, 2017; Trott, 2020).

gendered violence and attending to the ways in which we write about, talk about, and imagine it" (Cuklanz, 2019: 308). Women living with experiences of sexual violence found support and acknowledgement in "networked feminist counterpublics" (Trott, 2020: 1131) as safe spaces that legitimised experiences which were excluded from the mainstream public sphere. In these counterpublic spaces, through women's "disclosure" or "testimony" of their experiences, they made sense of what Sameena Mulla (2014: 4) refers to as "their own suffering, recovery, and access to justice—in short, what it means to be a 'victim'". Against this backdrop, this study on sexual violence grapples with ideas around the ways sexual violence and its aftermath are made sense of, written, and imagined – particularly in the context of the Western imagination of Africa.

Writing about Sexual Violence

In accounts of sexual violence in conflict, women are still too often represented as defenceless victims. To counter this tendency, I aim to offer an interpretation of the experiences of women and their children that does not fall into the prevailing sterile tropes of victimhood. Rather, I seek to explore the complex and contested ways in which people give meaning to living in the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence. Thus, exploring the aftermath of genocidal rape as a phenomenon carries the responsibility of formulating these events in a manner that gives it the weight it demands while not allowing the weight of these discussions to overshadow the deep personal meanings and experiences that come with them. For those whose 'stories' are considered in this dissertation, rape, or being conceived in it, impacted their lives; however, it is not necessarily their 'life story' in that it is the main signifier or 'starting point' of their suffering.

Sameena Mulla's *The Violence of Care* (2014) poignantly explores this through her ethnography of sexual assault interventions in Baltimore, United States. Mulla explains that criminal justice processes demand a singular framework for sexual assault narratives, a temporal trajectory with a 'starting point', a "reframing of their suffering and its emplotment along particular trajectories that lead to specific destinations – legal, medical and therapeutic" (2014: 75). Within this structured framing of victimhood for legal, criminal, and forensic purposes, Mulla explains that women were given very few options to voice and make sense of their suffering in their own frame of understanding, "erasing the ways in which sexual assault has reverberated in their lives in radically different ways" (2014: 70). As Mulla argues (2014: 74):

> Drawing on moments strung together not through their temporal sequencing but through their affective connections, sexual assault had, indeed, initiated tremors in the lifeworlds of the women who suffered from it. Like a spreading ink stain, the centre or originating point of the events of sexual assault grew less distinct and locatable as it took on unexpected shapes and proportions, settling into an opaque and asymmetric blot.

She goes on to state:

> As it stands, the narrative arc of disruption in which the moment of assault is taken as a radical redirection of an otherwise unremarkable life does not encompass the complex ways in which victims understand the violence that has occurred in their lives (2014: 75).

In line with Mulla's work, the fact that this dissertation singles out events of sexual violence and experiences does not mean that women and their children would necessarily do so themselves. Needless to say, if you would meet any of the participants of this study, it would not be rape, or being conceived in rape, that defines your experience with them – their lives evolve around so much more than that. Yet, in scholarly literature, "children born from rape" or "children born from war" are repeatedly written about in an essentialist manner as symbols of war atrocities. As I have already noted, this centres violence rather than the human being or the child by disregarding who they are as individuals. It is my hope that this dissertation demonstrates the complex and multifaceted ways young people conceived in genocidal rape in Rwanda are active creators of their lives, owning the ability to make choices to determine their realities and futures and surpassing influences acting upon them through the way in which they were conceived.

Writing about genocidal rape places emphasis on children conceived in sexual violence during times of conflict and war. It must be noted that countless children are conceived in domestic, gender-based, and sexual violence around the world in different contexts and situations and whose lived experiences deserve as much attention as the ones conceived in rape within conflict settings.[24] Moreover, in its focus on children conceived in rape, this writing places an emphasis on rape as forced penetrative intercourse rather than the broader forms of gendered harm and sexual violence women experienced during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The sexual violence women endured during the 1994 genocide was extensive, including rape, gang rape, rape with objects like sharpened sticks or gun barrels, sexual slavery, forced 'marriage', sexual and bodily mutilation, and humiliation (Nowrojee, 1996). This sexual violence often happened in front of family members and their children and, in doing so, not only caused bodily harm but the destruction of their social worlds. Although my research focused on children that were conceived in rape, I do not intend to disregard the experiences of women who survived all forms of sexual violence, and I acknowledge the experiences of those who were not made pregnant in the process or who chose to end their pregnancies as equally valid in terms of its consequences and aftermath.[25]

[24] Methodologically and ethically speaking, a study on the lived experiences of these children might be more complex due to the difficulties and risks involved in identifying them and having adequate support systems in place.
[25] Fieldnotes, 4 December 2019: The Director of SURF explains that there is a weekly counselling group for survivors of sexual violence who do not have children born from it. At first, these women were in groups together with women who do have children born from sexual violence, but some tension arose when women without children felt that their situation or problems were not seen "as bad".

Rape during war and armed conflict is commonly referred to as a "weapon of war", a term that gained significance in global advocacy to validate the status of sexual violence as a war crime and a crime against humanity under international law. The term provides a way "to articulate the systematic, pervasive, and orchestrated nature of wartime sexual violence that marks it as integral rather than incidental to war" (Buss, 2009: 145). Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern (2013: 2) express a fear that:

> The dominant framework for understanding and addressing wartime rape has become so seemingly coherent, universalising, and established that seeing, hearing, and thinking otherwise about wartime rape and its subjects (e.g., perpetrators, victims) is difficult. In other words, this dominant framework reproduces a limited register through which we can hear, feel, and attend to the voices and suffering of both those who rape and those who are raped.

Mulla (2014: 71) referred to the forensic framing of sexual assault as "homogeneous and scripted", aimed at gathering evidence for court cases. A similar tendency can be detected when one speaks of rape as a "weapon of war"; one must be careful that it does not become scripted for the purpose of obscuring the victims' subjective experiences.

The implicit universality of rape as a "weapon of war" and what it signifies and symbolises leaves little room for the extremely personal and social experiences of those rapes and their aftermath. Describing sexual violence as strategic and mechanised eludes the meanings embedded in a deeply objectifying violation occurring between two (or more) human beings and their bodies. Harm is caused not only by and on bodies but also by the cultural ideas of personhood that these bodies represent. The objectification of women's bodies has intergenerational implications for how her child is perceived – as born out of this 'weapon' of war and, hence, objectified. My approach to both conducting the research and writing about it reflects these considerations, as I aimed to understand, and convey, women's subjective experiences with violence as it occurs in their lives and how, like Mulla's example of an ink spill (2014: 74), past violence colours their children's lives, without placing the ink in rounded-off borders, or frameworks of interpretation and objectification.

Writing about Genocide in Rwanda

Rwanda as a country is familiar to most Western audiences because of the 1994 genocide. Books such as Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* (1998) and movies such as *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) sparked a "global conversation about genocide and the human capacity for evil" (Berry, 2018: 18). Over the past three decades, Rwanda has developed a reputation for its exceptional recovery and economic growth as well as its forward-

thinking in terms of technology and innovation.[26] Rwanda is strategically positioning itself as a hub for investment and entrepreneurship whilst also challenging the status quo in the international aid landscape. An example of this is Rwanda's sponsorship of the Arsenal football club in the UK, marketing "visit Rwanda" messaging as a strategic campaign to increase tourism revenue and promote its international image as a tourist destination.[27] More controversially, Britain's plans to process refugees in Rwanda have received substantial international attention.

At times, it has felt uncomfortable writing about Rwanda in relation to the genocide. When I met people from different backgrounds around the world, they would often say things like, "Rwanda, I know about that country because of the movie *Hotel Rwanda*", or "You live in Rwanda? Please be careful", associating the country with violence. I have welcomed these conversations as they provide an opportunity to engage with these views and share my experiences that are vastly different from these negative associations. These conversations have also sparked my determination to write a dissertation that does justice to the role the genocide plays in contemporary Rwanda while simultaneously pointing out the myriad ways in which Rwandans have moved on, but not moved away, from the past.

In this dissertation, I employ the terminology of "Genocide Against the Tutsi" instead of "Rwandan Genocide". While this was a requirement in obtaining my research permit from the government of Rwanda, some of my Rwandan friends have also expressed they find it to be an important distinction to make.[28] They underlined the significance of recognising that the genocide was aimed at the Tutsi population and not at the country as a whole by an outside force, giving as an example that we speak of the Yazidi genocide in Iraq and not the Iraqi genocide. However, in adopting this narrative, I want to emphasise here that during the genocide, Tutsi were not the only population killed or raped, and numerous Hutu women are also survivors of sexual violence that occurred during this period. In this study, I did not use the terms Hutu and Tutsi, nor did I ask people about their identification since this is against the law in Rwanda. Sometimes, people's ethnicity was clear due to their positions or experiences, and at other times it was not. This did not pose a significant limitation in this study.

[26] Examples of this are the use of drones in the delivery of medical supplies to rural areas in the country, as well as the use of robots in the response efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.
[27] See: https://www.arsenal.com/visit-rwanda
[28] In the endorsement letter of CNLG in support of the extension of my research permit in 2020, the following was written: "CNLG's request of using the proper narrative of 'Genocide against the Tutsi' and using the appropriate figures of more than one million of Tutsi killed in 1994". Notably, in the proposal that was reviewed, I did not use the term "Rwandan Genocide", but this request was directed at occurrences of "genocide" or "post-genocide Rwanda", which shows the emphasis on having to follow the exact national narrative.

Reflections on Anthropology and Postcolonial Africa

In his article "Blinded by Sight", Francis Nyamnjoh (2012a: 75) reflects on the field of anthropology still being a "handmaiden of colonialism". Nyamnjoh thoroughly articulates the tension within what he calls the "anthropology tribe" (2012a: 68). I belong to the anthropology tribe of white researchers choosing Africa as the site to conduct this study. Being a white European woman in Rwanda requires an awareness of the postcolonial space and its power imbalances. Due to my personal background on the continent, having lived in African countries for most of my adult life, I am aware that my privileged position requires careful consideration. While having experience in Sub-Saharan Africa, Rwanda was the first post-conflict country where I lived and conducted research. Rwanda's relationship with the West cannot be understood without recognising its colonial history, which played a role in creating the conditions for the genocide due to the colonial instantiation of the Tutsi and Hutu ethnicities as cultural-political markers.[29] During the 1994 genocide, the international community "not only failed to prevent [the genocide] happening in Rwanda but, by pumping in funds intended to help the Rwandan economy, actually helped to create the conditions that made it possible" (Melvern, 2000: 4). Moreover, the failure of Western nations and the United Nations to intervene is still felt by many Rwandans today.[30] At the end of my interviews, when I asked if the interviewee had any questions for me, he asked why I believed the West and the UN left Rwanda instead of helping put an end to the genocide. It was thus important to reflect on how my interlocutors viewed the West and the UN's actions during the genocide as betrayal. The 'betrayal' of the West and UN peacekeepers being recalled from Rwanda amid the genocide has left marks that, as I have noted, resurfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic when many international organisations repatriated their international staff, to which Rwandan partners reacted "shocked and really upset […] and felt it was a repeat of 1994" (Fieldnotes 21 March 2020: communication with a UN staff member). I also had to leave the country in March 2020, which made me feel uneasy because I did not want my research participants and the organisations I worked with to think I abandoned them in a difficult time. However, I was able to express my considerations for leaving in appropriate terms – the importance of being with family – which were met with understanding.

[29] Colonial rule in Rwanda led to the distinct classification of the Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities, which was a fluid status in society one could move through in pre-colonial times. Hence, the creation of identity cards stating one's ethnicity that were directly used in the genocide caused an ethnic divide that contributed to conditions making the genocide possible.

[30] Rwanda's relationship with France is especially turbulent as France provided arms and military training to Rwandan youth who became known as *Interahamwe*, the primary group operationalising the genocide. Additionally, *Operation Turquoise* operated by French soldiers towards the end of the genocide is viewed by many Rwandans as an act of France assisting génocidaires to flee to the DRC under the cover of bringing Tutsi to safety. To this day, France's ambivalent role in the genocide is discussed in French administrative courts. Recent events, such as Felicien Kabuga's arrest in France, sparked new forms of distrust of France in Rwanda and showed the countries' fragile political relations, along with other countries accused of protecting génocidaires and government opposition, such as South Africa.

My return to Rwanda in October 2020 was met with reactions of surprise as many foreigners had not yet returned. I believe it meant a lot to people, particularly due to the parallels to the time of the genocide and people possibly not expecting me to come back. When I did, it transformed many of the relationships I had built – people invited me into their homes and to meet their family members, which showed me a level of trust that I had not reached prior to the pandemic.

As a white person walking on the street in Rwanda, it is a common experience to be called *umuzungu* (foreigner).[31] While this word generally denotes a white person, it was also said to my Asian friends. I prefer to understand the term as 'foreigner' rather than associate it with race since Rwandans who live in Kigali and visit their families in the countryside can also be called *umuzungu (abazungu* plural) by their family members, referring to them being rich or living a 'foreign' life. The term *umuzungu* contains the implication of having money. In the research context, I have been called *umuzungu* at times, such as during events or group gatherings. Though I was able to navigate the space of being *umuzungu* and 'having money', people would sometimes ask me for support with laptops for studying, phones, or investments in small businesses. I made sure not to get financially involved with any research participants, but I did bring back chocolates for the children of friends and colleagues at SEVOTA whenever I travelled. In not giving gifts or financial assistance to any participants in interviews, I wanted to ensure that no one felt pressured to speak to me in order to get something in return. As detailed earlier, I chose to be careful about placing people in positions where they had to compromise their well-being over the chance to increase my research sample. Whenever I visited people in their homes, I did bring a gift because it is a cultural practice and expectation, and the people I would visit with (mostly members of SEVOTA) always gave a gift, too.[32] The gifts that I gave were *kitenge* (cloth to wear) for women and milk for children.[33]

Returning to the "anthropology tribe" (Nyamnjoh, 2012a: 68), being a white European does not only require reflexivity in terms of methodology and considerations of interpersonal relations and expectations; it also requires a recognition of African epistemologies. I am careful to acknowledge the limitations of Western beliefs and try to position this study beyond existing sets of ideas and thought patterns, remembering that "social truth being negotiable, it requires humility and mutual accommodation on the part of those who lay claim to it" (Nyamnjoh, 2012a: 65). In this study, I was conscious of the fact that hegemonic discourses around sexual violence and genocide used to describe Africa often do not stem from it. As an anthropologist in the postcolonial African space, I aimed to create insights that reflect the epistemologies that give meaning to the everyday lives of

[31] It derives from the Swahili word *zunguka* "to wander around", therefore *umuzungu* can be translated as "someone that moves around" or travels.
[32] Gift giving as part of visiting will be further discussed in this dissertation, as visiting and receiving visitors became an important way for widows to share funds and support each other – similar to how this works in microfinance cooperatives.
[33] Giving milk for children is considered appropriate because it symbolises the cow, which holds important cultural connotations as exemplified by the ceremony of giving children milk during community events and celebrations.

Africans. In engaging with scholarship on the African continent, it is my responsibility to contribute to the "genuine, multifaceted liberation of the continent and its peoples […] by joining their people in a careful rethinking of African concerns and priorities" (Nyamnjoh, 2012b: 147). Exploring the lives of young people in an African country undergoing rapid socio-economic changes provided an opportunity to appreciate what young people understand about being African and which epistemologies exist within the spheres of being young. These epistemologies stem from the youth's point of reference rather than an 'outside' (outside the youth themselves) point of reference, which, in order to create meaning, deconstructs ideas in a language and thought that fits Western understanding (Mafeje, 1998). These epistemologies give meaning to the lived experiences of young people conceived in rape outside the hegemonic conceptual understanding of them as "children born of war". As Nyamnjoh (2012b: 131) explains:

> African popular epistemologies create room for *why* questions, and for 'magical interpretations' where there are no obvious explanations to material predicaments. In them, reality is more than meets the eye. It is larger than logic. Far from subscribing to rigid dichotomies, popular epistemologies build bridges between the so-called natural and super-natural, physical and metaphysical, rational and irrational, objective and subjective, scientific and superstitious, nature and culture, visible and invisible, real and unreal, explainable and inexplicable. Inherent in the approaches is the recognition of the impossibility for anything to be one without also being the other.

In writing about sexual violence in the aftermath of the genocide that has been described by dominant epistemologies as *unimaginable*, we need to look for African spaces of truth in which imagination takes place. Discourses relating to the "strategic" connotations of rape as a "weapon of war", as well as Western interpretations of trauma in the aftermath of genocide, tend to rationalise events to create meaning that fits within a Western understanding. Yet, there may be "no final answers to perplexing questions in a dynamic world" (Nyamnjoh, 2012b: 149). According to Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013: 3, 56):

> In the global frenzy to frame 'the disaster' of sexual violence in comprehensible terms […] nuance and complexity are sacrificed and […] the insistence that sexual violence is strategic, systematic, rational lulls us into thinking that the gendered violent subject resides in a moral world whose contours we recognise and as such can indeed be known, in control, punished, and reformed.

The intention of my research was to slow down and explore the nuances that shape everyday life. I looked at the real beyond what makes cognitive sense, beyond the sense of sight to what is felt in the subtle workings of affect in the everyday. In doing so, I explored how young people manoeuvre a world where a violent past is present but not seen – a phenomenon beyond cognitive functions, situated in the invisible, emotional, and intuitive – a social world without "recognisable contours".

Lastly, conducting research in the postcolonial context requires acknowledging that "the production, positioning, and consumption of knowledge is far from a neutral, objective, and disinterested process – it is socially and politically mediated by hierarchies of humanity and human agency imposed by particular relations of power" (Nyamnjoh, 2012b: 130). Though I began formulating this research topic and question because I saw a clear gap in academic and humanitarian knowledge regarding the familial and social worlds of children conceived in sexual violence, it was vital for me to confirm that those with whom I would be conducting this research and the organisations supporting them also felt that this topic was significant to them, rather than producing knowledge about them solely for an international audience. This included providing feedback to the participants and organisations in Kinyarwanda and sharing findings relevant to the contexts of their lives rather than an analysis of them. In addition, I wanted to counter the relations of power and hierarchies within academia by not extracting knowledge from the African continent, which was a significant factor in my decision to pursue my doctoral degree at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

The Protection of Participants

My primary obligation was to the people in Rwanda who participated in this research and whom I interacted with, as well as the wider population linked to this project. I did my best to ensure this research did not harm the safety, dignity, or privacy of the participants in this study by following anthropological ethical guidelines and codes of conduct and putting measures in place to protect their rights, interests, vulnerabilities, and social environments (AAA, 2012). The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were protected by using pseudonyms in recordings, field notes, written works, and publications. Additionally, a consent form was issued for each interview, which consisted of a short description of the study, its purpose, and a list of potential risks and benefits. It also contained the contact information for me, my translator, and social workers at the affiliated NGO, as well as the contact information for the president of the Rwanda National Ethics Committee (RNEC). Furthermore, the consent form provided a detailed explanation regarding how anonymity and privacy would be treated and the rights of the participants, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Moreover, it indicated how participants could obtain access to the results of this study (AAA, 2012; ASA, 2011). The form was written in Kinyarwanda and English to make it as clear and accessible as possible. Consent was not treated as a one-off event but rather as a continuous process through open conversations about research progress and how participants felt about having participated. Importantly, the consent form did not absolve me of my obligation to protect research participants as far as possible against any potential harmful effects of the research (ASA, 2011). I actively worked to minimise harm both to the participants themselves (such as by having counselling support on stand-by) and their relationship with their environment (such as by avoiding interactions with them in public places unless I was invited, because being seen with me could raise questions by their communities they wanted to avoid). The

rights of the participants always came first, especially in cases where dilemmas arose in terms of reporting abuse. While none of the participants in this study shared information I was legally required to report, I did consult with NGOs and social workers on a case where a participant was suffering from the physical consequences of abuse so that they were able to assist the participant in receiving adequate medical attention.

I safely secured field notes, recordings, samples, and other primary data that contained the identity of participants. Consent forms containing real names and signatures were securely stored in a portable safe. Digital data has been stored in password-protected documents, backed up on two different hard drives, and secured in a portable safe. These hard drives have full disk encryption and cannot be recovered by anyone but myself.

Throughout the research, I attempted to remain thoroughly reflective about the power relations inherent to the nature of this study and between participants and myself. It was important to emphasise participants' ability to say no, for translators to say no to me if I asked questions they did not want to ask, and for counsellors to say no to protect the people they worked with. Recruitment of research participants was done carefully and with the support of the NGOs. On a few occasions, counsellors advised against the participation of young people who volunteered because of concerns for their mental health. I decided not to provide remuneration for participation in the research to avoid placing individuals in a position where they would compromise their well-being or feel forced to disclose details they would otherwise choose not to. I did, however, provide funds to compensate for transport. It is difficult to say whether the young people I worked with believed that there was a certain benefit in engaging with the research, as they may have heard from others that I stayed in touch and would visit them, and they might have had ideas of how I could help them in future endeavours. When asked, most young people and mothers said they chose to participate in the hope it would help others. This consideration is further explored later in the dissertation.

During the interviews, I reminded participants of their right to withdraw from the study, not answer questions, or take a break, especially in situations where they seemed uncomfortable or emotional (AsnA, 2005). This was also stressed to the translators. I also reminded them of their right to stop a line of questioning if they were uncomfortable. Importantly, at the start of every interview, the participants were asked if they agreed to a follow-up phone call or visit by a counsellor they were familiar with. This was to ensure continuous support in case strong emotions arose during an interview. For interviews with mothers, a counsellor was present in the same venue but in a different room. She could be called into the interview when needed, and she did a brief counselling session with women after each interview to safeguard their well-being.

Another area of priority was the well-being of the translators. After each interview and home visit, we did a debrief to check in with each other and "squeeze our sponges". We learned this analogy

from a social worker at SURF who used it to describe how experiences such as these interviews or visits fill us with emotions that must be squeezed out. Christian and I often used this analogy to express how we were feeling. After working closely together for two years, Christian became skilled at observing when my sponge was too full and would tell me that we had to take a few days off. In turn, I was concerned about Christian when we began interviewing genocide perpetrators as part of the testimony project, an aspect that was not included in my initial project idea. I was familiar with Christian's family history and how the genocide affected his life, and I repeatedly reminded him that he did not have to do this work. These were ongoing conversations in which he could change his mind. He did not. He told me that due to his prior experience working with projects and reconciliation forums, these interviews would not be a problem for him. Ironically, they seemed to affect me the most. I was so concerned with protecting the interviewees and Christian that, somehow, I underestimated the effects they would have on me. I elaborate on this, the protection of my own well-being, later on in this chapter.

Research Permission and Ethical Clearance

To obtain approval to conduct this research, I went through a variety of ethical clearance processes. Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in March 2018.[34] In January 2019, I presented my research proposal in person to the Rwanda National Ethics Committee (RNEC), based at the Ministry of Health, which they approved after I edited my proposal according to their feedback.[35] After obtaining ethical clearance from RNEC, the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) approved my research permit in February 2019.[36] In Rwanda, ethical clearance for research permits is valid for one year only, which meant I had to extend my permits in 2020. RNEC extended my ethical clearance in January 2020.[37] NCST required multiple adaptations of my initial proposal as well as an endorsement for the continuation of the research by the CNLG (National Commission for the Fight against Genocide).[38] An extension of the research permit was provided in July 2020, valid until 30 June 2021.[39]

In October 2020, when I planned to return to Rwanda after being away due to the pandemic, I gained additional clearance from the UCT anthropology department. This required a safety protocol with extensive measures I would take to protect myself and others during the research continuation. These measures included monitoring the daily national new infections report

[34] Clearance number EARC2018-01
[35] Clearance number 029/RNEC/2019
[36] NCST permit number NCST/482/85/2018
[37] Clearance number 025/RNEC/2020
[38] Endorsement reference 0420/20/CNLG/SE
[39] NCST permit number NCST/482/192/2020

published by the Ministry of Health, wearing face masks,[40] renting a car to avoid the use of public transport, and social distancing.

Vigilance

In writing about young people's lives, the protection of their privacy goes beyond anonymising names, locations, and other identifiers. Rwanda is a small country. Even seemingly insignificant details of interactions between family members could allow readers to identify those being written about. In her ethnography on personhood conducted in Butare entitled *Peaceful Selves,* Laura Eramian (2018: 1) begins with the opening line: "Butare residents are vigilant people". I have noticed this about Rwandans in general. Vigilance plays an important role in Rwandan daily life, as it did in my fieldwork. The need to be constantly alert and living with a sense of caution became even more clear when I met Alice. She asked me to pick her up by car at a church in her neighbourhood, not her home. She wanted to avoid anyone seeing her with me, and she was not comfortable conducting the interview at a public place or an NGO office. I decided to invite Alice to my home for the interview. This was towards the end of my research and shortly after the incident when my housekeeper found the photography book. Though I felt that my safe space was slightly "compromised" already, it was the safest place for Alice. It was the only interview I did in my house. Alice's interview and the vigilance with which she lives her life are explored further in later chapters of this dissertation, but regarding ethical considerations, it is important to mention this experience here as well. Alice does not save numbers in her phone of anyone who knows about her conception, such as other young people, NGO counsellors, or Christian and me. She told us that if we ever meet in public, she will act as if we never met. She was constantly alert, foreseeing scenarios of people seeing her and who she was with.

In my fieldwork, I mirrored Alice's vigilance in daily life. I, too, saved numbers in my phone under different names. I numbered interviews and did not write names in my notebook. I had to be aware of where I was, who I spoke to, and who could see me and with whom. This gave me a small insight into the efforts young people constantly make in manoeuvring the everyday, as I did the same. A few years into the fieldwork, a large group of people knew me. I received text messages from young people saying they were aware that I had visited a certain town or place, and I always wondered how. Christian said, "This means you are Rwandan now". It gave me a glimpse into what it means to live in a country where connections are extremely interwoven and people are exceedingly observant of one another. I had now become a part of this tightly knit social web, where strings connected me to others, and my whereabouts and the people I met with had to be treated with even more care.

[40] I had brought transparent masks because I felt that due to the intimate and emotional nature of interviews, it would be helpful if people were able to see my face through the mask. I quickly found out that the transparent mask was seen as rather unusual and because it was not commonly seen or easily available in Rwanda, it actually led to more distance in the interactions. Rather than being helpful in making people feel comfortable, it did the opposite. I then used *kitenge* (cloth) masks that were made locally.

"Do No Harm"

I met Emmanuel at a youth camp in 2020. He invited me to his home to conduct an interview with him. Christian and I drove up and down a small, hilly road, and I parked the car on a patch of grass by the side of the road close to the house. Children were playing outside and stopped to look at us. Emmanuel greeted us, and we walked to the house where his two younger siblings were sitting outside. We greeted them before going inside to sit in the living room. His mother brought us tea. Emmanuel told us that it was not the first time researchers had come to interview him in his home.

Half a year later, I met Emmanuel's mother when I attended a women's group counselling session to introduce my research and ask if any of the women wanted to be interviewed. I did not recognise her at first until she told me that we had already met when I came to her house to interview her son. I remembered her welcoming us with tea. Mama Emmanuel told me that my visit gave her landlord the impression that a *muzungu* (white foreigner) was "sponsoring" her family, and he increased their rent. This was not something I had foreseen as a possible consequence of my visit, even though I was uneasy being noticed when people stopped to watch me park the car. I apologised to her and asked if there was anything I could do to help, but it was too late – being seen had produced assumptions that I had no control over, and neither did Mama Emmanuel or Emmanuel when he invited me.

A strong sense of failure came over me. In the days after hearing this, many questions occupied my mind. Should I not have gone to people's houses? Should I have put more boundaries in place? Should I have contacted Mama Emmanuel prior to entering her home? Could she have anticipated this? I was unsure what I could have done differently in terms of the measures I had put in place to protect people. I respected young people's decisions regarding where they wanted to meet, and some of them wanted to show me where they lived. These visits gave me insights into their lives that I would not have gotten if I conducted the interviews in a more neutral environment; it was participant observation, after all. I believed, and still do, that I never prioritised the research over any risks of harm. I had let young people make decisions about what was best for them and offered solutions to support their choices, such as inviting Alice to my home and renting a house in Huye. I never felt that I was in a position where I could choose what was best for them. Should I have turned down their invitations to show me their worlds? That would have undermined one of the main arguments of this dissertation, that young people have the agency to determine their own lives. What about Mama Emmanuel? Did she consent to me being in her house? I did not ask her as I assumed Emmanuel had discussed it with her. Should I have asked her? Even if I did, would she have been able to anticipate her landlord's assumptions?

These questions of consent stayed with me throughout the fieldwork and the writing of this dissertation. It is impossible to know the outcome of situations in life; we can try to put measures

in place, but the research context cannot be controlled. The American Anthropological Association (AAA, 2012) Statement on Ethics has a section on "do no harm" that urges anthropologists to think through any possible ways the research can cause harm to a participant's dignity, as well as to their bodily and material well-being. During the consultation process of the AAA guidelines in 2010, Gerald Sider commented, "Go and tell me you do not want to do any harm to anyone, when the violence of inequality and domination within native communities is probably the most salient feature of the last three or four decades of indigenous peoples' histories" (Bell, 2014: 512). In reflecting on the ethical considerations of their study on youth (conceived in rape), Denov et al. (2022: 1242) found that the ethical considerations underscored by the youth with whom they spoke centred around the notion of harm, "specifically, who determines what constitutes harm when both academic researchers and youth community members are engaged in the development of the research process". In their co-creation process, the young people had a say in what they considered harmful, which allowed the authors "to further examine the myriad process and power dynamics at play for the youth researchers" (Denov et al., 2022: 1242). Schretter, et al. (2022) reflected on the similar power dynamics at play when researchers navigate participants' expectations. They found that in their studies with children conceived in rape, the participants "sometimes regarded the researchers as their 'last resort' for resolving personal challenges" such as finding their father, emigration, or psycho-social support (Schretter et al., 2022: 71). This was the reason I decided to not offer any compensation for participation in this research, as I did not want potential participants to be pressured into speaking with me due to their circumstances. Yet, as a result of inherent power relations between the researcher and participants, as well as between a white foreigner in a community where a landlord might make undue assumptions, causing harm cannot always be avoided. I reflect on this uncomfortable nature of power and privilege, as well as the anguish when protection measures fail because I believe conversations on the nature of ethnographic fieldwork must also include the cases where one has to come to terms with the limits on their ability to prevent harm in an unequal world.

The Aftermath of Fieldwork

"What is your PhD about?"

During the seven years I have worked on this doctoral research, many situations have unfolded where people have asked me, "What is your PhD about?" This was a seemingly innocuous question demonstrating interest and curiosity, but for me, it was a difficult question to answer again and again. Kimberley Theidon (2014) published her fieldwork reflections on self-care for researchers working and writing on violence titled "How was your trip?" The title derives from an innocent question asked at a dinner party, but it prompted a situation where Theidon spoke of "war stories" that made her listeners uncomfortable, and upon realising this, she quickly added that "Peru is a beautiful country with fabulous food" (2014: 1). This situation resonated with me deeply.

Whenever people asked me about my PhD topic, I had to quickly evaluate what to say. Often, these questions came in light-hearted social settings, much like Theidon's dinner party. At first, I was honest and said the research was about the family relations of young people conceived in genocidal rape in Rwanda. This was met with expressions of shock and concern, with replies phrased as, "Oh, those poor children". Then, I was forced to defend the "poor children" and explain that, actually, my research explores the ways that people live and survive, their strength and creativity in the face of suffering, that the young people were not that much younger than us, and that I would go for a drink with them, just as we were having now. This was often where the conversation ended, as social settings are seldom the place for nuanced discussions regarding how children "born of war" are perceived. However, to me, it seemed as if by speaking about my topic, I was perpetuating the idea that they are helpless children with lives characterised by violence, whereas I wished for people to know the ways they transcend these perceptions about them. After many of these interactions, I began anticipating how the situation would unfold when asked the question, "What is your PhD about?", such as keeping my answer vague and saying that I was conducting an anthropological study on kinship. Yet, I was confronted with the reality that the question and my answer to it were not solely about the reaction of my audience; it did something to me. Sometimes, these questions came when I was on holiday, on a much-needed break from thinking out violence. The question alone brought me back to thinking about my experiences in Rwanda; regardless of how I answered it, the damage was already done. On a rare occasion when I answered honestly, the reply was, "That must be so hard". I then felt a pressure to lift the mood because my answer had turned the moment to a certain darkness, but sometimes I let the sombre mood stay; indeed, the research was very hard.

I have decided to reflect on the aftermath of fieldwork here because anthropologists have increasingly written about experiences with vicarious trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) (Calgaro, 2015; Markowitz, 2021; Taylor, 2019). Even though writing about myself might be viewed as self-indulgent and decentring the lives and experiences of research participants in favour of my own, feelings Ariana Markowitz (2021) explores in relation to secondary trauma, it is important to not shy away from this topic and the silences around it, particularly when this is a study on care; "Care work is work. It is not self-indulgent; it is radical and necessary' (Mountz et al., 2015: 4 quoted in Markowitz, 2021: 110).

Theidon writes that many readers might see her advice on self-care strategies as a "fluff piece" (2014: 3), but to me, reading about reflections that mirrored my own experiences and feelings felt like connecting with someone who "gets it" (2014: 2); one of Theidon's recommendations for self-care. I found the aftermath of fieldwork profoundly isolating; therefore, I share my reflections here as a small contribution to the vital increase in attention on trauma and self-care, in case it might resonate.

Vicarious Trauma

I completed my fieldwork by the end of June 2021. For two weeks in May 2021, I went home for a family camping trip and for my nephew's birthday. My extended family on my mother's side goes camping every year for the Ascension Day long weekend at the same campsite we have gone to since I was a child. I took my first steps as I learned to walk there; it was a place where I grew up and felt at home. This part of my life was my normality, a yearly outing that offered stability while living abroad. Yet, to my complete dismay, this time, camping felt anything but normal to me. The regular mundane routine of camping with my family, sitting in a big circle in front of the tents to drink coffee, angered me. I remember looking around the field of grass at our campervans and tents, those of my parents, brother, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and thinking that it was absurd. What was supposed to be absurd to me was speaking and thinking about genocide day in and day out, but as I sat there on the grass with my coffee in hand, I could not compute the two worlds I lived in. In this disconnect, I understood what had become normal for me was hearing about unimaginable pain and suffering, and I only understood the harm in this when I was confronted with what was supposed to feel like home and did not. The campsite that was my place of safety and stability made me angry exactly because it was so safe and stable – "How could people just sit here going about their lives in comfort with each other?" I thought. This is when I realized that I had to seek help, and so I contacted a psychotherapist directly after the camping trip.

I was prepared for the potential of vicarious trauma to emerge and had put measures in place with support from the ethics committee at the UCT and my supervisor. She also "gets it". My supervisor regularly asked if I was sleeping well, and I did. I had friends who I contacted when I faced difficult experiences, and it helped me to speak with them. It was only when I left the fieldwork space that my symptoms with vicarious trauma and STS started; I began having visions and spontaneously crying, as if I had to release something inside of me. I then realised that finding 'normalcy' in fieldwork on violence was what helped me cope. In Rwanda, the 'post-genocide' realm is a constant part of daily life, and I adapted to this realm to the extent that I suppressed many feelings and had to continue living (*komeza ubuzima*) – as Rwandans continue to live. I adapted to the Rwandan context without realising this, apart from moments where I was irritable and exhausted – symptoms of STS – and Christian would alert me to this and tell me to take a day off, an openness in our working relationship that I greatly appreciated. However, it was only once I returned home that I realised the emotions that were stored in my body that I had never felt in Rwanda, such as anger.

A factor that caused me to adapt so much was that I lost fieldwork time due to the COVID-19 pandemic and felt that I had to catch up, conducting interviews and visiting people almost daily. I said yes to every invitation, speaking and thinking about genocide almost daily. Importantly, during this time, I was continually surrounded by others, and these social connections may have masked my symptoms or relieved some of them. Social connections are how people "withstand"

(*kwihangana*) in the aftermath of the genocide, so it would not be strange to think that my research participants helped me withstand the difficult moments during fieldwork (Zraly et al., 2013). I engaged in *kwihangana* and *kuba hamwe* (being together) as social practices to live with the witnessing of suffering.

When I returned home, those social connections fell away, and I was left with stories that were difficult to read and write. There were times I could not think about the research at all, and I would get frustrated with myself for not making sufficient progress in my writing. My therapist would tell me that this material is too difficult to engage with every day, referring to it as "an impossibility". Some of the stories were indeed impossible for me to write, no matter how much time I took to care for myself. Revisiting my interview with Mama David would get my breath stuck in my chest, and my heartbeat would quicken, dreading each sentence as they contained betrayal after betrayal by the people she trusted most. The physical effects that revisiting this interview had on me provided a glimpse into what it must be like to revisit memories of the genocide in a yearly commemoration ceremony. The Kinyarwanda word *ihahamuka* used to be the primary word for referring to trauma until it became medicalised/pathologised by Western mental health professionals, referring to it as a panic disorder or PTSD, and now there is a certain stigma to the word. Thus, people mostly use *ihungabana* (trauma, distress) instead – I do, too, in this writing. However, the literal translation of *ihahamuka* does poignantly describe trauma: it means "without air and struck with fear", metaphorically describing the disturbed airflow one experiences when terrified. It was how my body reacted to my reading of Mama David's transcribed interview.

Ariana Marikowitz (2021) provides an account from her fieldwork in San Salvador about a young man who could not think of a place where he ever felt safe. She said, "I think about him every day" (2021:106). I wonder if she believed that by thinking of him, she felt she was offering him a sense of safety and, in this way, keeping him alive in his insecure world. This is how I have kept my research participants alive, by thinking of them in a way to offer comfort, and thus comforting myself. Theidon (2014: 9) describes the importance of boundaries in helping us "accept that we may be unable to change the forms of injustice and abuses of power we encounter during our research. The frustration accompanies us to our computer keyboards, where we realise that whatever we write falls short of doing justice to what we have seen and been told". It has been difficult for me to bring this writing to a close due to the enormous responsibility I have felt to do justice to what the research participants have entrusted me with, their most agonising memories, as I pursued the task of 'doing justice' in the face of the immense injustice of genocide and genocidal rape. In wishing to do justice, offer some repair, and draw conclusions that must perpetually be more meaningful, I closely held on to the stories I promised to share; yet, doing so would be an injustice. My therapist reminded me, "Is part of your argument not that these children are seen as symbols of suffering, and you say they should just be people, they should 'just be'? Then let them be and let yourself be".

Living With Poisonous Knowledge

Pumbla Gobodo-Madikizela conducted extensive research in post-Apartheid South Africa on feelings of empathy in situations of moral complexity. Her 2002 book, *A Human Being Died That Night,* is based on her interviews with Eugene de Kock, one of the most notorious killers of the Apartheid regime, and other stories of both victims and perpetrators of violence. In a recorded talk about this book at the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies (2016), she describes a situation where she spoke to Eugene de Kock. She recounts that they spoke after he had met the wives and mothers of people he murdered. He had tears in his eyes and his hands were shaking, saying he wished he could bring their bodies back. "Here are your husbands", he said, holding his shaking hands in front of him. Gobodo-Madikizela then says, "And when I reached out to touch his shaking hands, I was responding spontaneously in a way that, if I had thought about it, I probably would not have. But why should we think about whether our empathy is right or wrong?"

In my research, I interviewed perpetrators of the genocide. In Chapter 5, I describe my feelings towards Mr Kalisa when I interviewed him. I saw him as a loving father and husband, feeling unexpected empathy for him. I have already described Emmanuel's uncle as a supportive man without recognising that he, too, may have been a perpetrator in the genocide. These feelings caught me off guard and were difficult to reconcile with how I understood the world around me. Gobodo-Madikizela poses an important question: why should our empathy be either right or wrong? These were questions I grappled with in the aftermath of my fieldwork. Mr Kalisa stayed on my mind. Though my feelings toward him were clear but opposed to my initial beliefs, they lingered. It is one thing to accept that empathy does not have to be right or wrong, that human experience does not have rigid contours, but it is another thing to be confronted with the "grey zone" of human experience where "tidy moral binaries" get blurred (Theidon, 2014: 3). Blurriness in the face of injustice and immense suffering is difficult to process, and I kept searching for a conclusion on how I *should* feel; not necessarily about Mr Kalisa personally, but about what he made me realise – that the people who have committed the most horrific crimes can also be good fathers and loving husbands.

As I grappled with these fundamental life questions, I also realised that while writing about "poisonous knowledge" (Das, 2000) as part of my analysis, this dissertation itself had become poisonous knowledge. There were many fieldwork experiences I did not share with anyone, not wanting to place certain images or ideas in other people's minds that I could not get out of mine. I chose to be at home in the Netherlands when I returned from fieldwork, as I believed being close to my family would make me regain the 'normalcy' that I had somewhat lost. Yet, it was very difficult to write in proximity to my family. It felt as if my house would become 'infected' with my writing, and when I had visitors, they would catch a darkness that surrounded me. Or maybe I

was isolating myself as a symptom of STS, as I felt disconnected between worlds. All in all, it made it difficult to write. The knowledge of violence comes at a cost.

Mama Keza and Mama Pauline told me that “genocide lives in us”, which is also the title of Jennie Burnet’s book about women living in the aftermath of genocide (2012a). To a much lesser extent, genocide lives in me, too, and the stories have been living in me for many years. Perhaps it is a good thing for this writing to be shared and read by others – so that it can live in the world and not solely within me.

5. The Past and Presence of Genocide in Family Life

Genocide Memories and *Kumvikana*

"I didn't ask much more because it seemed difficult for her", said Caleb, explaining a situation where he asked his mother about his biological father. He picked up on something in his 'felt sense', an empathetic attunement to his mother that caused him to assess the situation and decide not to ask more. This "seeming difficult" can be revealed by subtle signs in a mother's face or through her body language. Sometimes, they are invisible. The risks and precarity of touching upon topics or feelings related to the genocide are navigated by young people with refined skills that are at work in their everyday family lives. Though minute displays of genocide memories entering a space may be invisible to others, they are often carefully controlled by young people like Caleb in their interactions with their mothers by managing the constant oscillation of genocide memories between the past and present.

This chapter explores the past and presence of the genocide and how it surfaces in spaces within and between people. By looking into the invisible of the everyday, the 'feeling into' the tenor in rooms and interactions, my intention is to highlight the subtle yet difficult work that goes into maintaining stability within the emotional life of the family. By exploring this affective work, people's attunement, vigilance, and private work towards containing and managing situations where experiences of the genocide enter the present moment become visible. In this exploration, I draw from my ethnographic fieldwork working alongside young people and their mothers, as well as my experiences with situations where the genocide was 'felt' and how I learned my own attunement to manage these situations. As much of this work is invisible and takes place in the felt sense, my own process of learning this attunement allowed me to contextualise young people's actions and decisions in their homes in order to contain the effects of the genocide in the everyday. Slowing down and looking at the most subtle moments within my own fieldwork experience created an understanding of the delicate work, skilled control, and creativity that goes into young people managing their social worlds. As Veena Das explains, "The creativity of everyday life lies not only in the small changes and forms of attentiveness, but also in the volatility that might lie just below the surface of habits" (Das, 2018: 538). Young people's attentiveness to this volatility, especially to their mothers' experiences (even if they do not know the details of these), enables them to feel, hear, sense, and anticipate this volatility as central everyday practices of their affective lives.

In order to explore these affective landscapes, I draw on the concept of 'attunement' to think about this affective life, which Daniel Stern calls "affect attunement" (2018: 139). He asks, "How can one get 'inside of' other people's subjective experience and then let them know that you have arrived there, without using words?" (2018: 139) The term refers to the sharing of inner states of feelings, a way of relating by 'getting inside of' other people's inner experiences, which are

acknowledged in this invisible but felt communicative space. I have tried to observe 'affect attunement' by noticing patterns, rhythm, and intensity of affective displays, such as facial, vocal, and bodily movements. Stern points out that these sensed, bodily features generate a sphere of shared affective experience. Notably, in my observations, I was a part of these shared experiences, and they may have been shaped or altered by my presence.

The Kinyarwanda verb *kumva* means to hear, taste, and smell; it also means to feel, sense, and understand. This polysemic notion combines experiencing the empirical with the metaphysical (Purdeková, 2015). *Kumva* shows how culturally, the seen, felt, and sensed are integral components of social interactions. Locally, the term *kumvikana* is derived from *kumva,* meaning to understand one another. *Kumvikana* refers not only to people hearing or feeling each other; it also suggests that they have a deeper understanding between them, aligning with the concept of attunement. In the context of this research, this fusion of the physical and metaphysical forms a fundamental part of affective landscapes and helps to partially explain what happens when memories of the genocide enter a given space. *Kumvikana* emically explains the physical and non-physical attributes that are sensed (*byumvikana* – they are sensed and made sense of).

In the foreword to *Post-Conflict Hauntings: Transforming Memories of Historical Trauma*, edited by Wale, Gobodo-Madikizela, and Prager (2020: v), Stephen Frosh writes:

> [The chapters in this book reveal] just how little 'post-ness' there is to suffering. On the broader scale, as editors of this collection note, 'the violence of the past continues to play out in times that are deemed as post-conflict'. The politics of post-conflict societies are marked by continuing conflict that does not allow rest to anyone, living or dead, and often the only hauntings that are recognised are those that promote retaliatory and/or defensive violence rather than those that achingly reach towards reconciliation.

This chapter explores this "post-ness" and the presence of violence by questioning the idea of "post-genocide" Rwanda. My working title throughout this research was "The reconstitution of kinship in post-genocide Rwanda", but as insights during my fieldwork unfolded, the presence of the genocide in everyday lives in Rwanda became undeniable. Indeed, can we speak of a "post-genocide" Rwanda when the experiences and memories of it move through time and space, when the anticipation of the past surfacing in the present, in Frosh's words, "does not allow rest to anyone"? The challenging work that goes on in the private, in the invisible, in the silent is a constant endeavour of managing relationships and maintaining a sense of stability.

Carol Kidron urges us to listen "to descendant accounts of their phenomenological experience of silent traces of the past in the survivor home" (2009: 6). She introduces the story of Eve, a child of a Holocaust survivor, who says:

> But you know the Holocaust was present in my home. My mother would cry in her sleep. It would wake me up and… I would put my head under the pillow so not to hear her… I knew that my father would wake her up so she would stop screaming. If it didn't stop, sometimes I would have to wake him up so he… he would stop her. Sometimes, she would cry like that twice in one night. This would repeat itself… night after night. (Kidron, 2009: 5)

Kidron, questioning existing explanatory frames of analysis of descendant's silent memory work, proposes an alternative 'knowing' of the Holocaust, "a knowing without words, narrative, or history, a knowing through the body that wakes up at night, night after night, through the habitual taken-for-granted practice of covering one's head with a pillow and waking up one's father: all silent practices and tacit knowing" (2009: 6). Building on Kidron's notion of a 'knowing' of genocide through the body, a knowing without words, passed on to survivors' children as they grow up, we can explore how this 'knowing' takes shape.

Clara Han (2021) illustrates this intergenerational transmission through 'knowing' by describing the memories of violence of her parents, who fled from North Korea to South Korea and, ultimately, the United States, displaced by the Korean War. She described her memories of the first few years after moving to the US – she was three years old – as "disconnected moments, particular tones of voice, smells, an image" (2021: 36). She recalls a moment where she felt the mood change:

> I look up from the concrete patio where I am squatting next to a muddy sandbox and see my father's face through the backyard screen door. He yells at us to get out of the mud, even though we are not in it. A terrible feeling of impending doom began to take shape in my small body as we were living in that house, the house where my father still lives. I do not know when I began to pray to God for world peace, but I began to do so every night before I fell asleep in the bed that I shared with my sister. (2021: 36)

Through her account of her childhood experience and later as a mother to a child of her own, she explains how children learn to accept a violent past as part of their everyday life. Han also shows the lethality of such prevalent memories as part of kinship relations when she argues:

> The reverberations of my mother's illness and the lethality that grew in me have made their appearance in different ways over the years. I find it difficult to say that there is any single kernel of 'trauma' that progressively reveals itself. Instead, these reverberations crisscross the flux of my life. (2021: 51)

The reverberations of trauma within the family pulsate below the surface of the everyday, as children not only 'know' a violent past but learn to respond to this 'knowing', how to mobilise this knowledge and use it in relationships of care and protection. In situations where the safety and care of the present moment is in danger of disruption at any time, what Veena Das (2018) describes as the "volatility below the surface", or what raped women in Bangladesh referred to as "fire, storm, and cyclone" (Mookherjee, 2015: 115), keeping that danger at bay is an ongoing effort. This perpetual threat of the memory of violence and disruption indicates little 'post-ness' to the genocide in the everyday lived experiences of young people and their mothers in Rwanda. In this context of life in homes facing threats of invisible yet powerful disruptive forces,[41] I started "tracing the work that goes into making everyday life inhabitable" (Das, 2018: 537).

Ambulances at the Stadium

My second visit to Rwanda was in April 2018. I was still in the process of obtaining my research permit, so this was a pre-fieldwork visit to observe the yearly genocide commemoration period and gain a better understanding of the "post-genocide" space. The commemoration period begins on the 7th of April each year, the day that the 1994 genocide commenced. On the morning of the 7th, the president lights the flame of remembrance at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, the burial ground for over 250,000 Rwandans. In the afternoon, the Walk to Remember starts from the parliament building, with people walking to Amahoro Stadium, the largest stadium in Rwanda and the site where around 12,000 people sought refuge during the genocide. In the stadium, a night vigil is held with speeches, performing arts, and the reading out of names of families for whom all family members were killed.

I planned to attend the Walk to Remember, but when I arrived, the roads to the parliament building were already closed off. I then made my way to the stadium, with many other people coming from all different directions joining the walk there. Upon arriving, I joined one of the five long queues for people to be searched and have their bags checked. Standing in the queue, I noticed a line of ambulances in front of me, positioned alongside the stadium entrances. I also saw groups of medical personnel wearing jackets with red crosses. As I was still new to Rwanda, I was impressed by the country's safety and cleanliness— ostensible indications of its strict governance and overall organisation. With these impressions in the back of my mind shaping my experience, all the while standing in a controlled queue for safety checks and having just seen multiple roads closed off by police forces, I naively took the ambulances as another sign of the country's organisational efforts in crowd management. This was a large event with thousands of people in a stadium, so I thought proper precautions were taken as would be done for a football match or any other event with a

[41] I use 'forces' rather than 'memories' to emphasise the powerful agentive effects of memory, as traumatic memories break through the schema of everyday life and ordinary routines and have enormous power.

similar-sized crowd. I soon discovered that precautions were taken, but for something entirely different than I expected.

I sat down on a concrete row in the upper parts of the stadium, and a kind man seated next to me guided me through the ceremony, from the first lady's address to the survivors' testimonies. As I did not speak much Kinyarwanda at the time, the man would translate sporadically, but not wanting to take away from his personal experience, I mostly just took in the surroundings and the atmosphere. As the sun was setting and darkness fell, candles were passed around, illuminating the stadium in candlelight. Beautiful as it was, I nevertheless had a profound awareness of the place we were sitting. This was one of the only places in Rwanda protected by the UN peacekeeping forces, and this was where people sat 24 years earlier, in the same darkness, in the midst of the genocide. Then, while a survivor was presenting their testimony, screams suddenly echoed through the stadium. The sound of these screams was unlike any sound I had ever heard. Because it was dark, I could not tell where the screaming came from. The circular shape of the stadium amplified the sounds, and the screams echoed from all directions. I felt tense and fearful, with the sounds vibrating all throughout my body. Then, more screams erupted from different directions. On the far other side of the stadium, I made out the shape of a woman being held down, moving violently trying to escape the people helping her. Those people were wearing the red cross jackets I had noticed while standing in the safety check line. I then understood why there was a line of ambulances outside. I sat frozen in my seat, letting the screams surround me and run through me until it was time to leave. By that time, I had seen seven or eight women carried out of the stadium, screaming from a place of pain that I cannot put into words. It is possible that words cannot do justice to the powerfulness of the reverberations of genocide entering a space – and entering the body, the bodies of the women, as well as mine.

In her work on post-Apartheid South Africa, Rita Kesselring (2017) explores the intertwined themes of embodiment, injury, victimhood, and memory and the body as a site of remembered trauma. She describes attending a play in Cape Town about the killing of young protesters, which drew from a "real event in the past to keep the memory of it alive", an incident known as the Trojan Horse Massacre where on 15 October 1985, three students were shot dead by security forces as they protested against the Apartheid government. The play was performed in high schools, and Kesselring describes the audience's reaction, as the play "tore open wounds that had barely had the chance to heal" (2017: 81). She says that, for the audience, "it was experience *and* reality alike; and it was simultaneously the cause *and* the experience of their pain" (2017: 81). She writes that the performance "cut right to the conundrum of commemoration: on the one hand, its necessity as the condition for the possibility of transforming pain and experience, and, on the other hand, the ways in which it robs victims of their carefully guarded personal and raw experiences" (2017: 81). Her thoughts on commemoration are particularly resonant with my experiences in the stadium (2017: 84):

> For some victims, healing is a slow process of encapsulating their painful thoughts and emotions inside a cocoon in their minds. At best, their pain is carefully and anxiously hidden away. It is a necessary escape from their memories. This is in contrast to one of the major goals of memory work and commemoration, which is to fight against this process of forgetting and thus to prevent a piece of history from escaping public memory. To keep public memory alive, the embodied memory of the superstes (experiencing witness) has to transform into the testimony given by the testis (neutral witness). This transformation can fail, and attempting it can have unintended consequences for victims.

After my experience in the stadium, I felt torn about the national genocide commemoration. I understood the importance of the yearly commemoration and how it ensures that the 1994 genocide is not forgotten, denied, or ever happens again. However, this "conundrum of commemoration" also means that people are forced to relive memories of the genocide every year. Exploring how memories are relived during commemorations, Nicole Fox (2021) explains the local meaning of experiencing an acute episode of trauma as "traumatising", which resonates with my own findings. Fox said, "Traumatising is what happens to survivors when we remember too much", and the government tries to prevent it from occurring during commemorations (Fox, 2021: 72). She also notes that "traumatising", like what I witnessed at the national genocide commemoration, is "contagious" in nature (2021: 77). She explains that "since trauma can spread through groups of people witnessing the behaviours of those in its midst, memorial and commemoration staff try to contain those who are traumatising" (2021: 77). Fox quotes Ada, a trauma counsellor, who says, "Most of the time when one person traumatises, it affects the whole community and the whole community can begin to traumatise. We learned about this in the early years as it can get out of control and dangerous very fast" (2021: 77). Importantly, Fox also notes that remembering and "traumatising" are not necessarily reserved for specific moments in time, such as commemorations, but are ongoing processes in life. Thus, what this contagious nature of traumatising suggests in the context at hand is examining how Rwandans, whether as professional trauma counsellors or as family members in the home, work to contain the effects of these memories of the genocide, both individually and collectively, by limiting the ways in which these memories spread from one person to another. To me, the screams in the stadium were a reminder of how much is held at bay in the everyday and how even within a powerful ritual commemorative structure, pain can still emerge through the cracks.

The Banality of Genocide in the Everyday

As part of the testimonies project I embarked on with GER during the pandemic, I asked some of those who had written testimonies if they would be willing to meet with me to elaborate on their experiences. One of the people who agreed to meet with me was Mr Bizimana, who used to be

judge at the Gacaca courts[42] and was then the head of the "Unity and Reconciliation Commission" in his district.[43]

Mr Bizimana was very busy with his important role in the community, and after rescheduling a few times, we eventually agreed on a time to meet him in his town, at a lively 'business' centre just off the main road on the outskirts of Kigali. We called Mr Bizimana to say we had arrived, but he was still in a work meeting, so we waited for about two hours in the town centre. I took in the street views, with shops selling a variety of foods and household items. Car mechanics were at work on street corners, and vendors selling phone credit sat under big umbrellas by the roadside. Trucks passed by us and turned onto the main road to Kigali. We sat in the car because it was too hot to wait outside, but it was hot in the car, too. The waiting made me feel restless because it was May 2021, and my research permit was set to expire by the end of June. I had a full schedule of people I still wanted to visit and interview during this short timeframe, making up for the time I lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. While I would normally be more patient, I was losing my focus and felt annoyed that we were wasting time interviewing a man who might not show up and was not part of my core research population. Perhaps it was the heat or the discomfort of people staring at me as a white person in a 4x4 car with the engine running for the air-conditioning, but I told Christian, seated beside me, that I wanted to leave. Just at that moment, Mr Bizimana called, and we met him at a motel (closed due to the pandemic) where we could sit on the quiet terrace. I was still feeling distracted and tired. Just as we sat down, Mr Bizimana received a phone call and said, "I'm sorry, I have to take this call. We were just told the location where bodies were buried during the genocide, and my team is digging". My tiredness disappeared instantly, and I was immediately brought back into focus. Again, in a similar but less haunting fashion to the screaming in the stadium during the genocide commemoration, I felt the reverberations of the genocide in my

[42] Rwanda's Gacaca court system was based on a traditional Rwandan conflict resolution model (gacaca) and combined this traditional approach with a modern punitive legal system (Clark, 2010). Gacaca comprised approximately 11,000 community courts that were established by the Rwandan government to handle crimes related to the genocide. Gacaca began as a pilot project in 2002, and in 2005, the courts began operating throughout the country. After ten years, the Gacaca jurisdiction was formally closed on June 18, 2012, having tried nearly two million cases of around 400,000 genocide suspects (Clark, 2014). Until 2008, rape and sexual torture committed during the genocide were not tried by the Gacaca courts, but were instead dealt with by Rwanda's national courts (Rafferty, 2018). However, during the information gathering stage of Gacaca's pilot phase, affected women and other community members, including perpetrators, could publicly raise cases of sexual violence at Gacaca hearings. According to Kaitesi, "a great deal was spoken about sexual torture" during these initial years of Gacaca (2013: 208). All Rwandans were required by law to participate in Gacaca, which may have prompted some affected women and other community members to talk about sexual violence. Nevertheless, while an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 women were raped during the genocide, less than 7000 cases of sexual violence have reportedly been brought to the Rwandan justice system (Rafferty, 2018). All trials that included charges of sexual violence were held 'in camera', with specially trained judges and trauma counsellors present (Kaitesi, 2013). Between 34% to 37% of the 'in camera' judges were female (Interayamahanga, 2020). Observers were not allowed in these trials, and Gacaca documents on sexual violence are not publicly available, with judges and counsellors being bound by confidentiality. Therefore, "only the victim-survivors themselves can currently provide information on what happened during these trials" (Rafferty, 2018: 101).

[43] Rwanda's National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) commenced in 1999 with a mission to promote unity and social cohesion among Rwandans. NURC operates in each district of Rwanda, coordinating reconciliation and education activities, disseminate publications, promoting activities that work against divisionism, and monitoring adherence to NURC's principles.

body. I was quite shocked by this phone call, but Christian seemed unfazed. “This happens all the time”, he said. When Mr Bizimana came back, we asked if everything was fine. He replied that a genocide perpetrator came forward to disclose the location and said, “This perpetrator also wrote a testimony for you; I work closely with him as part of the Unity and Reconciliation Commission in the district”. I was processing the banal manner in which he spoke and Christian’s casual reaction, as well as the fact that people were still digging up bodily remains as we began our interview, 27 years after the 1994 genocide.

Mr Bizimana used to be a teacher, and it showed. He gave us a detailed timeline of his experiences directly after the genocide. He worked with various humanitarian organisations and as an investigator for the government researching continued killings in the years after 1994. He was clear in what he wanted to tell us, so I decided not to use my list of prepared questions, instead listening to his meticulous, first-hand historical account. When he spoke about the Gacaca courts, he elaborately described the piloting of the system across the country, the selecting and roles of the judges, sentencing guidelines, and even details regarding the times prisoners would be picked up from the prisons and brought to court (8 a.m.). He then mentioned, “Rape cases were not tried publicly; they were tried in a room without an audience. These cases were very difficult for us”. I asked if women volunteered to testify. He answered with one word: “Some” (*bamwe*). With this, his expression changed, and he sat up rigidly. I interpreted his one-word answer as a loud sign to not inquire any further. The contrast between the elaborate details in his account of other horrific events that took place during the genocide and his one-word response about the rapes was outstanding. His change in demeanour implied that even for a man whose job it is to speak about the genocide and reconciliation and all that these entail, he did not want to speak further about rape. The banality of telling us about buried bodies and his well-spoken narrative about events of the genocide emphasised to me the sensitivity surrounding rape and the difference between sexual violence and all other genocide-related crimes. This was not only conveyed by one-word answers but by changes in the body as if it had closed somehow. Feeling into the closedness of his body, ever so slight as it was, was important. Being attuned to what people can and cannot speak about and when to ask and not to ask is a methodological skill enfolded within conducting ethical interviews, but in this case, this attunement was a skill I had acquired throughout my two-year stay in Rwanda. It involved an alertness that I developed over time, a vigilance of my senses in my interactions with people, even though I had been so tired moments earlier. I learned this skill from others through interactions and interviews where the slight and subtle shifts in people’s physiques announced an opening for the past to enter. In this moment with Mr Bizimana, I saw him close this opening to the past.

Rita Kesselring’s (2017) reflections on the ethnographic experience and a researcher’s knowledge are helpful in understanding this alertness to the embodied experiences of others. Kesselring explains that recognition can be formed through “sensory and bodily information” by “both attending with and attending to the body”, emphasising that “it is prominently one’s own body that

is the means to connect to others' experiences" (2017: 171). Indeed, it was through sensing shifts within my own body, from tiredness to alertness, that provided this bodily information that something was going on within others. Kesselring's description of sensory and bodily information as attending to others aligns well with the Kinyarwanda concept of *kumvikana*, the physical and non-physical attributes that are sensed in order to deeply understand one another. Jennie Burnet referred to listening to silences as an essential methodological tool in her research with Rwandan women, writing that "Listening to silence means paying attention to what people avoid saying as well as noting the occasions when they fall silent" (2012a, 34). It is in the moments where silence falls within a person that the other must attend to this silence and act accordingly.

This interaction with Mr Bizimana alluded to my learned ability to navigate other people's felt sense and the spaces created in conversation where unexpected emotions can arise in the body, and how people work together to contain it. This is an indication of the unexpectedness of distress and how it can emerge within conversations that seem comfortable and where people are at ease. Even in these situations, I found that many Rwandans have the ability to notice and respond to potential distress in others. I am not explaining my own abilities at this moment to praise my own skills but rather as a testament to the constant work that goes into the alertness and 'feeling into' others by Rwandans day in and day out. Just as Caleb had expressed that "it seemed difficult" for his mother when he asked about his biological father, as introduced at the beginning of this chapter, speaking about rape "seemed difficult" for Mr Bizimana.

Unresolvedness in the 'Post-Genocide' Space

The 'perpetrator' to whom Mr Bizimana referred was Mr Kalisa. Interviewing genocide perpetrators was not in my initial research plan, but I felt that it was important to meet with him to further understand the different perspectives and people's lived experiences in the reconciliation and "post-genocide" space. Prior to the interview, I prepared myself well for what I wanted to ask, as well as the questions and topics I wanted to avoid. I was particularly interested in hearing more about his current daily life and family relations, believing that the aspects of his involvement with the genocide that he wanted to disclose were written down in his testimony. From an ethical standpoint, as well as to not offend him, what he had chosen to evade in this written testimony I would not ask about. I wanted to get to know him and his social world better rather than confirm his past actions. As I have explained, I also prepared for the interview with Christian, mostly by telling him that if he was not comfortable with this interview, we would not go. Christian pointed out that it was part of life to meet with perpetrators in the day-to-day, too. In the end, I discovered that I had prepared everyone but myself.

We met Mr Kalisa in his house, situated in a village on the rural outskirts of Kigali. We drove on difficult-to-pass dirt roads through what seemed like forests of plantain trees. It was a rainy day. Driving on the muddy and rocky roads was difficult, and we got lost a few times. When we finally

met him, he was standing outside his property in front of the courtyard leading to his front door. We parked the car and rushed inside the house to seek shelter from the rain. He welcomed us warmly with a big smile and a friendly look on his face. He said he was happy to see us, and the fact that it was not easy to find his house made him appreciative of our efforts. As with most Rwandan homes I visited, we entered through his living room, where a couch and large armchairs formed a square against the walls. We sat down on the couch with Mr Kalisa seating himself on a chair in front of us. We started speaking about his testimony, why it had felt important for him to write it and who he hoped would read it. He told us that it was important for him to help contribute to history not being lost, for young people to read his testimony and for survivors to know that he has changed. We spoke about his work in the district's Unity and Reconciliation Commission, being involved with GER and other organisations, and he told us that he met a group of people from Côte d'Ivoire as part of an exchange program revolving around reconciliation. He described how he speaks to people in his community as part of his role, to both encourage and ask for forgiveness. He explained that he asks for people's forgiveness on a daily basis. Sometimes, when he meets people in the street, he can "see something in their eyes", and in those moments, he asks for forgiveness. I asked if this was part of any training he received as part of the Unity and Reconciliation Commission or from NGOs, but he said, "This comes from my heart; the trainings came later". I asked if people forgive him when he asks for it, and he replied, "People forgive, but what I really want is to live in peace. That is different". He added, "In general, I feel peace in my daily life, but when I meet a survivor or a widow, I am reminded. I always remember, and I do not want to forget. I don't want to forgive myself fully because then it will be forgotten". I took in what Mr Kalisa said and wondered about the difference between forgiveness and what he called peace, as well as the ongoing daily efforts of continuously asking people for forgiveness. Mr Kalisa said forgiving himself is a goal he does not want to achieve, making his daily life seem to me like a never-ending cycle of moving through confrontations with the past without resolution.

In reflecting on what Mr Kalisa called the difference between forgiveness and peace, I turn to Jacques Derrida's writing on forgiveness. Derrida argues that one can only truly forgive the unforgivable, that true forgiveness is unconditional, beyond repentance and atonement, which means that when instrumentalised in the realm of reconciliation, forgiveness becomes impure. Pure forgiveness, in his view, "must announce itself as impossibility itself" (Derrida, 2001: 33). He proposes:

> Each time forgiveness is at the service of a finality, be it noble and spiritual (atonement or redemption, reconciliation, salvation), each time that it aims to re-establish a normality (social, national, political, psychological) by a work of mourning, by some therapy or ecology of memory, then the 'forgiveness' is not pure – nor is its concept. Forgiveness is not, it should not be, normal, normative, normalising. It should remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality. (2001: 32)

In post-genocide Rwanda, forgiveness *is* instrumentalized and aims to 're-establish a normality' through unity and reconciliation efforts collectively. Ervin Staub and Laurie Anne Pearlman (2001) have documented how forgiveness after mass atrocity always contains a distinctly communal element, in some sense shaping how reconciliation unfolds. Their study with genocide perpetrators and survivors in Rwanda found that genocide survivors, in deciding whether to forgive or not, considered both what this meant for them personally and for the community as a whole and that many decided on the merits of forgiving through group discussions, or when others had already publicly forgiven (Staub and Pearlman, 2001). Ernesto Verdeja conceptualises forgiveness as different dimensions of "a complex moral desire for closure" (2004: 39). He discusses the idea that forgiveness "contains a basic structural similarity with retribution: both aim to put an end to a destructive cycle of violence. In this understanding, forgiveness and retribution both imply closure, and allow for the creation of a new moral community that is informed by but does not remain anchored to the past" (2004: 38–39).

These ideas may help better understand Mr Kalisa's grappling with forgiveness, both publicly and within himself, as his life did seem anchored in the past. His daily asking for forgiveness shows how forgiveness has become normative and 'normalised' in Mr Kalisa's everyday life. I wonder, too, if Mr Kalisa also feels that forgiveness has become 'impure', thus disallowing him 'peace' – because, in line with Derrida, when forgiveness becomes the goal, it cannot be achieved. Verdeja's discussion on forgiveness as "a complex moral desire for closure" is helpful as Mr Kalisa seems to want to offer closure to others when asking for forgiveness but does not aspire closure for himself "because then it will be forgotten", referring to his responsibility within his country's national commemoration. Therefore, as Staub and Pearlman found, forgiveness has a communal element, as demonstrated by Mr Kalisa's words.

Finally, thinking about Mr Kalisa's stated difference between forgiveness and peace – forgiveness has a goal and is for communal reconciliation, but what he calls peace is only attained by Derrida's notion of *pure* forgiveness. *Pure* forgiveness is not normative in a daily routine, not to attain closure, or "in service of a finality", as Mr Kalisa spoke of a finality he already experiences, stating, "I only live for the future of my children, my life is already over".

Mr Kalisa was a 22-year-old soldier when the genocide began. Being part of the Rwandan army was a great achievement for him, and he was looking forward to his future with his fiancée. His fiancée, now his wife, comes from the north of Rwanda where her family lives. She and her family were among "those that were being hunted" (*abantu bahigwaga*), that is, Tutsi. As a soldier during the genocide, Mr Kalisa was privy to information, and he heard that his fiancée's family members would be killed in the north. He immediately used all the connections he had and gave word to a friend who was a soldier in the area, asking him to hide and save his fiancée and her parents. His friend told others that the family had fled the area, but he hid them. Mr Kalisa and his wife got

married after the genocide and had a child before he went to prison. There, his wife came to visit him a lot ("*cyane, cyane*"), and his parents-in-law supported him throughout the period of Gacaca, where he confessed his crimes and went to prison, because he saved their lives. While we were talking about his family, his youngest son walked through the front door. His clothes were soaked from the rain, and he took off his backpack before giving his father a hug. Mr Kalisa embraced him, saying, "My child" *([name of son] wanjye*). This small phrase holds great significance in the Kinyarwanda language: it is a term of endearment signifying the importance of the child and recognising the child as *mine*. After hearing Mr Kalisa's daily experiences grappling with his and others' memories, it was lovely to see this moment of lightness in his role as a father.

We continued to speak about his work in the community and how he works to convince other perpetrators to ask for forgiveness and "open up" about their crimes. "It is still hard for them", he says, "so I talk to their children so that they can ask their parents, 'Why were you in prison?' to help them to speak about it". In this moment of speaking about reconciliation in the community, I asked him if, in his work, he comes across young people conceived in rape and who might be looking for their fathers as part of their process of reconciliation. I tried to ask the question in the most general way, not to personalise it, but in reference to his position as an 'expert' in reconciliation work. Then, while Christian was still speaking, translating the question, I immediately regretted asking.

Mr Kalisa's body reacted to Christian's words. The light in his eyes went out as if they were projecting inward instead of outward, looking at us. His shoulders moved slightly forward, and his chest hollowed, making room for something dark. His arms crossed in front of his chest as if to protect himself from whatever had entered the room. He seemed smaller, somehow, embodying the vulnerability that accompanies a pain that cannot be described. It was a haunting sight. His abrupt change of posture seemed to swallow up the air in the room, replacing it with a heavy emptiness. I realised then and there that I was looking at a man who had raped women. He did not have to say it, but I sensed that we both knew it at that moment. I briefly allowed myself to be frustrated with myself, for the fact that having read his testimony (though it does not refer to sexual violence) and knowing he spent over ten years in prison; I was still naïve enough to think I could ask this question in a general sense. If he spent ten years in prison, he killed many people. I knew he killed people who took shelter in a church. The mass killings in churches often encompassed the worst genocidal violence, including rape. He finally answered firmly, "After the genocide, rape was severely punished. Many men did not testify about rape unless people proved it. They cannot say it openly because of the punishment". Even though rape was given the harshest punishments by law, I expect that he did not refer solely to the law but to the penalties within society. We moved on and changed the subject by asking him what he was most proud of in his life. His marriage to his wife, he said.

In analysing this situation after the fact, it stood out to me that rape and sexual violence are left out of conversations in the reconciliation space. Both Mr Bizimana and Mr Kalisa were extremely elaborate about their activities in their respective Unity and Reconciliation Commissions and spoke openly about killings, but not about rape. However, while noting this, it was difficult for me to analyse this interview in any academic or analytical manner because of the profound impact it had on me as a human being. As prepared as I thought I was for interviewing a genocide perpetrator, I was not fully prepared for the empathy I felt for him, for the human connection we shared and the conflicting feelings that arose from this. In his living room, I saw Mr Kalisa as a loving father and proud husband, a man who cared deeply about his community and the future of his country. I felt sad for his reality of being stuck in a cycle of the past without even wanting to get out of it, asking for forgiveness wherever he went, not being able to forgive himself. And then, it all shifted when before me sat a man who raped women. I had spent years building friendships with young people conceived from actions like his, learning about the hardships in their lives, the pain and anger of their mothers, all caused by men like him. The haunting sadness and emptiness in his eyes when confronted with rape stayed with me for a long time, even after returning home from Rwanda. I was not sure how to feel about it or if there was any particular way to feel. The unresolvedness that characterised Mr Kalisa's life equally shaped my feelings towards him, too. All these feelings happened in the body, in the space between us, the memories of the genocide that rose in the air, in our lines of sight, in the suddenness of the atmospheric rupture. Genocide was felt in the collective sharing of the space, in Mr Kalisa's home, where he generously invited us in. In this space, personal experiences were collectively shared, as was done in the stadium at the night vigil three years prior. These experiences showed me that while one can be attuned to the surfacing of genocidal memory, one can still sometimes be taken aback by its power—a power that is bigger than people sharing a room or sharing a stadium, making skilled attempts to control it seem all the more impressive. In this moment with Mr Kalisa, we were able to move away from the darkness that had enveloped us, but that does not mean it did not leave its mark. The ambivalence of how to feel about a person stayed with me. It is not easy to live with a lingering unresolvedness in one's body. Yet, this is how most Rwandans live, even when public memorialisation promises a resolution of some kind.

Sonia and Mama Sonia

Sonia lives about half an hour's drive outside of Kigali. One afternoon, Christian and I went to visit her, and we drove on a long dirt road off the main street to find her waiting on the roadside. The house where she lived with her mother was situated very close to this dirt road. Sonia told us that the road would be paved soon, so they might be forced to move out of their house. We spoke about living with this insecurity, how the house was meaningful to them because it belonged to her mother's family, who was killed during the genocide, how the area was being developed, and

Sonia's job. She worked in a rare field for women, so I enjoyed speaking about her work since I saw her as an inspiration for other young women in Rwanda, which I told her.

Her mother then joined us in the living room, and we exchanged pleasantries. It was the first time we met, but Sonia had told her mother that people from SURF were coming to visit.[44] We continued speaking about the house, the cow that we heard in the background, and Sonia's mother asked me if I was married and had children. She thanked me for caring so much about children like hers when I do not have children of my own – a remark that touched me. While speaking to Sonia's mother, I saw Christian looking at his phone. This was very uncharacteristic of him, and when seeing this, I felt slightly embarrassed and angry, not only because I depended on his translations, particularly with older people who often speak in more complex Kinyarwanda, but also because it was impolite. Suddenly, Christian told Sonia's mother that we had to speak to Sonia about something private and if she could excuse us, which she did. I was confused by this sudden interference, but he told me he would explain it later. I had just asked a question about the neighbours while discussing the house, to which Mama Sonia began mentioning how she was taken captive (*kubohoza*) during the genocide, and this was how Sonia was conceived. The fact that she used the word *kubohoza* (to take captive for the purpose of rape over a period of time) shocked Christian because this is a very intimately meaningful word for women that is not often used in front of young men such as Christian. I wondered why Mama Sonia was so attached to her house given what had most likely happened nearby, as we spoke about the distress the road expansion gave them, and what is it about speech that triggers her response given that she lives alongside the site of her wounding. These were questions to which I did not have answers, but they inferred what it is, quite literally, to live with the traumatic past.

The reason why Christian was looking at his phone is because Sonia had surreptitiously sent Christian a message warning him that her mother would "stay in it, she is going to be in a place of trauma (*akabazo kihungabana*)". Christian did not immediately know how to change the situation – replying to the text message would be rude, but so was cutting her mother off. When he did not immediately react, Sonia sent another message that said, "Help me (*mfasha*), don't engage with her (*umureke*)". Thus, Christian made the decision to interrupt her and ask her to leave. Sonia explained that she can see and anticipate when her mother goes to a "place of trauma", a term used in Rwanda to indicate a traumatic crisis, and her mother stays there if she is not interrupted or guided out of it. Sonia received training organised by SURF on how to handle situations like this, when her mother has flashbacks or when her trauma resurfaces, so we trusted her judgement. Before we left, I asked if we should inform SURF's counsellor to check on her mother, but Sonia said she and her mother would be fine. We agreed we would call her in the evening to make sure her mother was fine and would ask the counsellor to call them if she was not. In the evening, Sonia confirmed that her mother was fine.

[44] I met Sonia at a youth camp organised by SURF, so it was common for research participants to associate me with the organisation.

My visit to Sonia and Mama Sonia alerted me to the subtle ways in which memories of genocidal violence lurk close to the surface of everyday life. These memories can be activated by what appear to be innocent conversations,[45] thus revealing how fraught the 'normalcy' of the everyday really is. Whether it was my presence or knowing people from SURF came to visit, Sonia's mother felt it necessary to speak about her experiences. In her account of women's lives in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Jennie Burnet (2012a) elaborates on the way these memories are intruding, as "sometimes, the unexpectedness of everyday life (the recognition of a moment in time, a place, a sound, an object, an action, or a confluence of these and other factors) breaks through" because "these remembrances are embedded in everyday life" (2012a: 75). At the same time, the visit to Sonia and Mama Sonia demonstrated the skills through which young people become sufficiently 'attuned' to distress and avert it.

Visiting Mama Maurice

My initial interview with Maurice in December 2019 was surprisingly light-hearted. He let us in on some inside jokes he shared with his mother. On a Sunday morning in April 2021, he invited Christian and me to visit his mother together. At the time, Maurice lived in Kigali, so we picked him up and drove to his mother's village, where Maurice grew up. In the car, Maurice told us that his mother had given birth to another son, his younger brother. Maurice was extremely happy to have a sibling and could not wait to introduce us to him and see him again himself. We were welcomed in Mama Maurice's living room where a radio was blasting gospel music. Maurice and his mother immediately shared jokes again. Notably, joking can be used to fend off conflict and pain. When Maurice was younger, he would always complain that the entire neighbourhood could hear his mother's loud music, and now, years later, he was still coming home to the same music, on the same channel, Radio Maria. We sat down and chatted with Maurice's mother about her lovely living room (Maurice had helped her renovate the windows and doors), and we all watched Maurice interact with his few-month-old baby brother. Mama Maurice said that her youngest son was a miracle because she was "very old". I told her she was still very young, and she looked like it. She had a youthful sparkle in her eyes that radiated a joy for life. It was unusual because while

[45] Upon reflection, I realised that what may seem to me like an innocent question about the neighbourhood may also relate to a concept that is intricately linked to violence in Rwanda. Living together (*kubana*) with neighbours is an important concept to understand as part of daily life, so I had many conversations where I asked about neighbours. However, after this encounter, I removed this from my list of 'safe' questions to ask during social visits. The idea of asking questions that might trigger traumatic memories was also re-evaluated when I conducted interviews with mothers, ultimately deciding to not ask any questions about the genocide. However, almost all women experienced symptoms of trauma (and received counselling afterwards) because even when not directly asked about the genocide, it surfaced due to the setting, their own wishes to speak about their experiences, or just 'randomly', as trauma does. I found that within this type of research, ethical decisions cannot effectively protect women, as the effects of genocide cannot be contained in life nor in the research setting.

most mothers I had met had a spirit of resilience around them that could be felt in their presence, I would not usually associate it with joy. She told us that she gave birth to Maurice when she was 14 years old, so they grew up more like siblings. They lived in this house together, and both contributed to the expenses/upkeep. Maurice would often get tomatoes at wholesale prices and sell them on the street, or when he was hungry, he would go to the military camp nearby and ask soldiers for food, something that made them both laugh.

After we spoke for some time, Mama Maurice put a sheet over a space on the couch next to where I was sitting and laid her baby to sleep. Maurice went into another room to prepare us a meal. Christian, Mama Maurice, and I talked about how beautiful the baby was, and I asked if he usually slept well. She said he liked being around people and preferred sleeping with us rather than in the bedroom. Then we spoke about Maurice's cooking skills, and Mama Maurice was excited to show off her son's excellent cooking. However, something about her baby sleeping seemed to have stayed with her. Suddenly, she looked at her baby sleeping next to me, tears forming in her eyes, and she said, "Babies as old as that little boy would be swung against the walls of the church until their skulls cracked open". I did not know what to say or how to process the abrupt transition to this horrifying imagery. I looked at her, and she looked at me. I had no words, but I did not need them to comfort her at that moment. Christian acknowledged what happened in the churches, and how painful it was. We were careful not to encourage her to move further into her memories and instead tried to stay with her in the present moment. She was still present in both her memory and in the living room. After feeling into her memory for a short while, she began wiping her tears and moved forward towards us. She whispered that she did not want Maurice to see her like that because she did not want him to be exposed to that type of pain.

Mama Maurice had done a lot in her life trying to shield Maurice from her painful past. As mentioned earlier, she attended counselling sessions aimed at helping mothers speak to their children about their conception and had told the counsellor she had 'disclosed' to Maurice, although she had not, deciding to continue to protect him from a reality that might hurt him. It was reasonable that Mama Maurice did not want her son to see her response to her memories in the living room. Shortly after, Maurice came in with his prepared meal, and we all ate while discussing other matters.

After our visit, I continued wondering about the work of memory and how Mama Maurice's memories of the genocide surfaced when she looked at her baby. The 'trigger' for this memory – her baby – made sense, and it was April, genocide commemoration month, which often stirs memories of the genocide through associations with the weather, songs on Radio Maria, and memorial events held throughout the country. Therefore, I was not necessarily surprised that Mama Maurice had a moment where her past became part of our present. What was surprising to me is that it happened when Maurice was not in the room, as if Mama Maurice did have some control over when her memories would surface, as if her need to protect Maurice from these moments was

more powerful than the memory itself. Perhaps it was a skill she carefully crafted over time. It may also have been my presence and something she wanted to share with me, an outsider – to experience this moment outside the intimacy of her life with her son she viewed more as a sibling, it may have felt safer. I left Mama Maurice feeling in awe of her abilities to care for her sons, by her choices to protect them, and by enduring a moment of suffering alone, with us, keeping it out of her son's world as much as she could.

Here, we can see one possible response to the question posed by Das et al. in the introduction of *Remaking a World*: "How does one contain and seal off the violence that might poison the life of future generations?" (2001: 4). Mama Maurice sealed off the violence from her son when her memories of the genocide entered her home, and Sonia sealed off her mothers' memories by not giving them a chance to fully erupt. These actions may seem relatively minuscule, but this difficult affective work that takes place in the everyday is a constant negotiation between the past and present because sealing off a poisonous past is not done once, nor is it an occasional occurrence; rather, it is a persistent grappling with the threat of memories of violence and acknowledging what these memories have the potential to unleash. Illustrating collective trauma in the context of Freetown, Sierra Leone, after the civil war from 1991 to 2002, Aminatta Forna (2010: 184) beautifully introduces this idea in her novel, *The Memory of Love,* through a symbolic comparison to the surgical amputation of limbs: "the nerves continued to transmit signals between the brain and the ghost limb. The pain is real, yes, but it is a memory of pain". Even when one tries to seal off past violence, the memory of violence remains – and the pain is real. The nerves, the past, continue to cause immense pain at unexpected moments, but not unexpectedly. Young people and their mothers live with a 'severed limb' that is invisible to others but of which they are acutely aware.

What About the Future?

Thus far in this chapter, I have explored how the past intrudes in the present everyday. But what about the future? How does this enter into the present everyday? Yuko Otake and Teisi Tamming (2021) found that experiences of distress and healing occur along an axis of temporality: remembering the past, experiencing the present, or imagining the future. Their analysis regarding imagining futures focuses on healing pathways through social reconnection, whereas 'thinking too much' worsens symptoms of distress. In my research, mothers explained that "thinking too much" (Backe et al., 2021) included both thinking about the past, as well as worrying about the future. A frightening reality for many mothers was that they were often the only parent or only person to care for their child. Many mothers were HIV positive, sometimes a direct result of having been raped, and their illness was something they indicated as a fear for their children. As Mama Keza said:

> Whenever I am sick, I'm always worried for my children, wondering what they will eat, wondering if I die, how my children will survive; that makes me uncomfortable. Sometimes, I wonder if I sleep and don't wake up, I always ask myself what would happen to my children. That is my first challenge, I am always scared because of that.

Despite it being a constant worry, some have not told their children about their illness to avoid passing this worry on to them. Mama Alex said:

> I take my medicine, and I got used to it. Until now, my son doesn't know about it. I don't have the energy yet to tell him. People who know about it are my nieces, who I used to take care of, they are the ones that know I'm sick, because my son was studying in boarding school. One time, SURF prepared a training for widows that are HIV positive and told us that we should tell our relatives, but for me, I didn't tell my son because I don't want to cause him problems; he might fail to finish his studies.

Mama Alex's decision is another example of how mothers shield their children from knowledge that may harm them, much like the knowledge about their conception through rape. Mama Gilbert voiced that she worries that she did cause her son problems by telling him, saying:

> I was infected with HIV. Gilbert knows about it because I told him. When Gilbert started to behave badly (he had started drinking too much alcohol), I sat down with him and told him. Sometimes, I wonder if I'm the one who caused him to behave even worse. He might have thought, 'My mother is going to die', and maybe he couldn't cope with it. But I told him not to worry because I take medication and I'm still strong. I'm not going to die anytime soon.

Of course, in general, mothers worry about their children, but how these mothers worry about the future is dually compounded by both their illness and their isolation due to having been raped. They worry that even if they have re-married, their husband might not take care of their child when they die, and neither will their extended family. These very real worries about their children's fate, or fears that their children worry about them, signify a way in which the future becomes part of mothers' everyday lives. Just as young people and their mothers shield each other from the past, they also do so in the face of a precarious future.

The need to protect and care for their children is what Zraly, Rubin, and Mukamana (2013: 242) found to be mothers' "reason for living again (*kwongera kubaho*)" after the genocide (see also Kantengwa, 2014). Drawing from the example of Helene, a mother whose child had also survived genocidal rape, they found that "through it all, she prioritized shielding her children as best she could from any distress in the present" (2013: 428). The topic of HIV also came up in their study through the example of Chloe and her child, who were both HIV positive. Chloe struggled with

having ambivalent feelings for her child, but when she started to love her child, "she encountered the dread of losing her to HIV" (429). Indeed, mothers do not solely worry about the future when thinking about dying from the illness, but when their children are also HIV positive (which I did not ask young people about in my research), their future can become an added worry.

What happens when these children, who are their mothers' reason for living, grow up? What happens when the children have grown out of their direct day-to-day care? As young people had just started moving out of their mothers' homes during the time of this research, it might be too early to answer these questions, but I witnessed how some of these young people were now starting to care for their mothers, effectively reversing the caring role. Young people would renovate their mothers' houses and send money home from university, which may have made it a little easier for their mothers to "live again" despite their children not being around. Some young people had children of their own, and mothers became grandmothers. Mama Theresa, for example, took care of Theresa's 2-year-old daughter while she lived on her university campus. Hence, taking care of young children might continue constituting reasons to live, and for worrying, through care and being cared for, as mothers and grandmothers. This shows the potential to wind experience into generational time, finding solace in valued roles.

In this chapter, I have shown that memories of the genocide provide little 'post-ness' to it in everyday life. Memories are powerful forces that arise in numerous situations, from commemoration ceremonies to conversations in everyday life, and young people and their mothers work tirelessly in private, invisible spaces to maintain a sense of stability within the home under a constant threat of disruption. It is through attunement and *kumvikana* that interactions were managed when memories of the genocide arose in a given space, between Rwandans, between Sonia and her mother with Christian, and between myself and others in the interviews, such as those with Mr Kalisa and Mr Bizimana. Young people and their mothers worked to seal off the past violence from each other in the present, as Sonia did for her mother and Mama Maurice for her son, living with memories of the genocide like an amputated limb of which they were perpetually aware. For mothers, much like the past, the future was also something they were aware of as part of their everyday, worrying about their children's futures in the face of illness and dependency on them for care; nevertheless, though, the future also offers possibilities.

6. “Knowing” History

In his study of the Armenian genocide, Joachim Savelsberg (2021) explores what it means to ‘know’ genocide. He understands knowledge as “humans’ taken-for-granted assumptions about the world” (2021: xi). This conceptualisation of knowledge is rooted in its social construction; when people interact, they exchange their ‘taken-for-granteds’, thereby shaping the mechanisms through which knowledge is formed. When children are part of these interactions, they come to learn about and ‘know’ the world (Han, 2020). Savelsberg (2021: 5) mentions the “micro-level” of social processes people tell stories to friends and family, they share their experiences and information, and it is through these interactions that knowledge is constituted and transmitted. Over time, these micro-social interactions create what Savelsberg calls “knowledge repertoires” (2021: 2) that are comprised of silences, acknowledgement, and denial. He explains that when such repertoires “become communal”, they transcend their micro-social origins, becoming characterised by what he calls a “carrier group – that is, collectivities defined by criteria such as religion or nationality that secure the transgenerational transmission of beliefs and worldviews” (2021: 49). Importantly, Savelsberg notes that interactions “involve conflicting pressures to silence, deny, or acknowledge” (2021: xi). Regarding silence, Savelsberg mentions that “tacit knowledge” is conveyed in moments of silencing among survivors and their children, transmitting knowledge across generations. He gives an example of a mother who avoided the topic of genocide, and in her avoidance, the mother “thus communicated not just a void to her son, but unease” (2021: 20).

Savelsberg’s framework of knowledge transmission through “knowledge repertoires” helps us understand young people’s childhoods growing up in communities where knowledge about their being conceived in rape, as ‘children of enemies’, was transmitted at the micro-social level and solidified by the ‘carrier group’ of genocide survivors. The intergenerational transmission of these ‘othering’ beliefs about young people, including their mothers’ silences regarding the identities of their fathers, caused them to grow up with fragmented knowledge about their conceptions and who their fathers were (as it related to knowing who they themselves are) – “they crave ‘the truth’, which may consist of confirming the whispers or insults” (Theidon, 2022: 26).

This chapter explores questions revolving around the notion of ‘truth’ and what this looks like intergenerationally in post-genocide family life, as well as how these communal transmissions of knowledge through “whispers or insults”, which disrupt mothers’ carefully protected silences, are countered by women trying to prevent this knowledge from further poisoning their children’s social worlds.

Children as Their Fathers

While memories of genocidal violence lie beneath the surface of family life, the expressions of this violence are often more explicit. Young people not only have to deal with memories of the genocide but are also seen as embodying these memories themselves, often in a very material sense. Studies and reports in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide found that children conceived in rape were called "little killers" (Wax, 2004), "devil's children", or "*les enfants de mauvais souvenir*" (children of bad memories) (Nowrojee, 1996). The young people with whom I spoke confirmed that throughout their childhood, they were called a "child of *Interahamwe*" or other "bad names". I did not inquire any further into the specificities of these names whenever this topic emerged during the interviews, as the young people I spoke with frequently expressed that these were some of their worst childhood memories – emotions that shone through in their voices or through their tears. They were called these "bad names" by other children at school, on the street when walking home, or when visiting their mother's extended family. A young man I interviewed named Charles said that when he was younger, his mother would have traumatic crises (*ihungabana*) and would yell at his younger siblings, "This child will kill you!" Clearly, these children were seen as manifestations of a violent, dangerous past, or as mediums through the violent past might materialise in the present. It was through these childhood experiences that young people became aware of and attuned to how they were perceived by others, regardless of whether they were explicitly told about their mothers being raped – the "bad names" marked them as enemies. Even when they could not understand what the words meant, they nevertheless sensed this was the case.

Knowing your father and knowing yourself

Christian, Alice, and I were sitting in my house for the interview with Alice. Though I tried to maintain a clear separation between my personal space and my research, Alice had expressed a hesitation to conduct the interview at her home or in a public space (the NGO offices were closed due to the pandemic). We ended up in my home for practical reasons, but it stood out to me that doing so created a particular atmosphere that was different from the other interviews I conducted, perhaps one that was more personal and inviting. Alice told us that she does not talk to anyone about her conception, and no one in her close circles knew except for her mother, her twin sister, and her two older sisters. While she was part of the NGO group, she did not frequently attend its events or engage with others in the group. Her distancing shone through when she referred to young people conceived like herself as "those children", not seeing herself as one of them.[46] Whereas others would use words like "us" or "we", Alice's positioning was unusual though understandable. She told us that when she was born, her stepfather told everyone that he was her

[46] The interview was conducted in English, so any quotes are her direct non-translated words.

and her twin sisters' father, and since they had moved to Kigali after the genocide, this was not questioned. This meant that while growing up, she was never seen as being "conceived in rape" by others – an experience much different from many of the other young people included in this research. However, she was seen this way by one of her older sisters, who, to this day, in Alice's understanding, does not accept her as a sibling since her sister believes she is "the enemy". Alice explained that her sister had never "forgiven" her mother for choosing to raise Alice and her sister. She told us about a time she attended a commemoration event and saw her sister there. Upon seeing Alice, her sister came to her and said, "What are you doing here? You did this". This phrasing seemed to equate Alice with her genocide-perpetrator father, her sister speaking to her as if she was her father incarnate, employing the word "you" to address Alice's father through her. This experience parallels what I witnessed visiting Emmanuel's grandmother with him, as introduced in the Prologue, with her mumbled incantation of "You killed me", evincing her perception of Emmanuel as the one who "killed" her.[47]

That young people are perceived 'as their father' due to their biological connection, is observed beyond the Rwandan setting. According to Theidon (2022) as "across contexts, one can find examples of people's concern that the baby will be innately, biologically predisposed to violence, to seeking revenge, to literally embodying their father's malevolence" (41). The idea that children embody their father's malevolence was exemplified when Alice explained what she called "her sister's mindset" by saying that "in Rwanda, a child is from their father". I asked if she knew who her father was, and she told us that she did not know and that this lack of knowledge disallowed her from knowing who she truly was:

> How do you know where you are from? How do you know who you are if you don't know where you are from? We ask ourselves, "Who am I?" My name is Alice, and I am a [her profession], but that is who I chose to be, not who I am. Who am I? Where am I from, and what is my history?

Alice concluded by saying, "I will never know who I am". When I asked her about her feelings towards her father, she said, "I love him a little bit, I am alive because of him, and I have some value to some people".

Alice's interview lasted for over four hours, the longest we had done. Yet, I asked very few questions. I believe the fact that we were in my home contributed to Alice feeling comfortable. It also seemed as if Alice wanted to take this opportunity to talk about her experiences to two of the very few people who knew that part of herself that she usually kept hidden. At one point, she

[47] The terminology Emmanuel's grandmother used was common when people, especially women, spoke about the genocide, referring to "being killed" since it made one feel as if they were no longer alive. Women also refer to men who raped them as "the men who killed me" (De Brouwer and Ka Hon Chu, 2009).

jokingly asked, “What did you put in my Fanta?”— aware of her seeming inability to stop herself from speaking. It made me wonder, while she managed to avoid a certain “stigma” in her life by hiding her conception and never speaking of it, if she appreciated speaking to someone about it, especially with someone outside of her everyday life. She mentioned that she would not be in touch with us after the interview, but in that moment of our secret meeting, she spoke a flow of “secrets” she had never shared with anyone, to the extent that she wondered if something “was in her drink” to create this scenario. She said, “Don’t be surprised if I don’t save your number”. She also had not saved the numbers in the NGO WhatsApp group and told Christian that if she ran into him, she would pretend not to know him.

A year later, exactly that happened. During a phone call with Christian when I was back in the Netherlands, he said that he saw Alice at an event. He did not know if she saw him or not, but it played out exactly as she had predicted; they did not interact. Alice told us about the lengths she goes to in avoiding any questions about her conception, like celebrating a birthday that is not on her actual date of birth. At the end of the interview, she said, “I opened up too much”. I assured her that if she changed her mind at any point, I would not use our interview in my writing. Although her narrative was powerful, what was most striking was how her actions, rather than her words, provided insights into how she lives her life, a life of constant vigilance about her location and who can see her, the phone numbers saved in her phone, her date of birth, and much more. She actively navigates life, safeguarding this secrecy with great care. Though the information in the “secrets” she told us was important, what the secrets further revealed was that they *are* secrets, that there is a vast, hidden world to which only she is privy.

Alice had a successful career and graduated from a prestigious university. She was interested in the research process from an academic perspective, and I gave her a few copies of articles I included in my literature review – we put them in a solid folder so she would not be seen carrying them home. She also asked to have a copy of the interview questions during the interview. Even though I had a set list of questions to guide the interview through certain topics, I rarely asked every question and mostly improvised according to the topics that arose in the moment. As Alice’s interview was very long, I skipped many questions on the list. She saw one question that I skipped and said, “Never skip this question!” The question was:

> Can you tell me some of the challenges you face in your daily life?
> *Ushobora kumbira ibibazo uhura nabyo mu buzima bwawe bwa buri munsi?*

In her answer, she spoke of “those children” facing ‘stigma’ and that the lack of belonging was a fundamental difficulty. She spoke in general terms at first but then said, “If I had the ability to not make them feel alone, I would. I’ve been there, I’m still there”. It was the first and only time when she seemed to identify with young people conceived in rape as a group who shared common experiences, particularly the experience of loneliness. To illustrate her answer on the topic of

belonging, rejection, and loneliness, but perhaps also referring to what she said about not knowing her father and not knowing herself, she said:

> I love a mirror; when you break it, you see so much of you. You will see yourself in pieces. You can perceive the pieces as mistakes. When you look at those, you see a hundred images of yourself – those are the scars. So, why do we go in front of a broken mirror? If you don't look at the broken pieces but take one, even if it's small, you will see yourself clearly.

She added, "And if you smile, life smiles back at you".

Alice continued to speak from a place of giving advice and validity to young people conceived like her: "They will be the mothers we need. If we meet in the future, with my children, I will be the mother of my kids. They will see me differently, not as born of genocide. Five years from now, I won't be addressed like that". I asked her about her wishes to marry and have children. She said she would like to adopt children and get married to make her mother happy, but she did not understand "the usefulness of a husband". She explained that her stepfather died when she was still a baby, and her mother never remarried, so she never had men as part of her life, growing up with sisters only. She then asked me:

> Why do I need a husband? How can I love a man if men raped my mother? What does a man do in a woman's life? I'm still so confused. It's not that I hate men; I just don't know what [being married/living with a man] should be looking like. I want children, but a husband, for what?

She told us she had a similar conversation with her mother, who said, "I have raised you all alone, but it's hard. Maybe your child can have a chance to have a mother's *and* a father's love you never had". Alice continued that it would make her mother proud for Alice to have a wedding, but if not, she would accept it; "I didn't know my mom would be cool about this, so I told her, 'You are the best mother ever!'"

Alice's interview reveals both the depth and utility of hiding and selectively sharing knowledge. She decided that she did not want anyone to know about her conception, which was made possible by her stepfather sharing a false account with others and her mother strategically hiding knowledge. Though Alice often concealed knowledge, she also sought it out, especially regarding her father and her history. Like Alice, living with fragmented knowledge about one's identity was a shared experience for the young people included in this research, an experience that was intricately linked to not knowing their fathers. These circumstances carry implications not only for their sense of self but also for practical purposes, such as rights to land and civil registration.

Notions of personhood in Rwanda determine that connections to others make a person a recognised member of one's social world (Eramian, 2018); thus, it is vital for young people to trace what these connections are since they influence how their personhood is perceived. As Eramian and Denov note, "Asking who one's father is a typical practice by which people locate each other in webs of vital social relations" (2018: 375). This observation was corroborated by Christian, who said that asking about one's father is openly discussed among his social relations. Not knowing a father's name can lead to suspicions, but knowing is also imposed by the state in civil registration forms, like those necessary to attend school. Young people often did not know which name to include, coming home to ask their mothers – a common source of conflict between mothers and children. Mama David mentioned these very practical implications:

> Another thing about David that hurts me, I don't know where he is registered. When he was born, his father's family registered him as their last born, like their child. It's his grandmother (from his father's side) who did it. By the time he was going to do the ordinary level national exams, I don't know the person he registered as his father. Even when he did the high school leaving exams, I also don't know what he registered. But he once asked me for the person he could register as his father, and I also asked him who he thinks he would register. He said that he would register his stepfather as his father. I told him that it was fine, but now he has different identities [at birth and at school].

Mama Erica mentioned that her daughter expressed a curiosity regarding the exact place her father was from. Mama Erica told her daughter that she knew the town her father was from, to which Erica asked about the exact sector. When Mama Erica replied that she did not know the sector, Erica replied, "It would have been much better if we knew at least the sector where he comes from so that we can call that place our home". What this suggests is that knowing one's father is less about his individuality as a person and more about what having a father's lineage represents – a place to call home.

A young man, Papa Mihigo, did know his father's family and grew up living in his community as his father's son. Nevertheless, he also faced these practical implications. Christian and I met Papa Mihigo with his two-and-a-half-year-old son, Mihigo, in his town centre, where we conducted the interview in a quiet room at the back of a soda shop. Papa Mihigo is from the west of the country, close to the Congolese border, but now lives close to Kigali for his work. Papa Mihigo's mother remarried when he was four years old, and he had six other siblings. He said that he had a good relationship with his entire family and that he was a social child. He grew up living with his grandfather (his biological father's father) until he died when Papa Mihigo was five years old. That is when he went to live with his mother and her husband, knowing that her husband was not his father, a fact that the other children in his neighbourhood were well aware of. He knew because he used to live with his father's family. Some children were mean to him, but he said it did not affect

him because his stepfather took good care of him. He told us that his worst memory growing up was when he asked his mother to buy him a phone one day, knowing that she had the means to do so, but his mother refused, and he was so upset he left home for a month. When he reminded himself that his mother always gave him everything he needed, he came back. I noticed how this memory was vastly different from other young people's worst experiences growing up, showing the individual lived experience of being 'conceived in rape' does not necessarily permeate all memories. Papa Mihigo found out about the circumstances of his conception when he was about ten years old. At that time, he met a man who told him that his father lived in Congo and wanted to see him, that he was sent by his father; however, Papa Mihigo soon came to learn that this person lied and wanted to steal money from him. When he had to register a father's name in primary school, his mother said to Papa Mihigo, "Tell me, when they ask you who is your father, which name do you say?" He replied that he had given his stepfather's name. His mother then said, "That is fine, but you know that this is not your father, your father's name is … and his family home is …". What stood out to me in this narrative was that this time, the mother asked her son rather than the other way around. After talking with his mother, Papa Mihigo did his own "investigation" and soon found out that his father had died. His father had fled to Congo after the genocide and took his mother with him to live there together. Papa Mihigo was born in Congo. One day, his mother left the house to buy food, and when she came back, the house had been attacked. She could not find Papa Mihigo's father, so she came back to Rwanda when Papa Mihigo was around two years old. This is why some people came to say that his father was still alive in Congo.

His father's family are his neighbours. His father had two sisters whom Papa Mihigo grew up spending time with, and they knew he was their brother's child. His mother also speaks to them without any problems (*baravugana nta kibazo*) as the aunts frequently visit their home. Papa Mihigo grew up knowing them as his aunts, even before he knew about his conception. In the community, everyone knows him as "the son of (father's name)" and refers to him as such. When I spoke with him, however, Papa Mihigo was in conflict with his aunts about his rights to his father's land. Before his grandfather died, he had said that Papa Mihigo would inherit his father's land, as his father was the only son his grandfather had. Papa Mihigo's father had a house, which he was also set to inherit. After the grandfather's death, the older aunt registered the entire plot of land for herself and demolished the house, leaving Papa Mihigo without any inheritance. They went to court, after which the aunt tried to poison and kill Papa Mihigo. He asked a counsellor at SURF for advice, and they recommended that he look for his own property rather than stay in a conflict where he might be killed. I asked Christian if the risk of poisoning was truly that high, and he told me that it was a common occurrence in land disputes. Papa Mihigo decided to move on from the conflict and continue to live on good terms with his aunts.

Papa Mihigo's account reminded me of Emmanuel, who was also in a land dispute with his aunt, including a court case. In their study on land disputes in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, André and Platteau (1998: 1-2, 36) found that "pervasive incidence of land disputes and the threat of

landlessness have led to rising tensions in social relations and even within the core of family life" (1), leading to "bitter tensions within families" (2) and "frustrations and antagonisms […] between the two generations" (36) as they "undermine the very basis of social life and strike deep at the heart of family life" (42). Indeed, they found that threats of poisoning were a core component of these land disputes. Shortly after my interview with Papa Mihigo, I attended the funeral of the mother of a young woman I met through SEVOTA where the mother's sisters did not attend the funeral because of a decade-long disagreement over their parental land after they were killed during the genocide.

So far, we have explored the complex ways in which young people's identities are entangled with their (non-existing) relationship to their fathers. Not knowing who one's father leaves young people to struggle with knowing who they are, where they come from and where to call 'home'. This explains young people's intention to inherit their fathers' land. Papa Mihigo and Emmanuel were in the exceptional position that they knew who their father is and how to locate the family land, although this led to conflict with their father's siblings. I wonder if this conflict is caused by young people's claim to land implicating their claim to legitimately be part of their father's family, which when they were younger was more 'informal' and thus pleasant? This would be a topic to explore in future research, as the importance of knowing one's father – and this family land/home – is established as a core component of young people's identity formation, as Alice explained, you need to know where you are from to know who you are.

What We Are Given to Know

Clementine volunteered to do an interview with us when Emilienne, SURF's social worker, asked if anyone would like to be part of this research in a WhatsApp group created during the pandemic as a support system for young people who had attended SURF youth camps – the same WhatsApp group that Alice was part of. In May 2021, we picked Clementine up from her work on the outskirts of Kigali. The interview started with the usual questions about how she was feeling on that day, if she had shared her 'testimony' (*ubuhamya bwawe*) before, and how it made her feel. She said that she shared in small groups at the camp she attended in 2019 and that listening to others made her feel less alone in her experiences growing up. It was only when she mentioned still being close friends with two people she had met at the camp who I interviewed in 2019 that I realised Christian and I attended that camp. At that time, she did not volunteer to be interviewed. I wrote this quiet realisation as a sidenote for myself in my notebook: another layer of disclosure.

Clementine told us about her family, how she lives in Kigali with her mother and her younger brother, and that their father had passed away. I took note of her use of the wording "their father" as it seemed implausible for her and her younger brother, who was six years younger than her, to have the same biological father. Clementine was very detailed in her answers about her studies

and the scholarship she received. Every question about her childhood she answered with one-word answers, ostensibly reluctant to speak about it. When asked about her worst memory when she was young, she said she could not remember anything from that time and that she was only able to tell us about her recent past. The worst recent memory was when her father passed away. When she was in secondary school, she and her brother asked their mother multiple times about their father, who he was and why he was not living with them. Her mother told them that he had "deceived" her and had another family – a wife and children he lived with. After repeatedly asking their mother if they could meet him, he once came for lunch. Clementine said she felt sad that she never had a chance to spend more time with him.

Her statements about the man who she said was her father confused me. The next question we would normally ask was, "When did you find out about your conception?" This question derived from the literature concerning 'disclosure' and from my affiliation with NGOs that based their programmes on psychological approaches, assuming 'disclosure' as a conversation that creates a rupture in time: a 'before' and an 'after'. However, many young people who were interviewed in this research described 'disclosure' as a moment of clarification, an answer to numerous questions they had but not always a conversation. When they did have a distinct conversation with their mothers regarding their conceptions, it provided a frame for many puzzle pieces they experienced growing up that did not fit together. It was a continuation of a process that began when they were young rather than a starting point. I was unsure about how to proceed with Clementine because I could not risk her finding out about her mother's rape through this interview.[48] Could Clementine's mother have done the same as Maurice's? Maurice's mother had not told Maurice about his conception, but said to SURF that she did, and Maurice was invited to the camp. If a similar scenario for Clementine, it is hard to believe that she, like Maurice, would not have recognised the experiences of others, especially because earlier in the interview, she told us that listening to others made her feel less alone in her experiences. I hesitated to move on to the next question and wished that Christian could speak Dutch or that we had another language to quickly discuss how to proceed. Thankfully, Christian himself had also taken note of her responses and understood my hesitancy. He excused himself to the bathroom to give me time to think about my next move. I decided to avoid all further questions about her childhood or her conception, as she made it clear that she was reluctant to speak about these topics, and I did not want to risk asking questions that would make her question her own truth.

We proceeded with questions about her daily life, her job, and her aspirations for the future. I looked at the note I had written to myself earlier: we met at the youth camp in 2019. I could not conceive of any possibility where, even if she did not know about her conception prior to the camp, she would not have figured it out while she was there. She was at a camp for four days specifically

[48] Realistically, neither did I. All I knew was that she attended a camp for young people conceived in rape, but not more than that.

organised for youth conceived from rape,[49] and she was friends with two young people who have been very open with me about their experiences and who I have seen multiple times over the years, which Clementine might have known since my whereabouts and meetings with young people were always known by others, often to my surprise. She had listened to Christian reading out my consent form to the group, specifically emphasising the topic of this research on young people conceived in rape (*urubyiruko rwavutse ku ngufu*). I wondered if she really did not know or if she did not want to talk to us about it like she had not wanted to when I interviewed others in 2019. This question stayed with me for a while until I realised that the answer might not matter. Perhaps both of her 'truths' can exist simultaneously. She was conceived in rape and grew up without a father. Her feeling sad about the absence of her father, regardless of how this man was manifest in her life, was her reality. I wondered what she meant by the 'father' she missed in her life: was it her biological father, a social father, or a fantasy about her father? I return to these imaginaries and 'father fantasies' later in the dissertation.

Nevertheless, I remained curious about Clementine. Why did she tell us this story about her father if she knew we would not believe it? Perhaps because it was not about what was true for us but rather her truth. It begs the question regarding what is at stake in her telling, whether she might be generating and releasing a fantasy. Ultimately, it was not my position to judge what is true or not; rather, my intention was to learn to understand how people mobilise language and narratives towards particular ends.

Clementine was clear about what she did not want to speak about, such as her early childhood. She could have said that she did not want to speak about her father, but she spoke about him before we even asked. One of the first questions we raised was about who she lived with, and she said that she lived with her mother and younger brother and that "their father" had died. She could have not mentioned her father at all, as most young people would not mention a father unless their mother was married and they lived with their mother's husband. Therefore, it seems as if she wanted to signal from the start that this was the knowledge she wanted to share with us. It made me wonder if this truth about her father is what she usually shares with others. Many young people and their mothers tell others different versions of events that prevent their conception from being questioned. Mothers would say that the father of their children was killed during the genocide or, like Alice, that their father died when they were still a baby. It could be possible that Clementine's mother created a 'truth' for her children that was more bearable than the other 'truth'. The fact that her mother referred to a man who was supposedly her father as a man that "deceived" her is a remarkable choice of words in the context of women who were raped during the genocide, having experienced extensive layers of betrayal. Clementine said that the man who was her father came to visit after persistent questions from her and her brother. Perhaps his invitation was in response to this, as he helped provide answers to Clementine and her brother's questions. Perhaps this man

[49] The camp is not openly advertised as being for those 'conceived in rape' to protect people's privacy, so when they are invited, they are invited for a youth camp, in the general sense, supported by SURF and/or SEVOTA.

was only the father of her younger brother. The many questions and possibilities that played in my mind were an indication of my wish to find out the 'truth'. Yet, definitive answers do not always exist, especially in the post-genocide realm. Instead of a single truth, I received pieces of Clementine's lived experiences, pieces of her puzzle that she chose to share with me. Much like Alice, Clementine carefully controls others' perceptions of her and chooses what knowledge she wishes to disclose. She came to share her story, but it was not 'the story' of a young person conceived in rape. This confirms the danger of thinking that being conceived in rape is at the core of these young people's 'story' and, thus, the core of their being. This replicates narratives around 'children born of war' as fixed representations of the past rather than human beings who move through life. Life is not static. In this interview, I came to know Clementine as the young woman she wanted me to get to know.

Coming to Know the World as a Child

David grew up in Southern Province, where he lived with his maternal grandmother since his mother moved to Kigali with her husband when he was four years old. When he was 16, he moved to Kigali to live with them. His mother would occasionally visit David and his grandmother in Southern Province. When she came to visit, he was happy, and he felt sad whenever she would leave. He did not understand why she left and was not living with them. His biological father's family lived close by as neighbours. Sometimes, they would come to borrow tools and his grandmother would greet them. There seemed to be no problems between them. David would spend time with them in their house, and they would call him "our child" (*umwana wacu*). Other neighbours referred to him as "the son of [father's name]", some referentially and others in a dismissive, angry manner. He said, "I would always hear that". He never saw his father and heard rumours that he had fled after the genocide. David's mother's brothers attended boarding school and would come home for school holidays when he was still a child. When they were home, they would "harass" David by "telling him his ethnicity". David says he did not understand why they did that or what they meant, but it did not feel good. While growing up, David saw other children with their fathers and the things fathers would do for their children. Not having a figure like this in his own life made him sad.

When I asked David if he ever spoke to any of his family members about his knowledge of his conception, he replied, "No, never". Regarding growing up in a close community where everyone knows each other and living close to his father's family, he said, "Growing up in a village where both families are, it is not difficult to know things about people, having information, rumours (*ibihuha*), or truth (*ukuri*)". He explained that his father's family treats him like one of their own, and he considers them family, too. When he visits his home village, he always checks in on them by visiting their house. David's world as a child was comprised of impressions of rumours and truths, and the manner in which people referred to him, such as "the son of", "our child", or by his

"ethnicity", entailed a significant degree of ambiguity – he may not have understood why they referred to him in certain ways, but he remembers what it felt like.

David had never spoken to his mother about how he was conceived, yet he still knew. I have described David's experiences as a child that he shared with me during an interview. Note that he is describing his experiences with both language and context he obtained at a later age to communicate and make sense of these experiences. When I asked how, as a child, he understood what he told me, he said, "As a child, you don't understand these things".

David's words can be further explained by returning to Clara Han's work. In the foreword to *Seeing Like a Child*, Richard Rechtman explains the questions in a child's memory as blanks to be filled in, the golden thread in Han's book (2021: xii):

> Here, the usual questions – where do I come from, who am I, why am I here and not elsewhere, where does my family come from – take a very singular and specific resonance because they are objectively unsolved questions. They are material facts and not just imaginary fantasy. But even if the facts are missing, the fantasy keeps on searching for reality.

Reading these words, I could not help but think that this exactly explains the search of young people in Rwanda when the material facts are missing. Han's work centres around what it is to see like a child "who is puzzling together words and tidbits of perceptions" and "bits of social life that they find around them such that the fragments of experience of war and genocide are not marked out from everyday life but rather dispersed within that life" (2021: 3-4). She explains that in a child's "world-in-the-making", children do not have the vocabulary to articulate a narration that would place experiences in historical perspective since these vocabularies are learned and cannot be assumed in advance. She then traces her own memories, writing, "I find that I cannot myself recall how I know these fragments, when they were told, and under which circumstances. It is as if the context of telling is, for the most part, not available to me, but the affects around the telling are still very much alive" (2021: 54). Young people in Rwanda have also heard fragments about who they are, learning vocabularies without the ability to place them in the larger context of the genocide and their own conception. Mama Keza told me that her daughter once said to her, "How can you love me? I am a child of *Interahamwe*". This idea was something she had learned as a child, not necessarily from her mother, who told me she did love her, but through fragmented pieces of neighbourhood rumours, tones of voices, and the affects of telling her who she was.

Six months after my interview with David in his home in Kigali, I interviewed his mother in the SURF offices. We asked how she felt about the interview, and she replied:

> Apart from trying to be strong, whenever I think about myself, it doesn't feel good. Like today, on my way here, I was thinking about how I am going to go back in time. May God give me the strength to answer all the questions that I will be asked because it brings me back to the old times, but there is no other way.

I told her that she did not have to answer any questions she did not want to and that we could take a break or stop the interview at any time. After that, she spoke for two hours. I had only asked her one question, but Mama David knew what she came to tell us. It seemed that when she said, "There is no other way", she had her own reason to want to speak to us, not to answer our questions but rather to tell us what she wanted us to know. Carine, the female translator who assisted me during the interviews with mothers, occasionally tried to find a moment to translate, but I suggested that we let Mama David tell her story uninterrupted in the way she wanted. I ended up not asking any questions we had prepared, though Carine did ask a few clarifying questions. Mama David told us about her life from her childhood, her experiences during the genocide and its aftermath, her marriage, and her everyday life in Kigali.[50] The interview allowed me to understand David's account through the context of his mother's perspective:

> Mama David: I did not tell him like this way we are talking to each other. He first knew it before I even told him about it. He knew it from families and from the neighbourhood, also from the way he was always being cursed.[51] But he knows it, because he sometimes asks me some questions about the genocide, and from there, I get the opportunity of telling him the history. I also tell him stories of my family, about how his grandfather (father's father) was. A few months ago, I also went to ask for his inheritance from his father's side, but it wasn't easy because I testified in the Gacaca courts against his grandfather.
>
> Carine: Is his grandfather still alive?
>
> Mama David: Yes, he is still alive. I testified against him in the Gacaca courts because I knew everything that he did during the genocide. He was sentenced and went to prison. He accepted the role that he played during the genocide and asked for forgiveness, then later, he was released. But him being released affected my child because even when he went to prison, that is when my son completely left their home and went to live with my mother, because of the harassment from that family; that is what also motivated me to do my best and brought him to live with me. So, when I went to ask for his inheritance, they had

[50] The detailed contents of Mama David's interview are not included here for reasons I discussed in the ethics chapter regarding vicarious trauma.

[51] Mama David refers to "being cursed" in a literal sense, as she spoke of women in her husband's family, her in-laws, casting spells on her, her husband, and David. The topic of sorcery came up throughout the interview, as Mama David believes these spells directly influenced her husband's illness and her business failing. She has visited a 'witch doctor' (*umupfumu*) on numerous occasions, when her sisters-in-law visited her house and 'cursed' them through various interactions she details. An analysis of sorcery as it relates to Mama David's life goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, but her experiences of it had a very real impact on her daily life and David's childhood.

> already sold most parts of the land. They gave him a small piece of land where he can build a house, but it wasn't that easy to get; it was the authorities who made it possible.

From Mama David's interview, I learned that David spent time living with his biological father's family. He did not tell us that himself, indicating how he chose which pieces of knowledge to share with us and which he did not. After Mama David's interview, I wished I knew more about David's experiences with his father's family, and I felt that there were many gaps between his and his mother's account that I wanted to fill, wanting to understand these kinship ties from a perspective of completeness that does not exist. When I wrote to my supervisor about my feelings of not knowing enough and that each time I learned more, more pieces of what I did not know surfaced, this was her response:

> There are always gaps in data and in life; they take specific forms depending on specific circumstances, and the presumption that one can know everything is, I think, erroneous – in life and research! We can only know what we are given to know and what we have managed to do with that. I think of the gaps as gifts just as much as the knowledge is a gift; the gift the gaps offer is learning what we cannot know and trying to figure out why that is so.

Within this research, there was much that I was given to know and much that I was not – much like with the young people I spoke with, who lived with pieces of knowledge they were given, as well as many gaps. The process of filling in these gaps, questioning what they are and why they remain gaps, resembles the process of young people finding out parts about their conception and themselves – like picking up pieces of Alice's broken mirror. Yet, knowledge around violence is not always gifted in the positive meaning of the word; it is also imposed and used to continue the violence from which it arose. In what follows, I show how violent knowledge is transferred between people in communities, between children, and how mothers try to shield their children from this, gifting them with alternative truths to counter the violence of knowing violence.

Making and Unmaking Worlds

Amanda shared with us her mother's story as it was told to her, in addition to her own:

> My mother decided to move back to a very remote village in South Province, where she used to live before the genocide. There was a small house that she found empty, and she decided to live there. She was struggling, and people were saying she was a mad woman. She was always crying when her baby Amanda was crying. The people in the village were always telling her she would die because she had no one to take care of her and her baby. She had two aunts who were alive and gave her a small piece of land to cultivate. They did not give her the land she had rights to, only a small piece,

> so she refused to sign the papers. My mother left them and continued struggling by herself. The time came when a friend of my mother, who she used to pray with, brought us to another village and gave us a house in a village that was less remote and closer to the road. This is where I grew up.

Amanda said that when she was growing up, she was always fighting with her mother. She told us that her mother was very "traumatised" (*ihungabana*) and said, "I might have trauma, too". Amanda explained that her mother used to tell her, "You are the cause of me being like this; if it wasn't for you, I would be having another life". People in the village were always telling Amanda that she was Congolese, that she came from Congo; "I grew up listening to this". When she heard these rumours, she would go to her mother and ask her, "Where is my father? People say that I come from Congo, they say that I don't have a father, they say that I'm not Rwandan". Amanda's mother then took her to the small house they used to live in South Province on their aunts' land and told Amanda, "This is Congo. We used to live here before the genocide; this is where your father died, and my family was killed. Do you see that I also don't have my father and mother? They were also killed". Amanda said that her mother lied to her when she said that Congo was there, and she felt that it was easy for her mother to lie because no one lived there anymore to tell her differently.

After visiting what she thought was Congo, Amanda said, she spent about a week in a good mood, but people kept harassing her, and she became more reserved. She barely ate or drank anything, so her mother took her to the hospital. They could not find anything wrong with her. This was when she was about six or seven years old. Around that time, Amanda was asked her parents' names at school, but she could only give her mother's name. The teachers asked who her father was. Amanda replied angrily, "If you know him, go and ask him, don't ask me". The teacher sent her home to get her mother. Her mother came to school to explain the situation and made up a name. When they got home, Amanda asked her mother, "Would you please tell me who my father is? Did he not have a family? Was he born alone?" That was the beginning of many fights they had; Amanda wanting to know, her mother not wanting to say. When they fought, they would spend a week without talking to each other while living in the same house. Amanda explained that when she was in school, she would just sit there and not play with other kids. She had no friends at school and was always alone, but when the teacher asked a question, she would reply because, Amanda said, she was good at school. At home, they sometimes did not have food, and Amanda went to sleep without eating. She had no books, and she sometimes went to school without shoes. Amanda thought to herself that maybe if she had a father, she would be living a different life. She saw that her mother did her best, but they still struggled.

When Amanda was 13 years old, her mother sat down with her and told her the story about how she was conceived. She told Amanda about how she returned from Congo. When she was in a border town, Amanda, a week old at the time, was in a bad state; the shape of her head was not right, as if the top was pushed in. She carried her baby on her back but kept removing her to check

if she was still alive. She said she had given her a cup of water, and Amanda had finished it all. She told her baby, "If you don't die now, you will not die" – determined to keep her baby alive.

To clarify what Amanda told us, her mother was raped in the DRC, where she fled to or was taken during the genocide. Where they lived as Amanda was growing up, people knew this and told Amanda she was from Congo because her biological father was from or was assumed to be from Congo. After the genocide, Mama Amanda crossed the border and travelled back to her hometown in Southern Province (the imagined Congo she told Amanda about); yet this is not where they lived when Amanda was in school and heard rumours about her father being "from Congo"; that place was close to the imagined Congo and, thus, people knew about Mama Amanda's experiences during the genocide.

Knowledge about her father, or the lack thereof, was a site of contestation between Amanda and her mother. Amanda had many questions, prompted by those around her, that her mother tried to provide answers to in a way that she considered protective of Amanda's perception of the world; the imagined Congo was a quiet place where no one lived rather than the place where her mother was raped, and other violence occurred. Her mother's reactions towards Amanda when these questions kept imposing on the stability of their family life came from a place of trauma and rejection by her family.

In light of this, Mama Amanda's statement, "If it wasn't for you, I would have a different life", can be interpreted in several ways. For instance, perhaps Amanda's mother wished that Amanda was never born – that is how Amanda understood it as a child, even though Amanda's mother later told her that she decided to take care of Amanda immediately after she was born, and they crossed the border when Amanda was ill. Amanda also told us about a confrontation between her mother and her aunties when Amanda was still a baby, during which her aunts said they would kill baby Amanda since she was a "child of *Interahamwe*". As discussed earlier in this chapter, this made baby Amanda seem like a dangerous 'enemy'. Mama Amanda responded by saying, "Then you will have to dig two graves because you would have to kill me, too". When Amanda told us this, she smiled. Her mother had protected her, chosen her, even when Amanda was told that if she were never born, her mother "would have a different life". Amanda's mother navigates her own world, as well as Amanda's, by protecting her from these violent past moments, a world full of ambiguities and alternative worlds, such as 'Congo'.

Mothers used fantasy to protect their children with alternate truths of genocidal violence. Amanda's imaginings of the different life she might have had with a father lends itself to a discussion regarding how the imaginary plays a role in young people's realities through what I call 'father fantasies'. Erica wanted to know her father because knowing him would give her a place to call home. Clementine felt sadness about the absence of her father, regardless of how that father materialised. Young people often mentioned that they wondered what their lives would have

looked like with a father, someone to take care of them. Their interpretations were idealised around a caring male figure – a pater familias – rather than a progenitor. Thus, I interpret young people's 'father fantasies' as a way for them to escape their current realities, which often entail feeling lonely and out of place through rejection and exclusion, to a different reality where a father figure cares for them in ways their mothers cannot. In these fantasy places, young people felt cared for and at home. What this tells us about social worlds after (sexual) violence is that they are encompassed by knowing, unknowing, making, and unmaking worlds.

Rumours and Questions

Rumours within the community or being called 'bad names' by neighbours and other children led many of the young people I spoke with to grow up with questions. Thus, despite NGOs insisting on 'disclosure' being an event, it cannot be seen as a one-off conversation or a particular moment in time. Rather, disclosure tends to encompass weaving together the fragmented knowledge these young people grew up with, and this quest for answers was often a cause for conflict.

Growing up, Mariya always had questions about the reason why she was not like others. She asked herself, "Why do I not have someone to call 'Papa' when other kids always call their father?" People in her neighbourhood continuously called her a "daughter of *Interahamwe*", a moniker that continues today. Community members told her that her mother birthed a bastard (*ikinyendaro*) and that Mariya would, too. When asked about the worst thing she remembered about her childhood, she became emotional, covering her eyes with her fingers. "Being discriminated against by other children in the neighbourhood", she said.

When Eric was young, other children told him that his stepfather was not his real father. He used to ask his mother about it, but she would have a "crisis of trauma" (*ihugabana*). Every year in April, during the commemoration period, she would "get a trauma" when she saw him. Eric told us that he lost his love for his mother because she would always reject his questions. After his mother received counselling, he said she came to see him to ask for forgiveness for the way she used to treat him. He explained that it was not her fault, that she was "always having bad memories", and that he had eventually forgiven her. His mother told him about his conception when he was 16 years old. He remembered the exact date: the 26th of August 2011. Knowing that he had been conceived during the genocide, Eric said, made him feel good because he could finally understand his mother. After hearing his mother's story, he began helping her. "I felt that I was human again", he said.

Though Eric could remember the date of his mother's disclosure, implying that it was a distinct moment in time, it was actually the cumulation of a prolonged period of other children bullying him when he was young, telling him that his stepfather was not his "real father". Eric said that they were the first people he told after his conversation with his mother, telling them, "I know who my

father is; I know my story". Eric described how he became aggressive with those who still bullied him about his conception, saying that he would get into fights with them. "I did not want them to talk about it", he said, "I was defending my history".

The experiences of both Mariya and Eric show how knowledge is transmitted in communities and between children. Discrimination from other children and being bullied while growing up prompted young people to ask their mothers questions about their births that often went unanswered. Though Eric did experience his moment of 'disclosure' as a decisive point in time that transformed his relationship with his mother, it was not the 'revelation' that NGOs anticipate so much as a consolidation of his prior knowledge through a narrative account that brought it into coherence. This also shows how much the information shared by others shaped their childhood and why mothers would provide alternative realities, or imagined worlds, for their children.

This latter point is exemplified in the narrative of Mama Linda, whom I first met at her house in a town about an hour outside of Kigali when we interviewed Linda. My first thought when meeting Mama Linda was how young she looked. She told us that she was a young teenager during the genocide and had been raped by the son of a woman who had taken her into her home to hide her. Below is her account of finding out that she was pregnant, still a child herself; her family's reaction and push for an abortion which she refused; Linda growing up and hearing at school that her father was an Interahamwe; one of the uncles helping by telling Linda an alternative story; and eventually her 'disclosure' to Linda with support from SURF and SEVOTA.

> It was very hard for people to come and rescue me from the place where that boy had taken me in captivity. I was still young; I didn't know anything about pregnancy. Time came when I started feeling the baby kicking in my belly; that is when I noticed that there was something unusual in my belly. They took me to the hospital and found that I was pregnant. I was living with my sister only; we were children (*twari abana*). I started wondering how I will give birth. My little sister went and told it to older people, then they took me to take care of me. By then, there was no market where I could go and buy clothes for me to even hold the child. I was always thinking about how I will give birth. It was very hard for me. Now, problems became even worse because people didn't want me to keep that pregnancy. Someone came and told me, "Let's get rid of it, no problem", but I was thinking that if I do the abortion, God will punish me. That was also a problem for me. My uncles even took me to the hospital to do an abortion by force; I refused and escaped. I went back home. I said to myself that even if it is hard for me, let me be patient *(reka nihangane - from kwihangana),* time will come, and I will deliver this baby. I went through a lot, but I was patient *(ndihangana – from kwihangana*). People hated me; they treated me as someone with no value (*umuntu udafite agaciro*), someone who doesn't deserve to live in the family, but I was patient (*ndihangana*), I did my best (*mbyitwaramo*) and became strong (*nakomeye*). I became

patient (*nkihangana*). I said let me be patient until I give birth. You see, there were people who lived on the same hill [neighbourhood] who knew me. I have two uncles (mother's brothers), and they were both thinking that an abortion was the solution, thinking that my life could go on (*ubuzima buzakomeza*). I was a child. They thought that if I give birth to that child, it will cause problems. In the family, they didn't want to see a child of the people who killed (*umwana w'abantu bishe*).

I was living with my little sister. A man who was my father's friend lived in Kigali and took me in. He and his wife decided to take care of me until I give birth. They were the ones who took me to the hospital to give birth and bought nice things for me that I needed as a mother to take care of the baby. They even bought clothes for the baby. They took very good care of me, and I stayed with them as they continued to care for me and the baby. They are the ones who helped me, comforted me, and when my child would get sick, they would take me to the hospital. I was also still a child to the extent where I would sleep during the night and forget to cover the baby. The next morning, the baby would get sick because of too much coldness, and they would immediately accompany me to the hospital. They took good care of me and my child. Until now, that man is my friend, he's my parent, he loves Linda so much; up to now, he is still a true parent to me (*umubyeyi wanjye nyine*).

After giving birth, I had a lot of trauma, but I started loving her so much when she was in primary school. Before, when she was still young, when she was very small, I looked at her and wondered if she will grow up, wondering if I will have a life and raise a child so that that child can eat. I didn't have anywhere to live, because even if I was staying at that man's place, I wasn't happy there, I felt like it was not my home. I felt like a time would come when they will abandon me. I was wondering where I would take the baby, wondering if they will love her if I take her to my hometown.

Basically, when Linda was a small baby, I felt like I wouldn't be able to raise her. Then, that man proposed that I take Linda to the orphanage. I asked him if I will be able to get my child back from the orphanage once I had grown up, after I could make a living. He told me no. He told me that I might not get her back. He said that they might even take her abroad to have a good life there without me. I told him that if that was the case, I can't give them my child. I told him that I thought that they were going to take care of her and after I had grown up, they give me my child back. He told me no, there is a high chance of not getting her back. That made me love her. I felt like I had no choice but to love her as my own child; no one else would love my child for me.

> Time came, there is a form you have to fill when you take the baby for immunization. Because I didn't know the names of her father, I wrote the names of my father. As she was growing up, she was asking me if her father had the same names as my father; she grew up without knowing it. When she was in primary four, we had moved from a city where we lived. Actually, in the city, everyone is busy with their lives, no one cares about you. So, when we came to live here in the village, people started talking because they knew it. Parents would be having a conversation talking about me, and their children would hear it. Then, when they got to school, they told it to Linda. When she came back from school, she came and told me, "*Maman*, someone at school said that my father was an *Interahamwe*"; I told her that I didn't know anything about it.
>
> That time, I had a very serious trauma (*ndahungabana)*.[52] One of my uncles came to know about it, then he immediately came to see us. He helped me; he told Linda not to listen to those children, they don't know what they are talking about. He asked Linda, "Don't you know that I'm your grandfather? Then am I an *Interahamwe*?" She replied, "No". He told her that those people were saying things they don't know. Because Linda was still young, she accepted it as the truth, but she kept thinking about it.
>
> That is where I got the courage (*imbaraga*) to tell her how she was born. Before that, I couldn't talk about it. That is when we started receiving trainings. At first, we started to be trained by Kanyarwanda with SEVOTA; they are the ones who were training us until we got the courage to tell it to our children. Then, later on, we met SURF, and they gave us a lot of trainings, and the time came when we were even attending those trainings with our children. That is where we got the courage to tell them the truth. That is when Linda came to know the truth of how she was born and accepted it. It didn't hurt her anymore. As she grew up, she understood that that is how things went, there's nothing she could do about it. When I told her, I was so sad in that moment because she was also crying, but I also felt relieved in my heart (*numvise nduhutse mu mutima*).

Mama Linda's testimony of her experiences holds many insights regarding how kinship works in the aftermath of sexual violence, including what she came to know about her pregnancy and her child and what she decided (not) to tell her child. She used the term *kwihangana* (withstanding, to be patient) frequently. Zraly and Kagoyire (2021) frame this term as "resilience" in their study of intergenerational and collective resilience. In an earlier article (2010), they explain *kwihangana* as a way for survivors of genocidal rape to live with their suffering. They note, "*Kwihangana* was found to be an intrapsychic creative process of drawing strength from within the self in order to

[52] Guhungabana – "to have a trauma" in this case is refers to a traumatic crisis, a breakdown in the moment, rather than trauma that is lived with continuously.

withstand suffering" (2010: 1662). Mama Linda spoke of *kwihangana* in terms of her pregnancy, of withstanding the pain and fear of bearing a child she did not want while still being a child herself. She also used the term *gukomeza ubuzima*, which Zraly and Nyiramzinyoye explain as "a sense of moving forward in life and living on despite the ongoing struggles of accepting myriad problems and fighting for survival" (2010: 1662). "Taken together," *Kwihangana* (withstanding), *gukomeza ubuzima* (continuing life), and *kwongera kubaho* (living again) "describe an orientation to the world that involved being socially connected to like others in order to make meaning, establish normalcy, and endure suffering in daily life. Taken in isolation, each of these processes may be considered a coping strategy, such as 'thought control' and 'fortifying positive affect'" (Zraly and Nyiramzinyoye, 2010: 1662). Interestingly, Mama Linda did not use the term *gukomeza ubuzima* to refer to her own way of continuing life but rather to that what her uncles proposed when "they were both thinking that an abortion was the solution, thinking that my life could go on (*ubuzima buzakomeza*)" because she was a child.

In much of the literature, as well as in descriptions of extended family in this study, the rejection by a mother's extended family is often portrayed as malevolent. Yet, the perspectives of these individuals are not sufficiently explored (including in this study). In Mama Linda's testimony, for example, her uncles can also be seen for their roles as uncles in the family, protecting their niece from an unborn baby that would "cause problems" not only for them but also for her, since she was still a child herself and deserving of the guiding opinion of her uncles. As Theidon (2023) has stressed, in response to Carpenter's (2007) praise for "courageous women" who kept their children despite familial and communal disapproval, "Where does that leave the rest of the women?" (3) Theidon states that a "survivor-centred" perspective on international agendas cannot be discussed "without addressing women's right to abortion… and to acknowledge that some women may experience these pregnancies and babies *as a harm done to them*" (2023: 3). I add to this, where does it leave the men who were not "courageous" enough to support the pregnant girls in their family? Where is their point of view? Although Mama Linda's uncles did not initially support her decision to bear and birth Linda, one of the uncles did assist Mama Linda in creating an imagined story for Linda's questions, saying he was her grandfather and that Linda was not "of an *Interahamwe*"; thus protecting Linda from learning about knowledge that could potentially hurt her – a gesture of care and protection, as he had wanted to protect Linda when she was pregnant.

Mama Linda's story is an example of the many ways mothers choose to protect their children and choose to have them. It is also another clear example of how knowledge is transferred from neighbours to neighbourhood children and, eventually, to individual children. We can see how Linda held on to this knowledge that did not make sense to her at the time and how her mother and uncle crafted a story that made sense of this knowledge, although her "knowing" was something that stayed with her. Linda's experiences parallel David's in that he "knew" about his conception without speaking to his mother about it. Mariya and Eric also "knew" pieces of what they were told, and making sense of these pieces was a long process of questions and confrontations between

young people and their mothers, in which their mothers creatively found ways to provide answers without having to transfer painful truths onto their children.

Sharing and Shielding Knowledge

Throughout the research, the second to last question in each interview asked for advice. I asked young people for their advice for children conceived in rape in other places around the world, and I asked women's advice for mothers like them. This question always provoked profound answers. For instance, Mama Keza replied:

> You should have a vision of your life. I know you can't forget about it, even if you can begin in the morning while seeing good things until the evening, you can't spend a day without thinking about it. It lives within us.

In sharing her everyday experience of her memories living "within" her, Mama Keza displayed a distinct awareness of what sharing her story entails for the one receiving it. As the final question, I asked if there was something else she would like to say that was "on her heart", and she said:

> I want to thank you because this research might help other women who were raped, and you taking your time and thinking about it is an act of bravery because you are still young to listen to such stories, and the more you hear these things, the more they become, the more they become... When someone tells you, for you hear it in your ears, for you to be able to receive it, I thank you because you think of us day by day, you spend the night thinking of us. May God bless you, is what I ask for you.

In her beautiful Kinyarwanda prose, Mama Keza encapsulates how knowledge is held and transferred by mirroring her "day[s] without thinking about it" to mine. In thanking me for conducting this research, she not only expressed what it means to her and other women but also what it will mean to me. By saying, "the more you hear these things, the more they become", she illustrated the conduits of the knowledge of violence as it exists within and between people, how it is felt and how it becomes a part of oneself. This was not solely an exchange of words containing history but also an exchange between our bodies. My ears became an entry point for her knowledge to enter my body, where she said I would receive it and hold it as it stays within me day and night. Fiona Ross (2001: 250) begins her article on speech and silence with a description of the physical characteristics of the ear as "deeply grooved and rigid" cartilage and "soft pliable" lobule on the outer extremity, a description that serves to introduce her "deeply personal account of loss and grieving" as well as her argument regarding "the difficulties in listening and attending to stories of pain and loss". The physical characteristics of the ear, from soft to rigid, are a beautiful metaphor for what happens to violent knowledge as it is transformed from the outer ear to become grooved

within the body. Mama Keza's perception of this transfer and how the reception of her stories by others – calling it an act of bravery – may have a potentially harmful impact on others is important in understanding what mothers might choose to avoid sharing with their children.

In this chapter, I have discussed the various ways mothers have protected their children from what they considered painful truths and have taken action to shield their children from living with the knowledge of their conception. This knowledge of children's violent conception exemplifies Veena Das's (1996, 2000) notion of "poisonous knowledge", a knowing of violence that has devastated the social. Mothers, aware of how their children will have to carry this knowledge, often wish to avoid transferring this to their children; thus, they create alternative, non-poisonous worlds until they decide to disclose or suggest to others that disclosure has been made so that others can take on the burden of knowing. As mothers work to prevent their children from living with poisonous knowledge, the intergenerational dangers inherent to the everyday become apparent. Das describes how women keep poisonous knowledge inside, carrying it within them, almost like pregnancy. Here, over time, it is given life of a particular kind. As Das explains, the violation of women's bodies was never made public; instead, they used the metaphor of "a woman drinking poison and keeping it within her" and "using metaphors of pregnancy – hiding pain, giving it a home just as a child is given a home in the woman's body" (1996: 85). Yet, Das notes, "the only difference is that unlike the child, which the woman will be able to offer to the husband, this holding of the pain inside must never be allowed to be born" (1996: 85). Das further states that poisonous knowledge circulating in the everyday is different from other threats that pose a danger to one's futures as it is a threat to the present. Interestingly, the children of women who carry and hold this poisonous knowledge within themselves can be seen as both the present *and* the future – the next generation. Hence, when poisonous knowledge is birthed through mothers sharing it with the children they birthed, it becomes something more – it gives life to poisonous futures.

In this discussion thus far, we have started answering the question by Das et al. (2001), "How does one contain and seal off the violence that might poison the life of future generations?". In this chapter, we saw how women and others who help create elaborate alternative realities for their children do so as a way of sealing off the violence. Ideas and concepts around the psychology of sharing experiences and "speaking about trauma" as a method of cathartic release for women themselves does not necessarily take into account this transfer towards the receiver, especially if the receiver is their child. Even though children may receive fragmented pieces of knowledge from their surroundings, I found that women were aware of the physicality that accompanies a transfer of words – Mama Keza refer to the ear, and Mama Jacques limiting physicality between her and her son when transferring hurtful knowledge – and mothers thus tried to contain this poisonous knowledge within themselves, using their own bodies as a shield against a violent past and creating a barrier to prevent this past from taking hold of their children in the present. However, all the young people in this research were eventually told by their mothers. Mama Linda spoke of the

many trainings she attended where she got "the courage (*imbaraga*)" to tell Linda how she was conceived. In these trainings, women received counselling on how to tell their children and how to raise their carefully constructed barrier as a result of certain kinds of pressure from their social worlds. Their children's social worlds encompassed rumours and statements about their past, about who their progenitors were. These put pressure on mothers' abilities to contain this poison as it spilt over from the communities to their children through rumours, taunting, exclusion, and "bad names". Hence, "sealing off" the violence from future generations is work that cannot be done individually. Nor is it impermeable. The barriers mothers and others make to prevent knowing often have holes in them, much like the walls of many Rwandan houses that are riddled with bullet holes.

Jacques' mother put a physical barrier between herself and her son when she created a moment in which she would transfer the knowledge of her past onto him. Jacques told us that he was at home in another room when his mother had a visitor. The walls separating rooms in Rwandan houses usually do not reach the ceiling, and the empty spaces carry sound, as do the curtained doors between different rooms. Mama Jacques told her friend who was visiting about her experiences during the genocide and how Jacques was conceived. She knew he could hear her in the other room if he wanted to, but he also had the opportunity to not receive this knowledge and leave a situation he was not directly taking part in. Jacques did hear her, though, and this is how he came to know. They never spoke about it directly. It stands out that his mother had put physical barriers between herself and her son when this knowledge entered the physicality of the house, the space they shared, and in doing so, she left room for Jacques to receive it or not. This situation is similar to others where children generally come to know things in social worlds, they listen to those around them and overhear things. There is something about the indirectness of this situation that seems to me as if Jacques could fill new pieces into the layers of knowledge he already possessed, and this was just an additional layer.

How Jacques 'came to know' is very different to Eric's experience, Eric having had a direct conversation with his mother whereas Jacques was told in an indirect manner. The different modes through which knowledge was transferred show the variety of experiences with 'disclosure' and the considerations that are at play for mothers who share their deeply painful past.

It is not only mothers who keep 'poisonous knowledge' within themselves; on occasion, young people do, too. The violence that mothers experienced was often not acted upon them in isolation from family or community members and pass on certain types of knowledge to young people as I have discussed above. Thus, when 'poisonous knowledge' is spread in communities, it spills over to children, who then try to contain it again, hiding that they have this knowledge from their mothers to avoid hurting them and preventing their mothers from having to live with the additional painful truth of their child knowing.

Therese kept her knowledge about her mother's rape to herself, never discussed it with her. Therese grew up living with her mother and her grandmother. She was around five years old when her grandmother died; "It was as if she was sleeping", she recalled. Therese said that her best memory from when she grew up was the way her grandmother loved her. While growing up, her mother was always "lonely and quiet" and had a certain nervousness about her. She always told Therese when it was getting dark, "Come home early, and we sleep". Therese, like many others, was asked her father's name in school, and she came home asking her mother for his name. Her mother did not reply and began crying for a long time. Therese asked if her mother cried because Therese did not have any siblings. Her mother did not answer. Therese mentioned how she would pray for answers but never asked her mother again to avoid hurting her. Eventually, five years before we spoke, she heard about her conception from her neighbours. They told her that during the genocide, her mother fled to her older sister's house, where her sister's husband, her mother's brother-in-law, raped her. Therese said she then understood why she did not have any siblings and why, when a neighbour asked if her mother would want to get married, her mother said, "I don't want my child to have a bad life", and spent the next few days in sadness, not speaking. Therese said she now understood her mother's reply to mean that her mother does not trust men and is protective of her. She explained that her mother's older sister still lives with her husband and that he is an old man now. Neither Therese nor her mother ever see or speak to them. Therese does not want to see them. She has never spoken to her mother about it; Therese said that was unthinkable. She has never spoken to anyone about these details after she found out. She kept her 'poisonous knowledge' to herself, within herself.

In the aftermath of this research, I have found that I share parts of Mama Keza's awareness: her awareness of what her transfer of knowledge would do to me physically, from my ears to my mind to my restless body at night. My awareness was rather subconscious until I reflected on her words through writing. Her words, "the more you hear these things, the more they become", were initially translated as "these stories go beyond our imagination" – and they do. As I have explained, I realised that I was careful about sharing stories of my research with others because I did not want to place images in people's minds that I knew would stay there. I was aware of how the knowledge I obtained settled in my body. Thus, when speaking about my research, I created barriers between myself and others, too – sealing off the violence.

7. Kwibuka Twiyubaka – Remembering and Rebuilding Ourselves

This chapter focuses on the public and the private spheres of remembering and rebuilding the post-genocide landscape, including the role of NGOs and civil society organisations. I show the dangers of knowledge that had previously been carefully shielded as it enters the public space, addressing how the public disclosure of women's testimonies and children's 'being of rape' affect the next generation. In the previous chapter, I examined how poisonous knowledge is transmitted and how violent pasts cannot always be "sealed off" for the generation after. What happens when this enters public life? I explore this question by illustrating how the national commemoration slogan "*kwibuka twiyubaka*" (remembering and rebuilding ourselves) or, in English, 'remember, unite, renew',[53] takes shape in the lives of young people as they engage in *kwiyubaka* (building oneself).[54]

Rwandan verbs become reflexive when the prefix *ku-* is replaced with *kwi-*, such as *kubaka,* meaning to build, becoming *kwiyubaka,* meaning to build oneself. *Twiyubaka* is the plural form of *kwiyubaka,* meaning to build ourselves. Hence, the commemoration slogan *kwibuka* (to remember) *twiyubaka* (building ourselves) refers to a parallel approach of looking back while simultaneously looking forward. Through *kwiyubaka,* young people's apparent fixed connections to the past and their conception can be transformed by becoming a 'person of value' (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*) or the parent of someone rather than 'a child of rape'.

Every year from April to July, for the 100 days that the genocide took place, Rwanda commemorates the 1994 genocide. The yearly event is called *Kwibuka* (to remember), and the slogan *kwibuka twiyubaka* is prominently displayed in public spaces, such as on office buildings or banners on the streets, as well as through various forms of media, including radio broadcasts and social media. *Kwibuka twiyubaka* holds a physical outer presence in people's day-to-day lives as a reminder by the state that "we remember and we (re)build". Yet, this is also an inner notion that Rwandans grapple with in their private, social everyday lives. *Kwibuka twiyubaka* is a country-wide shared common yearly practice, but it also reflects the very private work that goes into remembering and rebuilding oneself in the aftermath of violence.

The idea of acknowledging the past while looking forward illustrates how Rwanda as a country reflects on its recovery after 1994. Rwanda has experienced high economic growth rates in recent

[53] 'Remember, unite, renew' is the English version of the slogan used in Rwanda, but it is not a literal translation of *kwibuka twiyubaka.*In my analysis, I use the translated terms for accuracy of the message most Rwandans engage with in Kinyarwanda.

[54] The literal translation of *kwibuka* is 'to remember', while *twiyubaka* means 'we build ourselves'; thus, I translate *kwibuka twiyubaka* as 'remembering and rebuilding ourselves'. In terms of the national approach to the commemoration and its focus on recovery after the 1994 genocide, most translations of *kwiyubaka* focus on rebuilding rather than solely building. The yearly slogan *kwibuka twiyubaka* is the same each year, with the event being called *Kwibuka*. I attended Kwibuka 24 in 2018, Kwibuka 25 in 2019, and Kwibuka 27 in 2021. In 2020, Kwibuka 26 was held during the COVID-19 pandemic.

years, evidenced by its rapid infrastructural development and positioning as an innovation and investment hub in the region. A general sense of possibility for economic opportunities can be felt in Kigali, although this contrasts with the countryside, where this economic growth has yet to fully materialise. When I lived in Kigali, I generally felt this sense of possibility and the work towards "building" the country. Through a lively arts scene, discussion evenings and workshops for youth and scholars, large international conferences, the "Visit Rwanda" campaign attracting an increased number of tourists, and new businesses popping up all around Kigali, this sense of possibility is palpable.

At the time of this research, between 2019 and 2021, many young people had recently graduated high school and were in a transitionary phase in their lives, moving out of their school environments or childhood homes. They were aspiring to own land, get married, attend university, or find jobs in the cities. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to spend time with these individuals in different places, such as their university campuses, the towns they lived in for work, or their childhood home villages. In these places, I observed the interplay between *kwibuka* and *kwiyubaka*, remembering and (re)building. I explored how young people find ways to live with the impositions of the past, through memories or in a more material sense, that is, through their perceived embodiment of violence as being 'born of rape'. I examined whether, and if so, how, they tried to escape this static connection to the conditions of their conception, finding that they do not necessarily 'move on' but move away from the past.

The national post-genocide narratives emphasise the dichotomy between 'survivors' and 'perpetrators', where most citizens belong to one group or the other. While reference to ethnic identities is now forbidden, with the government launching a national "*Ndi Umunyarwanda*" (I am Rwandan) campaign to unify Rwandans, most still identify as either Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa, but this is not openly spoken about. However, I noticed that ethnicity continued to be discussed privately, for example, when Theogene, my housekeeper, told me he was Hutu after he had found my photography book or when friends mentioned that ethnicity still factors into marital decisions. On multiple occasions, people would refer to "survivors" to tell me they are Tutsi, such as by saying "they are survivors" or "the people that were hunted during the genocide".

The young people I spoke with expressed to me that "*Ndi Umunyarwanda*" was important to them. Being of mixed Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities, these individuals struggled with their sense of belonging in a still-divided society (Hamel, 2016). As ethnic categories are conflated with 'survivors' being Tutsi and 'perpetrators' being Hutu, children conceived in rape were not seen as fitting into either category, leaving no clear space for them in society, and they are not recognised as survivors by the state.[55] As Marie-Eve Hamel (2016: 302) notes in her study on the ethnic belonging of children conceived in rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda:

[55] Rwanda has a Genocide Survivors Assistance Fund (FARG) that provides financial compensation and support to survivors of the genocide. To qualify for FARG assistance, one must be identified as Tutsi and lived in Rwanda during

> Many children born out of rape were perceived as the 'other', as children who do not belong to the mother's group and whose rights are not recognised by the state. This social exclusion prevents them from enjoying full cultural membership in their mother's group. Their exclusion from their father's ethnic group ensures that some children remain in an ethnic limbo, where they possess characteristics of both ethnic groups but are denied a sense of belonging to either of them.

In this context, young people manoeuvre the yearly commemoration period, where dichotomies and a sense of (un)belonging are brought to the forefront, sometimes destabilising their relationships. This was illustrated by a distressing experience Alice told me about during her interview in my house, discussed in the previous chapter. When Alice attended a commemoration event, her older sister, with whom she had a tense relationship, said to her, "What are you doing here? You did this". Alice interpreted this as being unwelcome in spaces for genocide survivors despite feeling like one herself. The external ascription of her identity did not sit with her intimate sense of self.

Kwiyubaka – Rebuilding Oneself

As discussed in the previous chapters, young people's childhoods were often characterised by their perception as 'children of *Interahamwe*', manifestations of a violent and dangerous past. As young people moved from childhood to adulthood, it became important for them to be seen as achieving things in life, to be recognised, as one young man described it, as being "a person of value" (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*). At the time of this research, most of the young people I spoke with had recently left high school and were in a transitionary phase, a point in their lives when they were moving out of their school environments or mothers' homes and looking to have their own land, get married, attend university, or find a job elsewhere. Moving away from home to attend boarding school or university allowed them to create opportunities for themselves to move away from perceptions of them being 'children of bad memories'.[56] In doing so, they carved out spaces for themselves away from the limitations and exclusions they experienced due to their perceived connection to the past, a past that holds a constant, albeit uncertain, place in their social worlds. Fourteen of the 32 young people I interviewed moved to places where others did not know their families or histories, an opportunity they did not have in their home villages where people widely 'knew'. In this newfound space of 'anonymity' (Anumol and Munderere, 2023), they were able to

---

the genocide, while children must have been born before the 31st of December 1994. Descent is determined through one's father. The children conceived through genocidal rape were born in 1995.

[56] Due to the socio-economic hardships the young people faced growing up, many had been in and out of school, since mothers often could not afford school fees, or they moved around a lot as mothers were finding places to live, often staying in temporary housing because they did not own land. This financial insecurity contributed to many experiencing delays in their school trajectories, some having just finished high school at 24 years old while others were still attending boarding school.

be seen as individuals removed from connotations of the past and build themselves into a "person of value" who could take care of themselves and others. For young men especially, this meant doing well financially in order to support their mothers and other family members, as is expected from many young men in the Rwandan context. Young men said this performance of socially valued roles opened possibilities for reconciliation with family members who had rejected them, allowing them to "come back", as I was told.

Take, for example, Eric, whom I first met in 2019 when he lived with his mother, her husband, and five siblings in a small village. Mama Eric and her husband were married before the genocide and had a son together, Eric's older brother. During the genocide, his mother and her husband fled and were separated. Eric's mother was then raped and impregnated. After the genocide, Mama Eric and her husband found each other and continued to live and have more children together. Growing up, Mama Eric's husband treated Eric differently than his other siblings, and their relationship was particularly strained due to the fact that Mama Eric's husband refused to pay for his school fees and materials even though he paid for those of Eric's siblings.[57] This, Eric said, was the worst thing to happen to him during his childhood because it precluded him from studying and pursuing his intended career. Despite this, he is now a successful salesman.

When I returned to Rwanda in November 2020, Eric invited me to visit him at his growing business, geographically far away from the village he grew up in. I could see how comfortable he was in this place and with his co-workers. I asked him what they knew of his background, and he said that he told only one of his co-workers, a friend who helped him find the job. Clearly, the anonymity of his current space did allow him to choose who to tell and who not to tell, unlike in his home village, where people in his community all 'knew'. Here, on the other side of the country, he is considered a hard-working person who does his job well. How he is perceived reflects his own actions instead of other people's actions in the past. Additionally, Eric's career development and life choices had a direct impact on his strained relationships with his mother and her husband at home, which had improved.

Similarly, in 2019, I met Maurice, who, at the time, lived alone, close to his workplace. Growing up, he had experienced violent abuse at the hands of his mother's siblings, who survived the genocide. They told Mama Maurice, "This child is not of any use". She was also beaten by her brothers since, as they said, she brought a "bastard" (*ikinyendaro*) into their family. They ultimately sent her and Maurice away to live by themselves in the same village. During his childhood, Maurice did not speak to his mother's family members, and, as he described it, they had no relationship at all. When Maurice first got a job as a driver for his current boss, his family members started contacting him, yet his mother advised him not to trust her brothers as they had not wanted to know Maurice prior to being employed and their intentions were not clear to her. Later on, his boss promoted him to manager of one of his companies. Maurice said, "After I

[57] Eric refers to this man as his mother's husband, reserving the term 'papa' for his biological father.

finished high school, and my life continued to change, my family members became closer to me because I have a vision for my life, and I am settled". He explained that family members who had previously rejected him began calling him, but he was "not ready" to meet them in person. They also started calling and visiting his mother occasionally. When I visited Maurice in 2021, he had moved to Kigali in search of better financial opportunities and to live with his cousin, the daughter of his mother's brother, and her young child. The parallels between Maurice moving to Kigali and being promoted in his job and his family members reaching out to him, ultimately living with his cousin.

As many Rwandans I spoke with described, these are examples of *kwiyubaka*, building oneself. They also show the transformative nature of *kwiyubaka* as these two young men moved away from their homes. Young people's financial contributions to their families and becoming a 'useful' person financially created possibilities for family members who had refused or denied them as kin in the past to "come back". These are not solely financial transactions but are rooted in deeper meanings of entering adulthood (Christiansen et al., 2006). By becoming "a person of value" through spaces of anonymity, young people not only built themselves; they also (re)built their family relations. They managed to carve out spaces for themselves to use the interplay between *kwibuka* and *kwiyubaka*, to build oneself to transform connections to the past associated with their being.

As Veena Das reflects on healing (DiFruscia, 2010: 141):

> The notion of healing carried two ideas: the idea of endurance, and the idea of the capacity to establish a particular relationship to death. Now, that is a very strange way of defining healing, but it really came from my very long experience of working with people who I did not start by thinking or choosing because they were the subjects of violence. But I was very struck by the ways in which pain does write itself enduringly on people's lives. It was not about a thunderous voice of pain but about the manners in which pain was woven into the patterns of life. So, for me, being attentive to acknowledgement in relationship to pain is not a question of locating broken lives and healed ones. It is about learning to recognise both the pain, and the way that pain enduringly writes a person's relationships, and yet, remaining open to the possibility of an adjacent self, if you will, of a self coming into being.

Along these lines, it is through *kwiyubaka* that a self comes into being for youth; however, the double-edged nature of this needs to be noted. It must be painful to leave as well as to stay; rebuilding oneself to be recognised as a person in one's community often means leaving or being ejected from it. In Laura Eramian's study of home and housing in Butare as sites where post-genocide life is contested, she refers to memories of home anchoring deep feelings of "the unfairness of life" (Janzen, 2004: 33, in Eramian, 2020: 881). Eramian notes (2020: 880-881):

> The ongoing sense of injustice and hardship anchored in the home exposes deep incongruities in the common-sense idea embedded in narratives of post-conflict reconstruction that 'moving on' from violence means 'settling down' in new homes. For Rwandans, then, there is no contradiction between physical resettlement and feeling deeply unsettled by the spectre of the homes and lives they once had… However, when Butare residents talk about homes, past and present, they speak of them as sites where their different lives unfolded, were violently interrupted, or might continue someday.

Whereas young people born after the 1994 genocide did not have different lives pre- and post-genocide, Eramian's analysis applies to the way their lives unfolded in their childhood homes and their new homes as they 'settled down' while continuing to feel 'deeply unsettled' by the homes they once had – even as those homes still exist. While moving away from homes was a site of transformation, it continued to show "the manners in which pain was woven into the patterns of life" (Das, in DiFruscia, 2010: 141).

In my interviews with young people, I asked them if they had any advice for young people like themselves around the world. Their answers would usually reflect a combination of *kwibuka* and *kwiyubaka*, including statements such as "Don't be defined by the past" and "It's your life; work hard for it". Such adjurations demonstrate how the state's narrative around *kwiyubaka* has become part of young people's own narratives – narratives that are significant enough for them to pass on to others. They also repeatedly stressed the importance of their own goals and the possibilities of transformation. Grace, for example, said, "Work hard and become successful. No one can say bad things about you when you make it and when you take care of your family". On a similar note, Fidele stated:

> A life of sadness is not easy. If God allows you to be born, do something good with your life. It will clean the bad things you went through. Don't give up on school; work hard and become someone of importance in this life and do great things. When you do good things, society will see that someone born this way is doing something good for society. You will feel less bad.

Most advice included building self-confidence and self-acceptance, working hard, and not giving up on oneself. Joseph, who had been very quiet and soft-spoken during his interview, suddenly spoke louder and gestured passionately when he answered this question: "Don't be afraid of anything! Of course, the past will be there, but think about the future. Have hope and work hard."

Answers were often thoughtful and practical. Alphonse advised:

> Even if you are born with this history, it is not the end of your life. Tomorrow will be better. Try to meet others like you, even if no one knows who the others are, speak out and find opportunities to know they are there. Search for information on where they gather, and plan your next steps. You have the responsibility for your own life. You are not the only one in the world like you.

The question about their hopes for the future elicited answers that demonstrated how much young people think about how they are perceived by others, and not always in a negative light. Felix and Chantal gave almost identical answers: "I wish to be a role model, someone people look up to" (Felix) and "I wish to be an example for others and inspire them, regardless of my [financial] level of living." (Chantal).

Here, it is necessary to discuss the role of NGOs in shaping how young people perceive themselves and their aspirations. The almost identical answers provided by Felix and Chantal may, of course, be accidental, but each of the young people I interviewed attended at least one youth camp where topics such as 'resilience' are taught and where young people are invited as 'role models'. As the director of SURF explained, "We had a young person who was told of the circumstances of his birth to come give a presentation on how he has managed to cope—what it means to look forward to a better future and how to leave the past behind" (Anumol and Munderere, 2023: 260). Eric was one of the 'role models' invited to speak to others.

Chapter 2 mentioned the sharp focus on young people related to the government's post-genocide recovery agenda. Pells et al. showed that youth seem to feel a sense of urgency to "improve themselves" (2014: 307). In my fieldwork, I noticed that young people took their personal development very seriously, not solely expressed by their words, but exemplified by phone calls they made to me to seek my advice about their careers or studies, and how proudly they invited me to show me their university campus. I found that discourses around building oneself are not empty platitudes or repetition of imposed discourses, but these seem to be ideas that are part of everyday vocabulary and ideas.

When asked what they were most proud of, many spoke of their self-reliance and hard work, studies, and graduation. Others answered that they were proud of their mothers for giving birth to them and "standing up" for them. Faustin said he was most proud of the strength with which he faced the difficult journey he called his life, saying, "I have gone from being that child to becoming this person."

In an article I wrote about global discourses around "children born of war" (2023a), I argued that in referring to these young people as "children born of rape", the language centres the violence rather than the person, thus negating the enormous efforts these individuals exert moving away from perceived connections to a past event. Additionally, this framing also fails to recognise

kwiyubaka, that is, how young people go from "being that child to becoming this person". When I asked Mariya what she was most proud of in her life, she made reference to *kwiyubaka* in answering, "I think I am a trustworthy person; I work hard to be independent, and people see me as a good person". Eric, too, in his advice to others, captured the essence of *kwiyubaka*: "You are alive; you cannot let the burden of your history overshadow the chance that you have by being alive, so take that chance and work hard for it".

I pause here to reflect on the challenges young people are burdened with as they work to "do something good for society" (Fidele) and "work hard for it" (Eric). Because young people are seen as descendants of wrongdoing who carry part of their father's malevolence within them (Theidon, 2022), it seems they also carry the burden of expiating what their fathers did – hence, they speak in these redemptive narratives. In psychological terms, "bearing a burden" (*inzira y'umusaraba*) led many young people to feel "stuck in depression", describing this burden as consisting of accumulative stress from "continuous tragic experience" (Ndagijimana, 2022: 52). One could also say that this burden involves the tragic experiences that happened in the past, and young people were now living with "the sins of their fathers" (Erjavec and Volčič, 2010a). Nikuze (2013: 1094) states that children conceived in rape "carry the burden of their traumatic conception and mothers' pain with them. Consequently, they develop guilt, viewing their self as a source of misery, a mistake, tainted, and even evil, as they see themselves genetically connected to their rapist father perpetrators of genocide". Christian notions of sin may also infiltrate the beliefs young people express about becoming a person of value. As the majority of Rwandans identify as Catholic Christians, the idea of being deemed 'a source of evil' in need of redemption by 'doing good for society' can be contextualised within the need for repentance having been born out of 'wrongdoing' that cannot be undone. If so, future studies could explore if this 'working hard' would have an ending if fully becoming a person would, or could, be achieved.

From Children to Parents

Many of the young people I spoke with aspired to become parents. For instance, Alice saw becoming a mother as a way for her to be seen differently. "If we meet in the future, with my children, I will be the mother of my kids," she said. "They will see me differently, not as born of genocide. Five years from now, I won't be addressed like that." The young people who had recently become parents during my fieldwork said it changed the way they were perceived by their communities. Rather than being a "child of" (rape, genocide, killers), they became the "parent of". The concept of *having children* has great importance in Rwanda. Having a child in Rwandan society gives men and women status, perhaps contributing to a person becoming "of value". Like in many contexts, mothers are usually not referred to by their first name but by "Mama (name of firstborn)". When I went to see an NGO staff member who has become a good friend, I told her I went to visit a young woman conceived in rape, and I referred to the young woman by her first

name. My friend was confused and told me she did not know that person. I replied, "Yes you do, you introduced me to her". After describing the circumstances of our first meeting, she replied, "Oh! Mama (name of her child), I now know her that way and forgot her name". As names can be forgotten through the transformative nature of parenthood, could it be that the connections to their names as children also become less important?

A young man, Mugabo, told me that his community's perception of him and reactions to him drastically changed when he became a father. "I am no longer seen as born from rape," he said, "but as a father". Moreover, Mugabo said that his relationship with his mother improved when he became a father: "She calls me all the time now and before, she never called". Burnet (2012: 1034) states that "motherhood is the best light in which females can be seen in Rwandan society", which aligns with other African ideas about parenthood. In her study of the value of children in African countries in relation to infertility, Dyer (2007: 74) found that "fatherhood conferred a sense of achievement, continuity and belonging". Naturally, there are significant gendered differences in the way parenthood makes a full person, but for children and young people conceived in rape, a substantial part of whom struggle with finding a sense of belonging within their social worlds (Hamel, 2016), parenthood becomes a means for them to find a sense of belonging.

Twiyubaka – Rebuilding Ourselves

Twiyubaka, the plural form of *Kwiyubaka,* can be interpreted as a collective rebuilding, that is, rebuilding *our*selves. Here, too, there is a parallel between the private and the public. Genocidal rape was a public act, but the aftermath is deeply personal and private. Genocidal rapes can be seen as public acts against women who were "symbolic representations" of the Tutsi ethnic group (Berry, 2018; Nowrojee, 1996). A reason for the public nature of rapes originated in colonial times, where Tutsi women were presented as superior to Hutu women in intelligence and beauty, leading to a deep-rooted resentment against Tutsi women that was weaponised through propaganda (Taylor, 1999). Taylor (1999) explains that this resentment influenced the sadistic nature of the rapes and the humiliation of women they were meant to inflict. Often, the rapes happened in public spaces or in front of the women's family members. Some women were forced to commit incest before being killed. Women were intentionally infected with HIV and their reproductive organs mutilated. In the aftermath of these rapes, the women were forced to grapple with the public nature of these experiences and memories.

The public nature of the rapes contrasts with the silence related to testimonies revolving around them in national commemoration spaces. In her work on women's testimonies in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Fiona Ross found that this silence is often attributed to a general stigma that attaches to women in a society that regards rape as 'private'; yet, in the context of political violence, "what is at stake is not the privacy or otherwise of the act but how society

acknowledges it as a form of violence and makes provision for its recognition as injury" (2003a: 23).

While the memory of the genocide is omnipresent through memorials and commemorations, the testimonies of survivors of sexual violence are excluded and marginalised (Fox, 2021; Gilbert, 2018). Nicole Fox describes the story of Angel, who was fourteen years old when she was raped during the genocide. Her entire family was killed except for her younger brother, with whom she now lives. When Fox asked her if she had considered speaking at the upcoming genocide commemoration, she replied, "No, they would never want my testimony" because the government preferred avoiding commemorative events that cause "traumatising" and reliving painful memories" (2021: 72). We have seen what happens when women get "traumatised" (*ihungabana*) during commemorations in Chapter 5. Fox then proposes the term "'stratification of collective memory' for the process whereby certain memories are elevated while others are marginalised to create a more unified national narrative" (2021: 74). The Rwandan government's intentions of protecting raped women and other attendees at these events from being retraumatised may relieve immediate suffering, but there is a risk of their testimonies being left out of historical accounts of the 1994 genocide if women are not given space to share them. As Jonneke Koomen (2013: 275) concluded in her study of women's testimonies at the ICTR, "the tribunal relies on the testimonies of witnesses who survived unspeakable genocidal violence, their stories have become a sideshow in the grand unfolding narrative of international justice".

The women, members of SEVOTA who testified at the ICTR are the protagonists of the documentary *The Uncondemned* (2015), which revolves around the women and lawyers who prosecuted rape as a crime against humanity. In 2016, the ICTR ordered a court junction that prohibited the movie from being screened due to the women's witness protection in place (Moore, 2016). No one, not even the women themselves, was allowed to reveal their identities unless the women signed away their witness protection. This left them feeling mistreated, stating that the mechanism did not consider the fact that, ten years later, it is common for survivors to speak publicly. One of the women who testified at the ICTR said, "These are things we've been talking about for a long time. Not only at the ICTR – we talked about it in *gacaca*, and everywhere else" (Moore, 2016). In her study of women's testimonies, Gilbert (2018: abstract) states that "in the face of the politically motivated processes of national reconciliation, justice, and commemoration, Rwandan women struggle to regain control over their narratives". The question of control over public narratives is important, especially in terms of who is allowed to speak and in what manner.

In her ethnography of women who were raped during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, Nayanika Mookherjee (2015) explores the tensions between public and private memory narratives. Raped women in Bangladesh are acknowledged as *Birangonas* (war heroines) and commemorated nationally, in the public view and in a manner they have very little control over. Yet, in their everyday lives among their families and communities, the rapes were made secret to provide

"security from the horrors of rape and its aftermath" (Mookherjee, 2015: 114). The national commemoration of women's testimonies transgressed these local codes, and the women faced severe rumours and judgement, blurring the boundaries between public and private secrecy. In a similar vein, my research examined how women in Rwanda speak privately about their rapes and whether this is in contention with their silenced narratives in the national reconciliation space.

Many women in Rwanda became members of women's networks and associations that arose after the genocide, finding both support and a platform for activism – a space where private and public narratives of sexual violence could come together. Likewise, their children found support in NGO youth camps, where national narratives of forgiveness and reconciliation are central components and where young people find a place of belonging.

In my fieldwork, the topic of genocidal rape did not arise often during conversations unless it was expected, such as in my interviews with mothers. In other interviews, when the topic came up, it was often shut down, as evinced in the cases of Mr Bizimana and Mr Kalisa described in Chapter 5. In both instances (notably, both with men), I decided not to press the subject further. In other fieldwork situations, the topic of rape did not come up in conversations unless it was specifically part of the research setting. I frequently travelled with SEVOTA staff members to community meetings and events, but we rarely spoke about their personal experiences with genocide. Many SEVOTA members are survivors of sexual violence during the genocide, and their children are members, too. In several situations, I noticed that they avoided openly mentioning their SEVOTA membership. One day, I visited Olive at her university with a SEVOTA staff member and her mother. It was an opportunity for Mama Olive to see her daughter and for me to see where Olive lived. I got to know Olive and her mother through SEVOTA. When Olive showed us her dorm room, which she shared with several other girls, the girls asked me how I knew Olive. I said she was my friend, leaving it up to Olive to choose if she wanted to say more about our relationship, which she did not. The girls continued to ask questions about how we met, which I answered vaguely and as generally as possible: "In Kigali". The girls then asked how Olive knew the SEVOTA staff member who was with us. She answered, "*Turi abavandimwe*" (we are siblings). The gloss helped smooth over an awkward moment: though they were not "biological sisters", they were indeed "sisters in the SEVOTA family". None of us mentioned SEVOTA. Olive studied a few hours away from where she grew up and where her mother lived. I understood that Olive's schoolmates might not know about her 'history' (*amateka ye* in Kinyarwanda, as is often used) and that being associated with SEVOTA could lead to harmful assumptions about her and her mother – something she moved away from. One might see in her discretion an attempt to shield her mother. This example demonstrates how SEVOTA membership is kept private in certain public spaces, while in other public spaces, it seems that SEVOTA membership is made public intentionally.

I began further noticing the interplay between the private and public within SEVOTA's activities when I went to visit Gisele, another SEVOTA member. We visited her with a group of SEVOTA members who took part in a project called *Agaseke k'Amahoro* (peace basket).[58] Through the project, the group of women take turns visiting one another each month with *agaseke* and putting money in their basket to then share with the visitee so that they take turns receiving money; a kind of rotating credit association. I was invited to join the visit to Gisele. We arrived on her street and put the *agaseke* on our heads while singing and dancing up to her front door. It was a Saturday, and we were meant to arrive at Gisele's house around 3 pm, but we were a few hours late. After we sang and danced, she invited us to come inside, where she had prepared an elaborate meal for us to eat together. As we walked inside, she said to us, "I thought you were coming late. I am so happy you are here before it got dark, so my neighbours can see I have visitors". This alerted to the public component of our private visit, a component that I was unaware of but seemed important to Gisele. Our visit showed to her neighbours that she has visitors, hence (assumingly in the face of exclusion and shame) she sought a recognition that she is a 'valued' member of society that takes part in social/cultural practices.

I had visited multiple women and young people with SEVOTA. The first time I went, we visited a young woman at her house. We sat in her living room and had a soft drink. The TV was on while we chatted. I had imagined that SEVOTA visits were directed, but that did not seem to be the case; the aim seemed to simply be the visit itself, to be together*, kuba hamwe*. I later came to realise that *kuba hamwe* (being together) is how women offer support to each other (Zraly, 2008). These visits were usually private, but the *Agaseke k'Amahoro* visit also seemed to have a public purpose: to show solidarity in public.

"My body is Not a Battlefield"

SEVOTA serves a dual role in their public position of activism as well as their private support to members through visits and projects, where membership can also be kept secret. In SEVOTA's activism, women use global humanitarian discourses around rape as a 'weapon of war'.

I witnessed the use of this discourse by the women of SEVOTA on the 25th anniversary of the organisation, a celebration that took place on the 7th of January 2020. It was an important celebration attended by government officials and a delegation of donors from the Netherlands and the US. The Minister of Gender and Family Promotion gave a speech to the approximately one hundred SEVOTA members present. At the time, I had been a part of SEVOTA for a year. I was there as part of 'the team' dressed in *umushanana* traditional clothing and assisting with welcoming the guests, handing out water and juice, and serving cake to children. I had been to other celebratory events at the district level, and I understood that this was a more significant event in comparison. The theme of the event was about showing the progress survivors had made and

[58] *Agaseke* is a traditional Rwandan woven basket.

justifying the impact of their investment to funders. It was not necessarily a celebration intended for the members of SEVOTA themselves because we had already celebrated the anniversary with cake, songs, and dancing at the annual SEVOTA festival in November 2019. Therefore, I observed a clear distinction between a celebration *for* SEVOTA and a celebration *of* SEVOTA. As I was handing out newsletters, I saw two women from the SEVOTA staff team wearing black buttons pinned on their *umushanana* with white letters saying, "My body is not a battlefield". I had never seen them before, and my (internal) reaction to them was significant. I had built relationships with these women, and we did not speak about sexual violence in my daily interactions with them. Seeing "My body is not a battlefield" pinned on their chests showed the women in a different light, as activists using their position to bring awareness to what happened to them. The forceful phrasing on the buttons contrasted with my experiences during fieldwork, where mentions of violence were brought up in subtle language, which I tried to understand through Rwandan epistemologies. Yet, this was in English, confrontational in nature, and directed at a specific audience. I saw the buttons as part of a performative action that mobilised their experiences as part of what I call a 'representational repertoire'. It showed the capacity of SEVOTA's women to navigate different landscapes in which their experiences form meaning – the international, local, and personal – and demonstrates that they use this knowledge and power in different ways. This was Rwandan women using global and feminist discourses, and the act demonstrated one way in which they give meaning to their experience. It was clear to me that these are complex dynamics within personal and performative settings, creating a delicate balance between global discourses and local meanings.

Editors Rosalind Shaw, Lars Waldorf and Pierre Hazan, in *Localizing Transitional Justice* (2010) challenge ideas about "the local" in transitional justice processes, arguing that rather than opposing "universal principles" and global justice mechanisms, the local can be seen as not being a "level" but a place-based context. "Often, for example, local human rights NGOs are assumed to represent 'the local voice'" (2010: 4), but whose voice is this, the various authors discuss. The women of SEVOTA have shown that victims or survivors do not have one voice, not as a homogenous group, but also not as individuals, using their 'representational repertoires' – a collection of self-expressions for a variety of audiences – in different moments. In her chapter, Fiona Ross (2010) comments on the gendered risks women in South Africa faced when speaking about acts of rape in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and calls for a re-examination of "the assumption that women in general and rape survivors in particular bear a responsibility to talk about rape". In the same volume, Weinstein et al. (2010: 39) explore "what victims want" and conclude that it is not possible to make "sweeping statements" about victims' wants; "that view in itself diminishes the agency of those who have lost so much". Could it be that victims and survivors negotiate their wants according to their interactions with the local and global, wanting to draw attention to their cause, reparations using voice in performing one representational repertoire, and wanting to "continue living" as they "draw upon the performance of everyday life as a means of remaking relationships" (Shaw and Waldorf, 2010: 20), through silences and not speaking openly,

as expressed within their other representational repertoire? In line with Weinstein et al., to assume "the local voice" is one voice with one purpose assumes a limited and short-sighted view of women's agency.

As women share their stories in private and public, through commemorations or activism, we can look at who their intended audiences are to understand its impact on the next generation. Fox asks, "How will future generations understand the full extent of the genocide when current commemorations leave out stories of mass rapes and gender-based violence?" (2021: 92). We have seen that the women of SEVOTA share their experiences on different platforms, where the next generation is present or can view, for example, the documentary *The Uncondemned*. Testimonies of genocidal rape, though marginalised in national commemorations, are shared on other public platforms.

When I conducted my 'testimony project' where I asked survivors, perpetrators, and youth to write their testimonies, I asked them if they had let other people read it. All writers said they would not share it with those close to them, apart from one young man conceived in rape, who said he would let his mother read it since she was the one who informed him of his 'history' that he had written. I then asked who they hoped would read it, and a common answer referred to a hope that it would contribute to preserving history. Hence, the audience in testimonies seemed to be rather abstract and one could say that the writers also made use of 'representational repertoires' when they wrote for an audience unknown. These 'representational repertoires' are sites where the local and global, private and public, are negotiated through various discursive practices around silencing/speaking about (sexual) violence.

Harm in the Public

In previous chapters, I have discussed how women keep careful secrets to shield their children from the "poisonous knowledge" (Das, 2000) of their conception. I now ask, how does this shielding work in terms of sharing testimonies in public? What happens when the knowledge shared within these testimonies cannot be controlled?

When navigating private and collective memories, as well as public discourses, is not done carefully, it leads to disruptions in delicately constructed and managed social relations. In the sections below, I illustrate several examples of when what has come to be constituted as private is brought into the public with harmful repercussions. These can be taken as lessons in ethical considerations and as a warning to NGOs, journalists, academics, and others conducting documentation or research projects on the lived experiences of women and their children.

(Un)intended Consequences

In 2009, photojournalist and documentary photographer Jonathan Torgovnik launched a multimedia project entitled "Intended Consequences", which featured a series of portraits of women who were raped during the genocide along with their children born as a result. The project included a photography book, a travelling exhibition, and documentary videos.[59] The photographs are accompanied by the women's testimonies of their experiences during the genocide and their feelings towards their pregnancy and their children. Torgovnik interviewed 40 women with their children, who were around 13 or 14 years old at the time, photographing them in or around their homes. Some of the testimonies are read aloud in the documentary videos, including Torgovnik's own testimony called "An Unspoken Language", where he offers his personal reflections.[60] Torgovnik's aim was to shine a light on the children conceived through genocidal rape by using portraiture as "a powerful way to communicate the continuing consequences of the past" (Strecker and Temkin, n.d.). The project received much praise and multiple awards for bringing international attention to the mothers and their children.

Kleinman and Kleinman (1997: 8) have discussed the taking of images of social suffering and the "consumption of suffering" as "moral witnessing", which must include a sensitivity to unspoken moral and political assumptions. Torgovnik's portraits are situated within global hierarchies as they show "someone who cannot represent himself, who must be represented" (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1997: 10). The two authors quote Michael Shapiro (1988) on representation, who writes that "representation is the absence of presence because the real is never wholly present to us – how it is real for us is always mediated through some representational practice" (Shapiro, 1988, in Kleinman and Kleinman, 1997: 9). To an international audience, the women and children in the portraits are represented by Torgovnik, and the real is not wholly present to them. Yet, critically, the mothers and their children are present in each other's lives; they are *real* in their communities. These representations of them, therefore, can affect the real.

The "Intended Consequences" project grew into the non-profit organisation Foundation Rwanda. Torgovnik used the funds raised from the exhibition to connect mothers and their children to counselling and holistic support programmes and provide financing support for children's schooling, needs that had been identified by the women who participated in the project. Foundation Rwanda has supported nearly 1700 women and their children with support services, including youth camps, vocational training, and scholarships for higher education (Foundation Rwanda,

[59] See: https://embeds.mediastorm.com/0gk8/1/intended-consequences

[60] All but one of the testimonies are read out in English rather than Kinyarwanda, which can be seen as an anonymising feature to conceal women's identities or as an artistic choice to stimulate connection with an international audience.

n.d.). The youth camps funded by Foundation Rwanda provided the settings where I connected with young people for this research.

In a recorded 2009 panel discussion on "Intended Consequences", Torgovnik recounted that the women "didn't want their stories to be told within the community, but they really wanted the world to know... I promised them that I will try to take their words and give them the space to express themselves, to give them a voice outside of Rwanda. I felt it a mission" (Aperture, 2009).[61] When asked how he will protect women from being recognised when their photographs are on the internet, he responded, "It's a debate we've been having from the beginning of this project. As I said, I promised the women not to publish it in Rwanda".[62] He explained that the project became bigger with online magazine articles and multimedia videos, and there was "really no way to control that hundred per cent". He continued saying that most women "don't have access to the internet, personally, but for someone who lives in Kigali, there is a chance someone might see it". He consulted with a social worker of AVEGA and decided that the impact this would have to help Rwanda and women, specifically, "is a lot bigger than something negative that will happen to these women". He concluded by saying that "this is a complex issue: Are we going to use this to raise awareness and try to take action and help these children with education and provide these women with therapy… or we don't use it at all?"

Torgovnik's question is not unfamiliar to me. I continuously weighed the academic benefits against the risks and always chose caution. It seems that Torgovnik could not see the (negative, unintended) consequences of his photography project fully. Rwanda is a small country where everyone knows everyone. Changing a name is not a sufficient form of protection. Though the book is not available in Rwanda, the internet is widely accessible there. People also travel abroad and can find the book. Someone could take the book to Rwanda, as I did. It is important to trust and rely on the expertise and judgement of organisations such as AVEGA. Like Torgovnik, I did the same for my research. Yet, I wonder if the women who are part of the research were fully aware of the negative risks their participation in Torgovnik's work entailed because they did not want their stories to be told within the community. The distinction between not wanting their communities to know but wanting "the world" to know implies that the women's communities are not part of the world. It rests on the false notion that enforceable boundaries exist between local and global worlds. In a mobile world, these boundaries are more imagined than real. People cannot predict what will happen in the future, and consequences depend on unforeseen changes in the environment, such as the widespread use of the internet years after the project.

Fiona Ross has considered what happens when "testimonies circulate beyond the confines of the immediate and intimate" as she explored how many South Africans who had testified before the

[61] Panel discussion (29 April 2009 at Aperture Gallery). Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUxCtTuAZ8c_ Quote at timestamp 22:30.
[62] Ibid. Quote at timestamp 1:25:45

TRC were "alarmed at the ways in which their testimonies proliferate outside the contexts of individual control" (2003b: 325, 334). The TRC hearings were widely broadcast and disseminated through local and international media. Ross notes that "testifiers did not, could not, anticipate the extent to which their testimonies would circulate" (2003b: 330). She also notes that "few studies have yet focused on the social ramifications of testimony" and notes that "there has been little attention given to the contexts within which testimonies are given or to the local conventions that shape how spoken interventions are received" (2003b: 332). In the following passage, Ross raises several critical questions that should be considered for Rwanda and understanding the impact of mothers' testimonies on their children:

> If, with Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman (2001), we understand the act of narrating life experiences to be an act through which individuals struggle to make shattered or dislocated social worlds meaningful, then what are the implications when their narratives circulate through global media that lie beyond individual knowledge and control and beyond the scope of their intervention? And if, following Liisa Malkki's formulation (1997: 242), we understand 'voice' to be 'the ability to establish narrative authority over one's circumstances and future, and, also, the ability to claim an audience', what happens when a process that rests on narrating specific kinds of experience renders the individual scrutable in terms of that experience as translated into various public domains? Once 'stories' circulate publicly, what controls are there over how they are used? What do we, as scholars, researchers, citizens, do with stories, performances, shards of experience? (2003b: 333)

Ross continues by asking another question that is particularly relevant in terms of young people conceived in rape: "What happens when the contexts within which testimony was elicited are shifted, when testimonies are placed into other contexts?" (2003b: 334).

The Rwandan women's testimonies published on the Foundation Rwanda website include sentiments about their children that can be very painful for their children to read. Pseudonyms are used, but the testimonies are displayed under photographs of the women with their children so they are clearly identifiable. One of the testimonies reads as follows:

> I must be honest with you, I never loved this child. I forced myself to like him, but he is unlikeable – the boy is too stubborn and bad. He behaves like a street child. I am confused and don't know what to do. It's not that he knows that I don't love him – it is that blood in him.

What if her son were to read this? Ross's question, "What if the contexts within which testimony was elicited shifts?" becomes particularly relevant here. A mother's feelings towards her children of rape are not static but rather highly ambivalent (Kantengwa, 2014; Woolner et al., 2019) and

prone to oscillate. The words spoken in her testimony cannot be changed, they cannot be undone (Ross, 2003b).

Bridget Conley (2023) also looked at "Intended Consequences" in her examination of photographs of children conceived in wartime rape. She evaluated Jackie's photograph and the accompanying story, which was updated in 2009 to note that Jackie's mother Aline had passed away. It also reads that Jackie learned about her conception when she came across her mother's diary. Conley points out, "In Jackie's narrative, another revelation becomes apparent: when the original photographs were taken and the women's stories published around the world, 'we,' the viewing global audience, learned that Jackie was conceived through conflict-related sexual violence before she did. These photos were taken for 'us'" (2023: 158).

Crawley and Simic (2012) have discussed the project's approach in their aptly named article, "Unintended Consequences". On the 'disclosure' of people's identities, they said:

> Although their names have been changed, the faces of the photographic subjects in *Intended Consequences* are clearly identifiable. This runs contrary to guidelines developed by international agencies for reporting on children who face the risk of retribution or stigmatisation. For instance, UNICEF cautions against categorising or describing children in a way that may expose a child to negative reprisals, discrimination, or rejection by their local communities, suggesting that in order to minimise these risks, the names of children should be changed and their visual identity obscured. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, women who have been victims of rape and children born of rape are protected from public identification. But there appears to be an exception in Western media when it comes to reporting on Africa. In 2010, the *New York Times* published an article by Nicholas D. Kristof with the name and photograph of a nine-year-old girl in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who was raped by rebel soldiers. The article contained a detailed description of her family and hometown and reported that she has contracted a sexually transmitted disease. The imperative of raising awareness in a Western audience was seen to outweigh ethical concerns about identifying victims of sexual violence: when challenged on why he printed her name and photograph, Kristof said his actions were appropriate because it was 'the only way to raise the issue on the agenda.'

Bringing international attention to humanitarian issues and raising issues on a global agenda should never compromise the human rights of women and children. I wonder about the children in these photos. They could not consent to being displayed to "the world" and did not know about their conception at the time these photos were taken – yet "the world" knew. There is something deeply uncomfortable about this. It places "the viewer in a position of epistemological superiority: as we look at them, we know a seemingly 'defining' truth about them that they themselves do not know…

we are placed in that privileged position of greater knowledge: we are the omniscient witness, reinforcing the West's self-conception as a distanced observer" (Crawley and Simic, 2012: 94). Importantly, this feeds into the notion that children conceived in rape are symbols of suffering and representations of violence, rather than human beings.

"Rwanda's Children of Rape Have Come of Age"

In 2018, Torgovnik went back to Rwanda to revisit some of the families he photographed 12 years prior. The mothers had now told their children about the circumstances of their conception and the children were also interviewed this time. Torgovnik took photos of the children with their mothers again, at the same place and setting, publishing an opinion piece in the New York Times for the twenty-fifth commemoration of the 1994 genocide in 2019.[63] The publication "Rwanda's Children of Rape Have Come of Age" displays the photographs from 2009 and 2019 alongside each other. Torgovnik writes:

> With this project, I'm hoping to shed light on the underreported issue of rape as a weapon of war and its consequences: the children born of rape in conflict areas and the complex and deep trauma they live with for their entire lives and that continues for subsequent generations. Revisiting the families, I found challenging stories of hope and forgiveness. But I also found fragility and lingering trauma among mothers and children alike.

At the time when the New York Times opinion piece was published, I was in Rwanda for my fieldwork. I had a copy of *Intended Consequences* at home in the Netherlands and was curious to see a continuation of the project. The photographs are indeed very powerful. It made me feel uncomfortable looking at the portraits so openly while being in Rwanda. The photographs, combined with the global power of the New York Times, made me wonder if the young people in the photos really understood the reach their publication would have, including being openly accessible to Rwandans. I had just met several young people who left their hometowns to work or study and lived in places where people did not know about their conception, where they could escape a history attached to them when they were growing up. I wondered if their friends or colleagues would see the photos, photos that held the power to re-attach a history they had moved away from.

Two years later, towards the end of my fieldwork, I spoke with an NGO staff about my interviews with mothers. Multiple mothers had asked questions about what exactly I would do with their testimonies and how I would ensure their anonymity. They also asked if I would take photos. I appreciated their questions and the opportunity to emphasise that I understood the importance of not disclosing their identity. I made it clear that I would only record the conversation using a voice

[63] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/30/opinion/rwandas-children-of-rape-have-come-of-age.html

recorder and that even this was optional. Several women told me that they were distrusting of other organisations because they had published photos of their children without permission. They were clearly aware of the risks. I spoke to the NGO staff about this coming up repeatedly in the interviews and that I wondered about the ethical processes in place when journalists or documentarians contact NGOs. The woman I spoke with had been involved in facilitating access to families for the "Intended Consequences" project, and she mentioned that now the children are older, some have regrets about participating in it. Others refused to be part of the second phase of the project. When one of the young people found out about being displayed in the New York Times, he told her, "You have done a lot for me to support me in my life, but this has undone all of it; you have done nothing for me".

The NGO staff member told me about the stages in the young people's lives; while they had received scholarship support and access to other services through Foundation Rwanda, she explained how they were now at a stage in their lives where they were looking to get married and start families. The potential of doing so becomes much more complex when their status as "conceived in rape" is publicly known. Conley (2023: 153) describes this in essence:

> But what of the child? The passage of time complicates the picture. As an infant grows into a young adult, neither memory nor forgetting are equal to the task of creating a future, where the act of violence is no longer determinant. Forgetting is impossible; memory constrains. Yet the child demands an open future for their life. Photos are usually defined by the past: a frozen moment in time. But photos of these children force a different sort of pause: see me, the images appear to demand, not only for who I am to others, but who I might yet be for myself. This photographic subtext haunts all such images of children born from wartime violence, but it varies significantly depending on what can be seen, for whom and to whom the photo speaks.

This discussion requires a meditation on time. The confessional discourse of disclosure presumes an event-centred model of time. Conley (2023) states that children demand an open future for their lives, yet photos of them are defined by the past. The young man in Rwanda who told the social worker that she has "done nothing" for him saw his demand for an open future become compromised, that the display of his portrait had "undone" all the support he received. This material, therefore, shows the longevity of unfolding relations and the ease with which people's efforts can be undone.

Public Disclosure and the 'Generation After'

Christian and I spent two days in the south in November 2021 to conduct interviews with young people who lived in that part of the country. I rented a house that provided a private and safe space

to conduct the interviews. We had met two young women, Aline and Amanda, at a youth camp. They lived in the same village and knew each other well. They asked us not to come to their community or to their homes, so we planned that they would come to meet us at the rental house.

When we ate lunch together, Aline and Amanda apologised for not inviting us into their communities. They explained why. When they were younger, a TV crew had come to their village and shot a video about them, filming them going to school. They did not fully realise what the filming was about, but the filmmakers had promised funds to their parents. Ultimately, the video about "children of the genocide" was broadcast on French TV5 and made available online. Aline and Amanda said that their parents did not receive the promised funds, and ever since, there has been a deep distrust of foreigners in their community, which is why they did not invite me there. Amanda then explained that she is now studying at a university in Huye, a town where her classmates do not know about her conception or difficult childhood. She described it as a new start. However, recently, one of her classmates saw the video of her on the internet and identified her. Amanda explained how she cannot escape what is on the internet, and at any time, someone can learn private details about her life she did not consent to being shared.

One day in December 2020, in the early morning after breakfast at the youth camp, we interviewed Alex before the official day programme began. The interview was light-hearted. Alex was doing well for himself but said that being at the camp was not easy for him. He said that while it provides support to some, for him, it brings up difficult feelings with which he would rather not be confronted. He described attending an event for young people where he saw a video of his mother talking about him. He started crying. I did not ask what she said about him, but I did not have to. It was his worst memory. I asked if he had spoken to the counsellor, who was also at the event, but he said he did not like speaking to her because she was close to his mother. I wondered how a situation like this could be avoided, when women provide their testimonies that are "out there" for their children to accidentally see. Her feelings may have changed, like the women who spoke about their children in the "Intended Consequences" project, but still, his mother's testimony was a moment captured in time.

Alex's experience signals the fine balance between bringing attention to societal issues and causing further harm. I thought of how Torgovnik started Foundation Rwanda, which provides funds for the camps where I met Alex, in order to help. These camps also made my research possible, and I saw their positive impact. Yet, individual experiences can be severely compromised in these collective events.

Ikikwibutse Amateka – A Reminder of History

Robert had written a testimony as part of the written testimonies project and agreed to an interview as a follow-up when I returned to Rwanda. Christian and I picked him up by car to find a private

space to conduct the interview. Public spaces were still mostly closed due to the pandemic, so we found a motel which let us use a private room in their restaurant. Robert apologised for the inconvenience of having to find a space for the interview because he preferred not to meet at his house. We told him that it was not an unusual decision for research participants and it was most important for him to feel comfortable.

Robert, aged 26, lived with his mother and two siblings, aged 10 and 13. He told us he had a good relationship with his mother and that she always protected him. This shone through many of his answers to questions as he spoke about wanting to make her proud and wanting to take care of her and being thankful to her for raising him. When we asked what he was most proud of in his life, he said, "My mother, because she stood up for me". He described her as a proud mother (*umuteri ishema).* In turn, he protected her, as he once again apologised for not inviting us to his home. He said that this time (it was April, genocide commemoration month) may upset her to see us asking questions. There were many reasons why participants preferred for us not to visit, such as the implications of being seen with a white European woman and the perceptions this may bring, that I may provide financial support, or that it would lead to questions that could compromise their 'anonymity' where they lived. Robert's reasoning was different to me because it showed an awareness of what the genocide commemoration is like for his mother, which he took into account.

His written testimony was not the first time Robert has spoken about his experiences. NGOs invited him to workshops where he found that sharing his testimony helped other young people like himself. He explained that many young people like him are "still owned by their history". When asked about his association with NGOs, he said that he used to be more involved but that he left one of the NGOs after they published his name. He said there was a TV crew, and they had promised funds – not unlike the experiences of the two young women in Huye – but he felt he could no longer trust them after the situation compromised his privacy. He elaborated on an event in 2017 where he was invited to a conference workshop as part of the national genocide commemoration. It was a workshop for children of rape survivors organised in one of Rwanda's largest hotels in March 2017. The event was broadcast on national TV in April, when the genocide commemoration period begins. His stepfather saw Robert on TV as part of the group of children conceived in rape. His mother had not told her husband about Robert's conception. His stepfather went into a "trauma" (*ihungabana*) and fought with his mother. Robert says he was trained to provide psychological support in such situations, and his mother helped calm her husband down. Robert explained that his mother's husband "was telling unusual bad words"; he told Robert, "You are what reminds us of bad memories" (*ikikwibutse amateka*). Robert described his stepfather as "a survivor" - his family had been killed, and only two people survived the genocide. Thereafter, their relationship changed. Conflicts started in their home. Robert attributed these to the secret being revealed and the crisis of "trauma" it evoked. Towards the end of 2017, when Robert was 22, his stepfather and mother fought, and he "beat her so badly". Robert jumped in between them. Robert recalled that his stepfather told him that "children of *Interahamwe* were born by accident"

(*bavutse mphanuka*) and "I cannot live with a son of *Interahamwe* while they killed my family". After this physical altercation, Robert says his mother told her husband to leave. He now lives close by, but they do not speak. He sometimes visits their home to see his children, Robert's younger siblings. Robert says he is thankful that his mother stayed with him.

Robert's version of events is told from his perspective and experiences, and he may only know what his mother told him, that she told her husband to leave. Robert's stepfather might have also decided to leave on his own accord, or perhaps his departure was a combination of the two. It does stand out to me that Robert's mother could have sent him away to live somewhere else if that would have made her husband stay, but she did not.

Robert's account underlines the dangers of broadcasting events and their participants to the public, how doing so can undo carefully managed "secrets". I use quotation marks here to signal the discrete ways that people may "know" without "knowing"; that is, the way that experiences can be shrouded in secrecy or discretion in ways that enable life to continue. The disclosure of young people's status as "conceived in rape", the disclosure of well-protected secrets, can cause profound ruptures to family life. In Robert's case, it led to his younger siblings' father leaving their home. It caused emotional and physical abuse for all parties involved, including Robert's mother's husband, as he went into a "trauma". It shows what happens when the seal that shields a violent past is ripped off. It also shows how deep the ramifications are and how hard people must work at keeping things calm, secret, or not known.

I think back to the "Intended Consequences" project described earlier. Robert's account of the events in his home places the notion of the impact of such projects to help Rwanda and to help women "being a lot bigger than something negative that will happen" in stark contrast.

Being Invisible and Too Visible

Thus far, I have discussed women's voices and silences in public genocide commemorations, their wish for "the world" to know what happened to them, and that their bodies are not battlefields, as well as the limited control they wield over these narratives when they enter all worlds, including their social and familial worlds. Similarly, Mookherjee (2015) has studied how public acknowledgement of raped women in Bangladesh is countered by secrets in their everyday communities. The everyday secrets in Rwanda are endangered through public disclosure of their children, alluding to the intergenerational impacts of public disclosure. Young people engage with both *twiyubaka*, the collective rebuilding of the country, as they engage in *kwiyubaka*, the building of their selves. Through *kwiyubaka*, young people find places of acceptance where they were previously excluded, moving away from static perceptions about themselves while navigating a world where photos or testimonies have captured them in a static moment in time. How do young

people engage with public testimonies and 'disclose'? Is the public solely a place of potential harm for them, or does it include a space to be seen as they wish to be seen?

Fiona Ross (2003b) has challenged the assumed unproblematic link between 'voice' and 'dignity' and between 'voice' and 'being heard'. When control over narratives is lost, it contributes to "a loss of voice, of agency and of self" (Ross, 2003b: 335). Eramian (2018) has used the composite self to explain personhood in Rwanda, "the self that is built out of relations with others" (12). In Eramian's work with Denov (2018), they argue that "rather than having a singular, autonomous, 'core' self, "the self is, by nature, changeable, unstable, and cannot be definitively known, as relations are made, broken, ebb, and flow over time" (381). For young people in Rwanda, engaging in public disclosure of the self as "conceived in rape" can be evaluated in terms of having a voice and dignity. Dignity seems to be awarded to those who have become "useful persons", and indignity, the shame related to a father's actions, a relation of the self as per Eramian, persists when others know of their "conceived in rape" status. How, then, do young people engage in testimonial practices? Ross notes that "the work of creating 'testimonies' thus involves not only recognition of suffering, and the sculpting of a linguistic form to carry the experiential, but also an individual determination to express and be acknowledged" (2003b: 337). The idea of acknowledgement is central to this discussion. Do young people want to be acknowledged? Scholars have brought attention to the invisibility of children conceived in wartime rape and the need for local and international actors to address their rights (Carpenter 2010, Seto, 2013, Denov and Kahn, 2019). In relation to the children from the Nazi Lebensborn programme, criminologist Kjersti Ericsson argues that the silences around these children are not a void; instead, they are "filled with meaning: a silence of shame and guilt. Somehow, these children were simultaneously invisible and too visible" (2005: 1).

Young people in Rwanda are both invisible and too visible; they are invisible in the national reconciliation and commemoration spaces, but they are also too visible in their communities, being noticed, called "bad names", and made visible through their exclusion. In Bosnia, young people reported that "in public spaces, such as schools, shops, streets, they feel that their privacy is invaded as others stare at them or approach them at will" (Erjavec and Volčič, 2010b: 368). In terms of privacy in relation to public and private life, I turn to Eramian and Denov's (2018) study on 'truth-telling' as situated in Rwandan "social, cultural, and political imperatives to reveal and conceal" in the post-genocide context and the paradoxes within young people's decisions to tell their 'stories' publicly or privately (389).

The authors first discuss the backdrop against which young people make decisions on 'speaking openly', in public spaces where people are encouraged to reveal their pain and guilt, such as gacaca, commemorations, and "reconciliation spectacles", and yet where one is supposed to conceal their ethnicity (Eramian and Denov, 2018: 390). Moreover, the works of Burnet (2012a) and De Lame (2004) on silence and secrecy in the aftermath of genocide show the cultural

expectations of Rwandans in perpetually concealing as much as revealing through the cultural value placed on "sharing in the sphere of the unspoken" (De Lame, 2004: 303). Eramian and Denov comment on this by saying that researchers in Rwanda are familiar with this phenomenon of concealment, including the tendency to talk indirectly through proverbs, a common feature of speech on the continent. I echo this, and while some doctoral students I met in Rwanda struggled with this (rightly so) as it made our fieldwork difficult, never quite knowing what stayed concealed, it did show me how young people manoeuvre through the world with secrets, having had to keep details of my research secret myself in a world of vigilance – as discussed in Chapter 4. Eramian and Denov then comment on the post-genocide period and its focus on reconciliation activities, which "have fostered a growing cultural value on self-revelation, open talk, and truth-telling in a range of contexts. Practices like gacaca, whose manifest purpose was to elicit objective, forensic truths, shape the contextual place of 'truth' in the post-genocide period" (2018: 382). Yet, within these practices, "there also appears to be a particular 'narrative of silence' surrounding genocidal rape, which may also account for the reticence to disclose" (Eramian and Denov, 2018: 382).

In these contradictory spaces of 'truth-telling' and silence, Eramian and Denov's study found that youth's ideas about 'talking openly' were also of a contradictory nature, as "youths' perspectives on their social positions show that neither revealing nor concealing is ever conclusively preferable, and they can never be entirely sure how a choice to reveal or conceal will be received by others" (388). The authors thereby challenge the Euro-American assumption that it is always better to talk openly because in the Rwandan context where "silence is an accepted and expected mode of managing hardship, the tension between revealing and concealing, talking and not talking is irresolvable. One is never decisively the better choice for these youth" (Eramian and Denov, 2018: 388). Significantly, some young people expressed the importance of talking openly, not for personal reasons but for political purposes, to speak out about their needs and "tell their stories in the service of advancing identity politics and making claims for recognition" (Eramian and Denov, 2018: 385). The authors conclude that "their near erasure from recognised categories of 'victims' in Rwanda speaks once again to the problem of stigma" (Eramian and Denov, 2018: 385). Though "stigma" is not a useful term in meaningfully explaining young people's lives, young people's call for recognition in the post-genocide political space is clear. Coming back to Ross' (2003b) work on testimonies on 'having voice' and 'being heard' being non-contingent concepts, in Rwanda, we can see that young people's conundrum as 'having voice' and 'being seen'. Rather than hearing their plight, there is a dependency on understanding how young people are being perceived in society as neither "survivors" nor "perpetrators", thus existing in a silent space. They do use this silence around them, the not 'being seen' as they engage with *kwiyubaka* in spaces of 'anonymity'. It is in this space of building oneself that young people can become seen for, as Faustin said, "this person" he became, rather than "that child" he was.

Returning to the issue of photography, I draw on an example from Bosnia and Herzegovina, where

the ZDR, the Forgotten Children of War Association,[64] together with photographer Sakher Almonem, put together a photography exhibition titled "Breaking Free" in 2019. Bridget Conley (2023) provides an analysis of this photography exhibition in her chapter where she critiqued "Intended Consequences". The organisation describes its founding as a response to help children "who remained shadowed by the war and the aftermath, invisible and not recognised as a vulnerable category in the country of their mothers and/or country of their biological fathers" (ZDR, 2023). Ajna Jusić, ZDR's president, said that the exhibition:

> Was of special importance for us (the children born because of the war), because this is the first time that some of our members are coming out in public with their story, their face after the life in darkness and discrimination… this also shows the strength of children born because of the war, for having decided to face the society and take a step forward to equal and undiscriminated community, despite the social and legal invisibility. (Conley, 2023: 163)

The exhibition included photos of Bosnian youth "born of war" as well as a series of images of actors who had covered their faces in shame and pain – these are pictures of "us". Conley's concluding remarks on the project are in stark contrast to her view of the "Intended Consequences" project:

> His images present "children of war" in an endeavour to draw attention to their origin stories, but not to draw pity. Rather, his images follow the children's lead in demanding that they be seen on their own terms. In presenting the actors as "us", he also demands that we see ourselves not as saviours nor as safely distanced from children themselves, but implicated in the long-term burdens of the frame, "children born of war." Grouping individuals under the heading of "children born of war or rape" declares that they be recognised in the full light of violence that provided their biological starting point. But Almonem's photos further assert that it is possible to reveal this originary fact, without assuming that individuals are defined by it. Agency, these photos argue, is entangled in the pain of recognising violence in a manner that does not let it determine the future. Balancing the dual imperatives of both seeing and seeing beyond a violent history is a complicated task. The exhibition argues that it does not belong to the children and mothers alone, but to a wider community of those who experienced violence and those implicated in policies that enabled it. (2023: 165)

[64] ZDR, The Forgotton Children of War Association was founded in Bosnia in 2015 by "children born of war" and human rights activists from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their mission statement is as follows: In order to legally and socially recognise and respect children born of war, through activism, public advocacy, research, networking and the arts, we contribute to the elimination of stigmatisation and discrimination against this social category. The Forgotten Children of War Association deals with legal and social recognition of the category of "children born of war" by supporting and strengthening their capacities, while at the same time, creating a safe environment for children born of war and women survivors of wartime sexual violence, regardless of their ethnicity, using both regional and international capacities. See also https://zdr.ba/en/home-zdr/

What the "Breaking Free" exhibition tells us is that young people conceived in wartime rape can, and have, come out in public to shine a light on their invisibility, which is still shadowed by war. Interestingly, they did so not through 'having voice' but by demanding to 'be seen', as they demanded we see ourselves.[65] It is crucial to note as I come to the end of this chapter and this dissertation that even though young people are made invisible (in their countries' reconciliation agendas), making them visible here through the topic of this research does not mean that *changing their invisibility* rests on them.

Let us return to Eramian and Denov (2018) and their finding that young people perceived "their dual embodiment of victim (mother) and perpetrator (father) [as] a potential asset if they can be seen as "symbols of reconciliation" (383). Noting that this is a quote from one of the young research participants and not a suggestion put forward by the authors, we must be careful not to place this redemptive burden on them. Young people should, first and foremost, be seen as human beings rather than symbols of the past, or of reconciliation. Denov's work in Rwanda has been pivotal in furthering our understanding of young people's lives, but as with this research, it was done (and could only be done) with young people who know about their conception. They are supported by organisations that have likely offered them trainings and workshops to help them understand their place in the world, as well as their place in Rwanda's post-genocide *kwibuka twiyubaka* (remembering and rebuilding) activities. Rwandan youth are given a herculean task in national rebuilding narratives (Pells et al., 2014). This is a lot for them to carry. Therefore, when increasing their visibility through research and scholarship, we must be careful that we do not impose even greater responsibilities on them.

To close off, a reflection on the private ways young people 'openly talk'. Young people at the youth camps I attended as part of this research said that the camps were places where they could speak to others "like them" who understand their stories. Some young people indicated that listening to others at the camp brought up emotions they would rather not deal with, while others shared stories and "talked all night", as one young woman said regarding her favourite part of the camp. It was here, in private, that they received recognition.

[65] This is not to say that members of ZDR do not use their voice. On 23 October 2023, Ajna Jusić, ZDR's president, attended a high-level UN meeting on sexual violence in conflict, providing contributions to the creation of a platform for children conceived in wartime rape to be included in international decision-making processes.

8. Conclusion

Children as 'Timebombs'?

In October 2023, while at home in the Netherlands nearing the final stages of my dissertation writing, I watched a Dutch TV series that made me reflect on the conclusion of this research project. The series, *Dokter Ruben* (Doctor Ruben), follows a doctor named Ruben who visits countries to explore the socio-economic backgrounds underlying illnesses. In this episode, he was visiting Doctor Mukwege's Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, the DRC, to examine the causes and consequences of sexual violence (Dokter Ruben, 2023). Doctor Mukwege, a Congolese gynaecologist and recipient of the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize, treats women in his hospital who have been raped and advocates for global awareness of conflict-related sexual violence. Ruben accompanies one of Doctor Mukwege's teams to a village where they speak to survivors of sexual violence and examine whether they require treatment in Panzi Hospital. The following scenes unfold.

A social worker listens to a woman who gives her account of how she was raped while Ruben, and the viewer, observe. The woman explains that she became pregnant after being raped by multiple men and calls over her 3-year-old daughter. The camera zooms in on her daughter standing next to her mother, and the social worker shakes the girl's hand and asks for her name. The child tells us that her name is Diana.[66] The scene cuts and moves to a new frame where Ruben interviews the social worker and tells her how incredible she is at comforting the women while they share their most sorrowful stories. The social worker replies:

> There are many women, such as the mother whose story we have just heard. Women are being ostracised because of the rapes, and some have become pregnant as a result. We have a problem here with the children who are conceived through rape. For us [as she gestures both hands towards her chest], they are a timebomb (*bombe à retardement*), a timebomb [she repeats herself, leaning forward and pointing her fingers together for emphasis]. The mothers ask us what to do about their children. They say, "I have been ostracised because of my pregnancy. My husband does not want the child, my family does not want the child, even the neighbours point at me when they see me". Because of this, the mothers are constantly reminded about what the future holds for their children.

I sat on my couch, watching, listening, thinking back to my interview with Charles, who told me that his mother shouted at his siblings, "This child will kill you!" His mother saw him as a timebomb, too, as a danger to her other children, an embodiment of past violence that could

[66] As with all names throughout this dissertation, this is a pseudonym, even if the episode can be watched online.

explode at any moment. This is why children like Diana in the DRC, Charles in Rwanda, and all the others we have come to know about in previous chapters are avoided, excluded and rejected. Yet, when the social worker says the women are reminded of what the future holds for their children, another sentiment shines through as well – a feeling of worry, of knowing the child depends on her alone, a connection to the child's future rather than solely a violent past. This sentiment was discussed in Chapter 6.

Later on in the episode, Ruben returns to Panzi Hospital. A delegation from the Belgian Embassy is visiting with a group of journalists. We observe a confrontation between the foreign delegation and Panzi's press chief. The delegation asks to hear a woman's testimony, and the press chief refuses, saying that they are welcome to walk around the hospital and observe. One of the journalists explains how they can make the woman anonymous and film her from the back, but that they must speak to at least one survivor. The press chief is steadfast and says they are welcome to request written permission. The journalists are visibly displeased. Ruben observes the scene and says he feels uncomfortable watching it, mentioning that he sympathises with the journalists because he had also clashed with the press chief in the preparations for his series. Ruben says, "He shielded the women from me, and it took some time for me to gain access. I found it difficult that a man decides who the women can speak to, but maybe it is a good thing that he protects them". The scene then cuts to Ruben sitting down with the press chief in his office. He confronts the press chief, saying, "During the Belgian delegation visit, I witnessed journalists demanding from you that they could speak to a survivor of sexual violence. Do you feel you are in a difficult position because you need these stories to be told in the West in order to keep the money flowing towards Panzi Hospital?" The press chief answers:

> It is true that the West is the biggest donor for Panzi Hospital, but they have to understand that despite their aid to the women, the women need to be able to keep their dignity, and here there was a lack of respect, a superior colonial attitude, from top to bottom, and that's why we had to explain it does not work this way.

Ruben then asks why the press chief chose to work at Panzi Hospital, what his motivation was. He answers:

> My motivation stems from hearing the stories. I myself am a victim of what happens here at the hospital. I don't want to elaborate on this, but my mother gave birth to me because of violence (*ma mère m'a eu par la violence*). When I was a child, I experienced some difficult things, but I didn't know about anything. Then, when I heard stories about Doctor Mukwege, I was interested, but I did not know what happens here at the hospital. Then, quite soon, a woman told me her story, and it strongly resembled my own. I found it important to dedicate my efforts to sharing what these women have experienced, so I left my work as a journalist and approached

> Doctor Mukwege, telling him it was not about the money for me but about the cause. It is a unique cause: to return the peace of mind (*la paix*) and the dignity (*la dignité*) of these women. With my first salary, I bought a *pagne* (traditional cloth) dress for my mother to encourage and congratulate her (*courage et felicitation*). That is my personal motivation to work here.

There is a moment of silence, a moment of contemplation, where Ruben does not immediately respond. The press chief clears his throat, growing emotional, and says, "This brings up many memories, many memories", playing with a piece of paper on his desk. "But you learn to live with it", he says, his voice quiet. The scene cuts.

The episode touched on the various themes explored in this dissertation: the contested identities of children seen as dangerous or 'the enemy', the problematic nature of publicly disclosing their status as 'conceived in rape', how people like the press chief 'come to know' about their conception, and, ultimately, that children seen as "time bombs" can grow up to work in positions of care and protection rather than danger.

While the setting of this episode was the DRC, the context in Rwanda is vastly different, and the experiences of survivors of wartime rape and their children cannot be generalised/essentialised across geographic contexts. Yet, common themes provide insights into the lived realities in the aftermath of conflict-related or genocidal sexual violence. How the social worker described the experiences of women and their children in their communities as ostracised and being "pointed at" resembles experiences in Rwanda, where women were found to say things like, "The neighbours make fun of us. It would be better if I moved to a place where no one knows me and where they aren't interested in me" (African Rights, 2004: 5). This is exactly what young people did as they grew up; they moved away from their hometowns and, thus, away from being perceived solely as 'conceived in rape' and all its connotations.

The press chief's pivotal role between the private and the public, his control in shielding women's narratives among pressures to share their experiences, is particularly noteworthy. Perhaps, having been conceived in sexual violence himself, he was once also perceived as a timebomb, a symbol of violence, and possibly a reminder of this violence to his mother and his community, much like how Diana, the girl, was described. Now, he holds a position where he can contain this violence; rather than being a catalyst through which the past is brought into the everyday, he protects the women – as well the listeners requesting to hear about this violence – from it. He came to know about his conception by listening to the story of women, just as Maurice had done at the camp where he was invited without his mother 'disclosing' to him yet. In coming to know, he chose to care for women like his mother and bought his mother a dress, an example of how care factors into this context. Mothers caring for 'timebombs' in situations of hardship and trauma can also be taken care of by their children once their children 'build themselves' (*kwiyubaka)* and become a 'person

of value' (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*) in society – something that the press chief clearly achieved. And perhaps in his mode of care – withholding violent knowledge from the women – he echoes something of the mode of care he and others may have experienced from their own mothers' experiences of grappling with 'poisonous knowledge'. This episode thus shows that girls like Diana can grow up to be press chiefs, transcending their perception as 'timebombs' to assume professional positions that protect against the 'timebomb' of traumatic memories, from being seen as a child conceived in violence to a person shielding others from this violence.

The Volatility of Violence

The analogy of a timebomb can also be used for the traumatic memories of genocidal violence, as memories are a force below the surface of everyday family life. In an explosive moment of "trauma" (*ihungabana*), Mama Charles shouted, "This child will kill you!"— a moment of anger and fear exploding as she herself became a 'timebomb' of memory going off. These ruptures in family life demonstrate that in the aftermath of genocidal violence, families deal with various timebombs in their homes. The hard work that goes into containing these explosive memories has been discussed in Chapter 5.

This timebomb analogy alludes to the potential that a violent past has to be brought into the present moment, even when the delicate layers of affective life work to carefully seal off the memories of the genocide. Young people and their mothers meticulously navigate their everyday moments, interactions, and relations while simultaneously holding memories of the genocide at bay and attuning to and offsetting these memories or imaginaries when they arise, if they can. This was exemplified when Sonia managed to alert Christian when she saw her mother going to a place of trauma and found a solution to prevent this violence from entering the moment, or when Mama Maurice allowed a violent memory to enter the space when her son was not in the room, shielding this moment from him. This tells us that very skilled and challenging work goes on in ordinary conversations and containing the volatility of memory; one does not necessarily know when it will arise and what that arisen memory will do. I have used the concepts of attunement and *kumvikana* to describe how young people sense the tenor in the room and act accordingly.

Through this anticipation and vigilance, I have shown that repair between people who would ordinarily be seen as kin is possible, but it does not have the consistency or durability that popular psychology suggests. At the same time, kinship is made impossible through perceptions and imagined attributes imposed onto young people conceived in rape. Yet, these seemingly impossible ties have the ability to be transformed as young people grow into adults and parents and through their work in piecing together the world. As I have described, kinship – in the absence of the 'post-ness' of the genocide within family life – takes on shapes that cannot be homogenised. I found spaces where broken ties still linger, where the affective force of violence is not and

perhaps cannot be contained. These lingering effects are dynamic and can change instantly, as young people and their mothers anticipate, to use Eric's words, the "burden of [their] history".

In her work on affect, Kathleen Stewart (2017: 197) describes "a world under pressure, the way a present moment can descend like a curtain on a place, the way a world elaborates in prolific forms, taking off in directions, coming to roost on people and practices". It is this curtain descending in a given moment that young people grapple with, such as during my encounter with Mama Sonia, or it is a lingering curtain attached to how young people's being is not separated from their conception, and the lifting of the curtain allows for kinship to work.

I have also reflected on the fact that in this type of research, ethical decisions cannot effectively protect women and their children as the effects of genocide cannot be contained in life or in the research setting, and their effects in the future can only be imperfectly predicted. I hope this knowledge does encourage rather than dishearten other scholars who are looking to engage with children conceived in rape in different contexts as more research to explore their perspectives is much needed.

Fragmented Knowledge

In Chapter 6, I explored young people's attunement not only to the invisible cues that emerge in everyday interactions but also to the perceptions about them that manifest in their lives. A perceived connection to a violent past, a violent conception that carries through into the present at times, dictates young people's relationships with kin. Young people's efforts to grapple with volatile family relationships through attunement involved not only being attuned to the present moment but also to the meaning of their own existence as part of the family. In these situations, their experiences with the physical aspects of *kumva*, such as hearing people call them 'bad names' (*amazina mabi*), coexist with a deep understanding between their own being and that of the other, *kumvikana*.

Young people live with fragmented knowledge about 'who they are', growing up as they come to know the world and their position in it. As children, they received pieces of information, being called 'children of *Interahamwe*' by neighbours, family members, and other children, and though they may not have understood why, they could, nevertheless, feel the accusatory tones of these words. David said he would "always hear that", and Amanda mentioned how she "grew up listening to this". At school, children were asked for their father's names, which they did not know, and so many went home asking their mothers questions that led to explosive moments of traumatic memories within their mothers, reacting with anger or tears, thus prompting children to not ask more. Some mothers prepared answers for their children through the making of alternative worlds, as Mama Amanda created an alternative, quiet "Congo" as opposed to the actual Congo, the place

where she was raped. In Rwanda's patrilineal society, knowing one's father is vital for developing a sense of self, but also for practical reasons, such as inheriting rights to land. As shown through the stories of Emmanuel and Papa Mihigo, obtaining their fathers' land, despite being a source of conflict with their fathers' families, was important to them. Yet, both young men dealt with this conflict differently; Emmanuel decided to obtain his father's land amid the ongoing tensions with his aunt, whereas Papa Mihigo accepted that the threat to his safety was too high. Both experiences demonstrate the agency young men exercise within kinship structures.

As young people live with fragmented knowledge, what they were given and searched for resembled my fieldwork experience. Much like how I was picking up the pieces of what Alice referred to as "a broken mirror", young people were picking up parts of their own reflections, coming to understand how they were seen and how they presented themselves, as well as which parts to keep secret. The many gaps in young people's knowledge and my searching for answers presuppose a picture of the whole that itself may not be an appropriate way of thinking about kinship, life histories, or life trajectories.

Chapter 6 also discussed the ways "poisonous knowledge" (Das, 2000) appears in young people's worlds. Mothers tried to shield their children from living with 'poisonous knowledge', but pressures from their and their children's social worlds meant they carefully brought down their shield when they 'disclosed' to their children how they were conceived, assisted by NGOs in the process. Since violent knowledge is often transferred between people in communities and between children, the 'disclosure' process cannot necessarily be interpreted as a one-off event or a single moment in time that has a 'before' and 'after'; instead, it is part of the pieces young people collect to understand their positions within their social worlds.

To illustrate this point, I return to Clara Han, who introduces her work as follows (2021: 4):

> The child is simply learning what the world is, but that world and that everyday life already bear the traces of war and devastation. Thus, the event, for the child, cannot be a priori treated as marked out from the fabric of everyday life. On the contrary, it is completely interspersed within it. Thus, in counterpoint to the project of testimony that seeks to transmit a narrative of the event to future generations, *Seeing Like a Child* sees the inheritance of familial memories of violence as embedded in the child's inhabitation of everyday life.

What is important here is that the event, the 1994 genocide and the child's conception, for young people growing up is not just something that is *told* to them; it is also part of the way they inhabit the world. This, often missing in conversations on the 'disclosure' of children's violent conceptions, is what this research has shown.

With knowledge about their conception, young people then came to know about their father. Eramian and Denov (2018: 379-380) explain that "for better or for worse, knowing who their fathers are is part of knowing who they are", and not knowing their fathers is "a cause of dislocatedness in life". As Alice said, she will never know who she is; she only knows who she chooses to be. Many young people wanted to know their fathers despite what they had done during the genocide. These young people grew up seeing "the things fathers would do for their children", as David said. This led to young people having fantasies about what their lives would look like with their fathers in them, with many viewing it as a 'better life'. It is worth noting that in these fantasies, the father is portrayed as a *pater familias*; children were not necessarily looking for their progenitors (though they may be) but for a quality of care they imagined fathers to offer and the network of affiliation and support they imagined such a relationship endowing. Emmanuel travelled to two countries to locate his father and ask if he could live with him. Others, though, expressed indifference towards their fathers, which shows that young people's ideas about their lives cannot be homogenised. Eramian and Denov (2018: 388) state that "what is crucial is that 'truth' in the Rwandan context is not necessarily equated with forensic or factual truth, which is, of course, precisely what youth sought from their mothers: the facts of their origins and the circumstances of their coming into the world". I discussed how notions of 'truth' are not necessarily factual in Chapter 6; yet, I do still wonder if a factual truth is what these young people actually sought from their mothers, that is, an understanding of why their lives were the way they were, why they were treated differently, why they did not have a father (and, thus, a place to call home), and why their mothers got so upset when they asked about it. These questions did not require a factual truth, a disclosure event that would answer each of them. Many young people had received factual answers, and while these provided them with an understanding of their mothers' experiences (Hogwood et al., 2018), many were still searching for their place within their social worlds. Truth may not be factual, and neither is knowledge; it is constructed in the social. Current knowledge, constructed in the social, determines young people to be seen as "children of *Interahamwe*", and consequently how young people learn to see themselves. I have argued that, as scholars, we have the responsibility to see and write about them differently (Loning, 2023a).

In the ethical considerations outlined in Chapter 4, I explored vicarious trauma and what it is like living with 'poisonous knowledge' as anthropologists. Returning to Mama Keza's words about the stories we hear, she said, "The more you hear these things, the more they become, the more they become". She described what the knowledge she passed on to me would do to me physically, from my ears to my mind and to my restless body at night, much like Mama Therese's restless nights, asking her daughter to come home before dark. Therese's story of knowing about her mother's rape by her brother-in-law showed the intergenerational dynamics of living with 'poisonous knowledge', where young people also keep this knowledge inside, in silence, not wanting it to become 'more and more'. As I tried to seal off the violence from spilling into my world at home, so did young people, in a much more intrusive, contentious world where this 'poisonous knowledge' seeped through everyday social life.

Public Disclosure

The concept of 'disclosure' has a private component in which young people learn more about themselves and their social worlds. It also has a public component. Chapter 7 explored the dangers of knowledge that had previously been carefully shielded as it enters public spaces, focusing on how narratives around sexual violence are controlled in the public and private spheres of remembering and rebuilding, specifically regarding the impact on the 'generation after'. I have shown how the national commemoration slogan "*kwibuka twiyubaka*" (remembering and rebuilding ourselves) takes shape in the lives of young people as they engage in *kwiyubaka* (building oneself). Through *kwiyubaka,* as well as through parenthood, young people's apparent fixed connections to the past and their conception can be transformed by becoming a "person of value" (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*) or "the parent of someone" rather than "a child of rape".

Photographs taken of young people conceived in rape when they were children, as their mothers told "the world" what happened to them, capture a frozen moment in time, which is directly opposed to the dynamic ways young people engage with *kwiyubaka*. In national commemorations, women's testimonies of genocidal rape are side-lined as the Rwandan government aims to protect others from experiencing "trauma" (*ihungabana*) through the memories that such testimonies may yield (Fox, 2021). Kesselring (2017: 81) refers to the "conundrum of commemoration" as a necessary condition for transforming pain and experience, one that "robs victims of their carefully guarded personal and raw experiences". The members of SEVOTA have positioned themselves in this conundrum by making use of their 'representational repertoires' – using global discourses about rape in public for activism and the sharing of stories in private for comfort. Zraly (2008) found that genocidal rape survivors remake their worlds through the narration of stories about their shared experiences. Kesselring (2017: 189) reiterates this point by arguing that "victims relate to one another by way of their bodily knowledge of harm. It is in such encounters that new forms of sociality can slowly emerge". This begs the question of audience: who the women tell their stories to and whether this occurs in private or public. As control over one's testimonial narrative can be lost, the intergenerational effects of women's disclosure crystalise in young people's social worlds. Alex, for instance, was extremely hurt when he accidentally saw his mother speaking about him, and Robert's family home turned violent when his mother's husband accidentally found out about his conception. When the seal that shields a violent past is ripped off, the ramifications are profound for everyone involved.

In the aftermath of the genocide, young people have been "simultaneously invisible and too visible" (Ericsson, 2005: 1). In commemoration spaces, they are largely invisible, not entirely belonging to the group of survivors or perpetrators. Scholars such as Charli Carpenter (2010) have called for more international attention to these individuals in scholarship and global discourses on human rights, where they have largely been "invisible" and "forgotten". Yet, they are also "too

visible" in serving as reminders of the past. The visibility photojournalists have given them – or, rather, imposed upon them, since control of this visibility tends to be lost – has solidified their positions as reminders of the past. The paradox between protection and public visibility is another conundrum, especially for young people themselves, as they decide what to reveal and conceal if they decide to "talk openly" (Eramian and Denov, 2018). Eramian and Denov found that "talking openly" was characterised by paradoxical versions of positive, negative, helpful, and hurtful aspects because as young people "invoked the virtue of talking openly not for personal but for political purposes… they must tell their stories in the service of advancing identity politics and making claims for recognition of their particular needs as youth born of sexual violence during the genocide" (2018: 385).

One way that youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina made claims for recognition was through the exhibition organised by the Forgotten Children of War Association. The exhibition, organised by young adults conceived in wartime rape through their association, was aimed at increasing their visibility, "coming out in public with their story, their face after the life in darkness and discrimination" (Conley, 2022: 163). That is to say, they came out in public *on their terms*. It would be interesting to know if and how Rwandan youth would want to be seen on their terms. I recall my interview with Faustin, who told me that he was most proud of the strength with which he faced the difficult journey of his life. He said, "I have gone from being that child to becoming this person" (Loning, 2023a: 10). Rather than being "that child", this transformation should be recognised in discourses on the "forgotten children of war". I note here that there is a distinct difference between the young adults in Bosnia calling their association by this name to call attention to being forgotten and scholars referring to them as such and further stigmatising them as 'forgotten children' rather than the human beings they are in the present; "these people".

So, What About Kinship?

To come to a better understanding of kinship as it relates to young people's social and familial worlds, I turn to two concepts of analysis: care practices as "small things" (Sadruddin, 2020) and "substances in relationality" (Carsten, 2011).

Aalyia Feroz Ali Sadruddin (2020) studied ageing and dignity in Rwanda by exploring care practices among the elderly. She found that care practices – what is done in care – were made up of "the small things that we do for each other every day" (2020: 83). Intimate care consisted of "bodily and emotional exchanges" that exclusively took place in private spaces. Sadruddin describes the experience of two genocide widows taking care of each other as "they felt like their minds and bodies were in synchrony with each other" (2020: 88). As I read Sadruddin's work, I could not help but think that these care practices are also done by young people and their mothers in the everyday, searching for synchronicity and attunement, taking care with the jagged edges of

the everyday. Sadruddin (2020: 87) notes that "although such care practices are referred to as 'small', they carry meaning and value, since smallness itself is multivalent. The small is neither unnoticed nor trivial; it is modest and remains charged with the potentiality to reinfuse meaning into the everyday". Sadruddin refers to Buch's (2015) research in care homes in the United States, where Buch describes how caregivers "attune their bodies" to those who come under their care and found that in her research in Rwanda, the synchronising of minds and bodies was "a crucial aspect of caregiving and care receiving" (Buch, 2015: 282, in Sadruddin, 2020: 91). Thus, care practices as "small things" require *kumva* (to hear, to sense, and to feel) and *kumvikana* (to sense and make sense of, to deeply understand each other) for the caring and cared for. One can conclude that young people and their mothers, interchangeably as care givers and receivers, engage in everyday care practices, the "small things", to keep the "big things" at bay, that is, the forces of genocide memories.

Janet Carsten's (2000) analytical notion of relatedness provides a view of kinship as a continual, fluid process rather than a fixed entity solidified at birth and where people become complete social beings in society through a process of becoming kin. For young people in Rwanda, kinning (Howell, 2003), the process of including a person into families of kin, emerges when a complete social being or a 'person of value' (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*) has been formed. The possibilities and limits of kinning can be further explored by using Carsten's focus on substances in relationality, particularly those of blood and money, as both, through literal qualities and metaphorical associations, have "a close association with life itself or life-giving properties" (Carsten, 2011: 30). Local Rwandan interpretations of blood as a substance in biological kinship ties allow young people to be seen as their perpetrator fathers.[67] Young people's personhood is linked to their fathers, and they are understood to carry parts of their fathers within them, such as their blood (Eramian and Denov, 2018). Alice said that her blood contains both that of a survivor and a perpetrator, and a mother's testimony in *Intended Consequences* spoke of her son in terms of "that blood in him". Metaphorical associations with blood make it so these young people are seen as carrying dangerous substances within them. As much as blood has "life-giving" properties, in Rwanda, blood is also widely associated with death. This life-taking force is then placed on the person – as in, "This child will kill you" – since the blood of a killer flows within. Yet, money as a substance also flows between people. As Carsten (2011: 28) states, "Like blood, money may flow and is perceived as generative". This generative quality transforms the idea that a child carries substances within them that might be dangerous to them carrying substances that allow for care. As they become older, this may take the literal form of material support and care. The fluidity of these substances, as they run within and between people, shows the dynamic nature of how young people's relatedness can be understood, as different substances circulating while they themselves move through their life trajectories.

[67] Laura Eramian (2018) explains the Rwandan notion of composite personhood as the self not being autonomous or unique but instead composed of others to whom one is connected, hence young people's personhood is connection to their father.

As young people moved through different stages of their life course, different types of relationships became possible that were dismissed when they were seen as 'conceived in rape'. By working towards becoming a 'person of value' (*umuntu w'ingirakamaro*), young people carve out spaces for themselves and enable relationships where rejection towards a 'child of rape' previously existed.[68] Taking on positions of responsibility was something that young people strove towards, though one must be careful in ascribing responsibilities to young people to create these possibilities for transformation. It is not their burden to fix what was broken.

Through the containment of "poisonous knowledge" and genocide memories within the home, the care of "small things", *kumva* and *kumvikana*, kinship is made possible in the home. I have described the subtle ways in which young people are attuned to the genocide memories within their mothers and actively protect them and their homes from their effects. In turn, mothers work hard to shield their children from living with a knowledge of the past despite the pressures of the social world to engage in 'disclosure'. I have suggested that Veena Das's (2007) argument that violence is absorbed in the everyday rather than transcended helps in understanding how the past sets the stage for kinship. My work shows how the 'generation after' absorbs memories of collective violence, as well as how this violence becomes embodied in their being 'of rape'. Some elements of violence, such as young people's apparent fixed connections to the past and their conception, can be transformed. Therefore, in the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence in Rwanda, violence is absorbed in everyday life and managed through affect and care, as well as possibly transcended by 'the generation after'.

Closing Thoughts

In writing this conclusion, I struggled with the self-imposed idea that I should have 'grand findings' that make us think differently about kinship or genocidal rape. I felt an enormous responsibility to do justice to what my participants had trusted me with. Rather than large theoretical revelations, what I found instead were beautiful moments of intimacy, protection, and care between young people and their mothers. Upon reflection, as people in Rwanda move on but not away from a history with unimaginable violence (of a particularly intimate and destructive nature to family ties (Fujii, 2009), I began thinking that it was the smallest, most subtle moments during my fieldwork that revealed what it is like to live in the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence. In previous studies, particularly in Rwanda, research with young people conceived in genocidal rape has analysed the themes that characterise young people's lives according to what they have said rather than examining what it is like in the everyday to live with 'their history', in

[68] It is important to note that while this framing suggests that kinship is something that can be accomplished when positive relationships are built, kinship ties are often structurally ambivalent and not uniquely positive. Janet Carsten (2013) discusses that anthropologists tend to dwell less on the ambivalent or negative qualities of kinship, but rather concentrate on its positive aspects. Whereas I also do so in this paragraph, the research has also clearly shown the paradoxes, complexities, and harmful facets of kin ties in the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence.

their words. While these studies have been crucial in shining light on the lived experiences of young people, I hope to have added substantial ethnographic insights into intergenerational family dynamics as I observed them. That said, much of what I found was also told. I was told a story by one of the mothers that I found significant, but I did not know where to place it in the analysis. Perhaps some stories do not need extensive analysis; they are just what they are: an example that intimate moments of care can exist in a world derived from violence. Mama Pauline told me:

> My children are the ones that make me happy. Things did not go well between me and my husband. We got married in difficult times. I can say we married unexpectedly because we did not love each other before but found ourselves living together. When I lived at my aunt's place, that is where I met him; he was a friend of the family. My aunt wanted me to get married and do all the ceremonies of giving a dowry and having the wedding, but I didn't want those things. The more she insisted on giving me such pieces of advice, the more I felt like I didn't want to get married. I left and went to live with my children and my sisters.
>
> Later, I found myself trapped living with that man. He found me while I was responsible for raising my family, and we then lived together. We raised those children together, but he made me feel like I was the only one who was responsible for taking care of those children and the whole household in general. He did not help me with anything at home; he didn't buy clothes for his children or pay for their school fees, no one received anything from him.
>
> Later, I found that I was HIV positive. I had been infected by the people who raped me. My husband tested negative, and things continued to get worse. He would always go out and spend many days away from home, then coming back; he was always moving. We lived together like that. He didn't buy me any clothes. It is me who takes care of myself. Then SURF built houses and gave me one. My husband then came and lived there with me, but our relationship has never been good. That is the reason why we did not get married legally, because I can't gain anything from getting married to him legally. After all, he might even take the house that SURF gave me and sell it and leave. You know, we have four children together. I'm thankful to God that all of them are HIV-negative.
>
> There was a woman with whom I was raped together. She was HIV positive and told me to go for a medical check-up; that is how I found out that I was HIV positive. After finding out, at first, I became like a mad person. I said to myself, "Why didn't you know about it earlier?" I said that if I would have known about it before, I would have also infected the relatives of the people who infected me. That is what I was thinking, wondering why I came to know about it after I had accepted the Lord Jesus. I was

saying that if I had known about it before, I would have also revenged myself. So, I became like a mad person for a long period, I would scream during the night and go outside. Basically, I had no peace. I spent the nights crying. For me to have peace is when I joined small groups of women who were also raped and talked about it. Slowly by slowly, I came to accept it. I used to feel like it was only me and the other woman with whom I was raped together; I used to think it was only us who were raped. But whenever I met others who were raped, I found that it was not only me, feeling that there are others I can share similar problems with and talk about it.

My husband's family wants him to leave me, but he refuses and continues to live with me. He comes and goes; he will spend six months away, and then he comes back asking me for forgiveness. I do think he is brave because I have nothing for which he should stay with me: I don't have properties, I don't have money, I don't have anything apart from the house that SURF gave me. For me, even if he doesn't provide anything for the family, he is brave. I consider him in a good way because that is what helps me to be patient and provide for the family. Even if he is supposed to be helping me or he disrespects me, he did find me when I didn't have a family. So, sometimes I think about those things, and all in all, he went through a lot, like others.

Something that helps me to accept him and feel at ease when he goes away and comes back is that there was a time when I was very sick due to being raped. Doctors had told me not to give birth to children anymore, but I did. My uterus had been wounded, and due to me giving birth again, I got cancer. I was at the hospital, and my husband had gone away during that period as usual. He came back to see me at the hospital. When I saw him, I screamed, thinking that he came to hurt me. Later on, I accepted that he could come and stay with me during the day and take shifts with the person who had stayed during the night. The way he used to comb my hair, the way he was saying he would come abroad with me when they take me for treatment, we had some misunderstandings because I was telling him that I have someone to take care of me, but he insisted that he would come with me. These things showed me something. Imagine someone who has cancer, who is almost going to die, but you insist and continue to take care of her. He used to bathe me without hesitating or thinking that he may get infected with HIV from the blood that I was bleeding. That is what made me feel at ease within me.

Mama Pauline shows that life in the aftermath of genocidal sexual violence is full of ambiguity – a word so often used in research without showing the deep layers of experience it encompasses. Ambiguity when she speaks of her husband who does not take care of her and her children financially, who she is scared will take her house from her or who she feared when she saw him at the hospital and screamed, but who is also brave and "went through a lot, like others", who brushed

her hair and bathed her when she was ill, and made her feel at ease within herself. Her story shows that moments of intimacy and care can exist through "small things" (Sadruddin, 2020) in a life filled with suffering because of a violent past, a violence that carries on in Mama Pauline's present everyday.

To close off, a discussion on conducting research on this topic. Young people and their mothers' willingness to participate in this study was varied and largely unknown to me, apart from what they told me. Many young people said they hoped their stories would help others like them. When I was in the Netherlands during the COVID-19 pandemic, I received a text message from Emmanuel on the 7th of April 2020, the first day of the national genocide commemoration. We had not been in touch after our interview in December 2019, and he must have found my phone number on his consent form. I was happy that I had kept my Rwandan sim card in my phone. Emmanuel said, "Do you remember me?" I told him that I did and that I was glad to hear from him, and it must be a difficult day for him today. He said, "I am happy about today. I think about my childhood up to now, and I made the decision to help other people who have a similar birth to me, so I am happy". The research was one way he hoped to do so, as he said when inviting me to visit him at his home, where he had prepared an itinerary to show me his social world, including his grandmother who mumbled "You killed me" without looking at us. Eric shared Emmanuel's conviction to help others. Eric founded a club in his village to bring together youth to campaign against gender-based violence. These initiatives of young people demonstrate their agency and interest in participating in activities such as this research. I recommend other researchers to involve them as co-researchers, much like Denov and Lakor (2017) have done. I have shown that young people have ideas about their lives to which we should pay attention; thus, they should play a role in collecting and sharing these ideas.

Jelke Boesten and Marsha Henry (2018) discuss the idea of over-research and research fatigue amongst survivors of conflict-related sexual violence across settings in Liberia, Tanzania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Peru. They note "the potential harmful effects that nonreflective methodologies and universal beliefs in the benevolence of disclosure can have on victim-survivors' lives" and that, in many cases, "seeking out victim-survivors of rape for research and/or international support and visibility has little to no benefits at all to survivors, and arguably, does more harm than good if it continually misaddresses the needs of survivors" (2018: 582). They call for a reflection on alternative methods of data collection and whether first-hand accounts "add anything", since some populations have been over-researched. Additionally, they ask "what do participants gain from research?" (2018: 583). These are important questions I considered and that should be considered for any follow-up studies. In the case of Rwanda, one could say that the 1994 genocide has been "over-researched", but the lives of children conceived in rape have not. The majority of people who were approached to participate in this research, such as young people in the youth camps, chose not to. The ones that did, however, often came with prepared stories they wanted to tell before I had asked any questions, taking the opportunity to share what they wanted

for reasons of their own. In the case of mothers, an example of what participants gained from it was explained by Mama Paulin when I asked her if she had any questions for me. She said:

> I don't have any questions to ask you, apart from thanking you, because when I get a chance to have someone to talk to, it helps me so much. I used to have severe headaches, but since I started to talk about my story, it helped me. Whenever I have someone to tell my story to, it helps me to feel relieved. When you become free and open and talk to that person, your head feels much better".

Mama Paulin's story buys into "universal beliefs in the benevolence of disclosure" (Boesten and Henry, 2018: 282), that telling one's story helps. We must be careful about this. I hope this dissertation has provided a thorough discussion on the concept of disclosure – of stories and identities – and has shown the multiple complex layers and risks involved. Yet, to stay true to what women told me, some who wanted to speak did so because it helped them feel relieved (*numvise nduhutse).* The findings from first-hand accounts might not "add anything", but the experience of women or young people telling their stories and for someone to listen does. Karen Engle (2014: 25) has argued that "too much emphasis on wartime rape as exceptional violence may actually reinforce the shame of rape, rather than undermine it". I have discussed the risks and responsibilities of studying genocidal rape on the African continent in Chapter 4 regarding the ethical considerations of this research and believe that the responsibility to not reinforce shame or other stereotypes lies with the researcher. On reinforcing and undermining shame, as well as the question of "what do participants gain from research", I close off with the words of Mama David. My interview with her was on the last day of my 30-month fieldwork experience; her closing words to me were the closing words of my fieldwork, and now this dissertation. When asked if she had any questions for me or additional comments when we closed the interview, Mama David said:

> As women that were raped, we have lost our value in society, and we feel that our lives have little meaning, but when someone like you wants to listen to us and help others with our stories, we get some of that value back.

Although these words moved me deeply, giving women and their children their feeling of value back is an ability that lies within these women themselves, as demonstrated by their survival, that I can only witness and give recognition to. I do hope that my writing has shown that the value of these mothers and their children within research and scholarship is clear and deserves more attention.

REFERENCES

Adams, A. (2018). The legacy of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and their contribution to the crime of rape. *European Journal of International Law*, *29*(3), 749–769. https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chy043

African Rights (2004). *Rwanda: Broken bodies, torn spirits: Living with genocide, rape and HIV/AIDS.* Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights.

Akello, G. (2013). Experiences of forced mothers in northern Uganda. *Intervention*, *11*, 149-156.

Akullo, E. & Ojok, B. (2022) Researching children born of war in Uganda: Methodological reflections on the inclusion of minors in CBOW research. In Lee, S., Glaesmer, H., Stelzl-Marx, B. (Eds.), *Children born of war: Past, present and future.* NY: Routledge. 87–110.

American Anthropological Association (AAA) (2012). *AAA Statement on ethics: Principles of professional responsibility.* Available at: https://americananthro.org/about/policies/statement-on-ethics/

Anderson, K. & van Ee, E. (2020). Reflective functioning of refugee mothers with children born of conflict-related sexual violence. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17: 2873. Doi:10.3390/ijerph17082873

André, C., & Platteau, J.-P. (1998). Land relations under unbearable stress: Rwanda caught in the Malthusian trap. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, *34*(1), 1–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-2681(97)00045-0

Anumol, D., & Munderere, S. (2023). Moving beyond Rwanda's "children of bad memory." In Theidon, K., Mazurana, D., & Anumol, D. (Eds.), *Challenging conceptions: Children born of wartime rape and sexual exploitation*. New York: Oxford University Press. 256–264.

Aperture (2009). Intended Consequences Panel Discussion [video]. 29 April. Accessible at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUxCtTuAZ8c

Apio, E. (2016). *Children born of war in northern Uganda: Kinship, marriage, and the politics of post-conflict reintegration in Lango society.* University of Birmingham: PhD Thesis. Available at: http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/6926/1/Apio16PhD.pdf

Apio, E. (2007). Uganda's forgotten children of war. In Carpenter, R. (Ed.), *Born of war: Protecting children of sexual violence survivors in conflict zones*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press. 94–109

Ashford, M.W & Huet-Vaughn, Y. (1997). The impact of war on women. In Levy, B. & Sidel, V. (Eds.), *War and public health*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 186–96

Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA) (2011). *Ethical guidelines for good research practice.* Available at: https://www.theasa.org/downloads/ASA%20ethics%20guidelines%202011.pdf

Ataci, T. (2022). Narratives of Rwandan youth on post-genocide reconciliation: Contesting discourses and identities in the making. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 25(10): 1316–1333. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2021.1950661

Atim, T., Ogwal, G. A., & Bunting, A. (2023). Kinship and belonging among children born of war in northern Uganda: I am a child who is not from here. In Theidon, K., Mazurana, D., & Anumol, D. (Eds.), *Challenging conceptions: Children born of wartime rape and sexual exploitation*. New York: Oxford University Press. 110–132.

Auerhahn, N.C. & Laub, D. (1998). Intergenerational memory of the Holocaust. In Danieli, Y. (Ed.), *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. Boston, MA: Springer. 21–41.

Backe, E. L., Bosire, E. N., Kim, A. W., Mendenhall, E. (2021) 'Thinking too much': A systematic review of the idiom of distress in sub-Saharan Africa. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, 45*, 655–682. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-020-09697-z.

Baines, E., & Oliveira, C. (2021). Securing the future: Transformative justice and children 'born of war'. *Social & Legal Studies*, *30*(3), 341–361. https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663920946430

Baines, E. K. (2003). Body politics and the Rwandan crisis. *Third World Quarterly*, *24*(3), 479–493. https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659032000084429

Banyanga, J., Björkqvist, K., & Österman, K. (2017). The trauma of women who were raped and children who were born as a result of rape during the Rwandan genocide: Cases from the Rwandan diaspora. *Pyrex J African Studies Dev*, 3, 31–39.

Barnett, M. (2003). *Eyewitness to genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*. NY: Cornell University Press.

Bell, K. (2014). Resisting commensurability: Against informed consent as an anthropological virtue. *American Anthropologist*, *116*(3), 511–522. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24029063

Benda, R. M., & Pells, K. (2020). The state-as-parent: reframing parent-child relations in Rwanda. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, *9*(1), 41–57. https://doi.org/10.1332/204674319X15740695651861

Benda, R. M. (2019). Promising generations: From intergenerational guilt to Ndi Umunyarwanda. In Greyson, H. & Hitchcott, N. (Eds.), *Rwanda since 1994: Stories of Change.* Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press. 189–210.

Benda, R. M. (2018). Time to hear the other side: Transitional Temporalities and Transgenerational Narratives in post-genocide Rwanda. In Mueller-Hirth, N. & Rios Oyola, S. (Eds.), *Time and Temporality in Transitional and Post-Conflict societies.* Routledge. 122–142.

Berckmoes, L., Eichelsheim, V., Rutayisire, T., Richters, A., & Hola, B. (2017a). How legacies of genocide are transmitted in the family environment: A qualitative study of two generations in Rwanda. *Societies (Basel, Switzerland)*, *7*(3), 24. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc7030024

Berckmoes, L. H., de Jong, J. T. V. M., & Reis, R. (2017b). Intergenerational transmission of violence and resilience in conflict-affected Burundi: A qualitative study of why some children thrive despite duress. *Global Mental Health. 4*(26), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2017.23

Berry, M. E. (2018). *War, women, and power: From violence to mobilization in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bihigi Habintwari, V. (2021). *Youth inclusive initiatives and reconciliation process in Rwanda: a case of Hope and Peace Foundation*. University of Rwanda: Master's dissertation. Accessible at: http://154.68.126.42/handle/123456789/1425

Bluhm, D. (2022). Healing from genocidal rape: An exploration of the trauma healing process among SEVOTA members. *School for International Training (SIT), Independent Study Project Collection*. 3497. Accessible at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3497

Boesten, J., & Henry, M. (2018). Between fatigue and silence: The challenges of conducting research on sexual violence in conflict. *Social Politics*, *25*(4), 568–588. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxy027

Borneman, J. (1997). Caring and being cared for: displacing marriage, kinship, gender and sexuality. *International Social Science Journal.* 49(154): 573-584. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2451.1997.tb00046.x

Braaf, R. (2014). Sexual violence against ethnic minorities during the Khmer Rouge regime. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Cambodia Defender's Project. Accessible at: https://giz-cambodia.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/CDP_leaflet_English.pdf

Buch, E. D. (2015). Anthropology of aging and care. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 44*, 277–293. doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro -102214-014254.

Burnet, J. E. (2012a). *Genocide lives in us: Women, memory, and silence in Rwanda*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Burnet, J. E. (2012b). Situating sexual violence in Rwanda (1990–2001): Sexual agency, sexual consent, and the political economy of war. *African Studies Review*, *55*(2), 97–118. https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2012.0034

Buss, D. (2009). Rethinking "Rape as a weapon of war". *Feminist Legal* Studies*, 17*(2), 145–163. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-009-9118-5

Calgaro, E. (2015). If you are vulnerable and you know it raise your hand: Experiences from working in post-tsunami Thailand. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 17, 45–54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2015.09.003

Carpenter, R. C. (2010). *Forgetting children born of war: Setting the human rights agenda in Bosnia and beyond.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Carpenter, R.C. (2007). *Born of war: Protecting children of sexual violence survivors in conflict zones.* Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Carsten, J. (2011). Substance and relationality: Blood in contexts. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 40*(1), 19–35. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.105000

Carsten, J. (2013). What kinship does – and how. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory, 3*(2), 245–51. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau3.2.013

Carsten, J. (ed.) (2000). *Cultures of relatedness: New approaches to the study of kinship*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Castellano San José, P. (2020). The rapes committed against the Yazidi women: A genocide?: A study of the crime of rape as a form of genocide in international criminal law. *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, *18*, 50–71. https://doi.org/10.14422/cir.i18.y2020.003

Christiansen, C., Utas, M. & Vigh, H. E. (2006). *Navigating youth, generating adulthood: Social becoming in an African context*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

Clark, P. (2014). After genocide: Democracy in Rwanda, 20 years on. *Juncture*, *20*(4), 308–311. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2050-5876.2014.00771.x

Clark, P., & Kaufman, Z. D. (2009). *After genocide: Transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation in Rwanda and beyond*. London, UK: Hurst Publishers.

Clark, P. (2010). *The gacaca courts, post-genocide justice and reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without lawyers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Colvin, C. J. (2018). *Traumatic storytelling and memory in post-apartheid South Africa: Performing signs of injury*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429491818

Conley, B. (2023). Triptych: Seeing children born of wartime rape. In Theidon, K., Mazurana, D., & Anumol, D. (Eds.), *Challenging conceptions: Children born of wartime rape and sexual exploitation*. New York: Oxford University Press. 153–166.

Cooke, M. (2019). Murad vs. ISIS: Rape as a weapon of genocide. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, *15*(3), 261–285. https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-7720627

Crawley, K. & Simic, O. (2012). Unintended consequences: representations of Rwandan women and their children born from rape. *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 36, 87–106.

Cuklanz, L. (2019). Representations of gendered violence in mainstream media. *Questions De Communication*, *35*, 307–321. https://doi.org/10.4000/questionsdecommunication.19487

Dallaire, R. (2003). *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda.* New York: Random House.

Das, V. (2018). Ethics, self-knowledge, and life taken as a whole. *HAU Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, *8*(3), 537–549. https://doi.org/10.1086/701379

Das, V. (2007). *Life and words: Violence and the descent into the ordinary*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Das, V., Kleinman, A., Lock, M., Ramphele, M. & Reynolds, P. (2001). *Remaking a world: Violence, social suffering, and recovery.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Das, V. Kleinman, A., Lock, M., Ramphele, M. & Reynolds, P. (2000). *Violence and subjectivity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Das, V. (2000). The act of witnessing: Violence, poisonous knowledge and subjectivity. In Das, V. Kleinman, A., Lock, M., Ramphele, M. & Reynolds, P. (Eds.), *Violence and subjectivity*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press. 205–225.

Das, V. (1997). Language and the body: Transactions in the construction of pain. In Kleinman, A., Das, V., & Lock, M. M. (1997). *Social suffering*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 67–91.

Das, V. (1996). Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain. *Daedalus*, *125*(1), 67–91. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027354

De Brouwer, A-M. & Ka Hon Chu, S. (2009). *The men who killed me: Rwanda survivors of sexual violence.* Vancouver, Canada: Douglas & McIntyre Publishers.

De Lame, D. (2004). Mighty secrets, public commensality, and the crisis of transparency: Rwanda through the looking glass. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, *38*(2), 279–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2004.10751287

Denov, M., D'Amico, M., Linds, W., Mitchell, C., & Mosseau, N. (2022). Youth reflections on ethics in research and practice: A case study of youth born of genocidal rape in Rwanda. *Journal of Youth Studies, 26*(9), 1240–1255. DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2022.2080540

Denov, M., & Shevell, M. C. (2021). An arts-based approach with youth born of genocidal rape in Rwanda: The river of life as an autobiographical mapping tool. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *11*(1), 21–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610621995830

Denov, M., Eramian, L., & Shevell, M. (2020). "You feel like you belong nowhere": Conflict-related sexual violence and social identity in post-genocide Rwanda. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, *14*(1), 40–59. https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.14.1.1663

Denov, M., Woolner, L., Bahati, J. P., Nsuki, P., & Shyaka, O. (2020). The intergenerational legacy of genocidal rape: The realities and perspectives of children born of the Rwandan genocide. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *35*(17–18), 3286–3307. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517708407

Denov, M., & Piolanti, A. (2020). "Though my father was a killer, I need to know him": Children born of genocidal rape in Rwanda and their perspectives on fatherhood. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 107, 104560–104560. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104560

Denov, M., & Kahn, S. (2019). 'They should see us as a symbol of reconciliation': Youth born of genocidal rape in Rwanda and the implications for transitional justice. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, *11*(1), 151–170. https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huz011

Denov, M., & Piolanti, A. (2019). Mothers of children born of genocidal rape in Rwanda: Implications for mental health, well-being and psycho-social support interventions. *Health Care for Women International*, *40*(7–9), 813–828. https://doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2019.1571593

Denov, M., & Lakor, A. A. (2017). When war is better than peace: The post-conflict realities of children born of wartime rape in northern Uganda. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 65, 255–265. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.014

Denov M. (2015). Children born of wartime rape: The intergenerational realities of sexual violence and abuse. *Ethics, Medicine & Public Health*, 11, 61-68.

Derrida, J. (2001). On Forgiveness. in J. Derrida (Ed.) *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. New York: Routledge Press.

Des Forges, A. L. (1999). *"Leave none to tell the story": Genocide in Rwanda*. Kigali, Rwanda: Human Rights Watch. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/r/rwanda/rwanda993.pdf

DiFruscia, K. T. (2010). Listening to voices: An interview with Veena Das. *Altérités*, *7*(1), 136–145. Accessible at: https://web.archive.org/web/20180421081506id_/http://www.alterites.ca/vol7no1/pdf/71_TurcotDiFruscia_Das_2010.pdf

Dokter Ruben (2023). Congo: Vrouwen de baas. *NPO*, 22 October 2023. Accessible at: https://npo.nl/start/serie/dokter-ruben/seizoen-1/congo-vrouwen-de-baas

Donovan, P. (2002). Rape and HIV/AIDS in Rwanda. *The Lancet (British Edition), 360*: s17–s18. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)11804-6

Durham, D. (2000). Youth and the social imagination in Africa: Introduction to parts 1 and 2. *Anthropological Quarterly*, *73*(3), 113–120. https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2000.0003

Dyer, S. J. (2007). The value of children in African countries: Insight from studies on infertility. *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 28, 69–77.

Eboe-Osuji, C. (2007). Rape as genocide: some questions arising. *Journal of Genocide Research*, *9*(2), 251–273. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520701368669

Eichelshneim, V., Berckmoes, L., Rutayisire, T., Richters, A. & Hola, B. (2017). *International legacies of the genocide in Rwanda and community based sociotherapy.* CICJ: Policy Paper. Accessible at: https://cicj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Policy_paper_Intergenerational-legacies-of-Rwandan-genocide.pdf

Elbagir, N. (2015). Boko Haram kidnap victim: Stigmatized for carrying captor's baby. *CNN*, 11 June. Accessible at: https://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/11/africa/boko-haram-pregnant-victim/index.html

Engle, K. (2014). The grip of sexual violence: Reading UN security council resolutions on human security. In Heathcote, G. & Otto, D. (Eds.), *Rethinking peacekeeping, gender equality and collective security*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 23–47.

Eramian, L. (2021). Moving on by settling down? Ambiguities of urban housing and home in post-genocide Rwanda. *Housing Studies*, *36*(6), 867–884. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2020.1729962

Eramian, L. (2018). *Peaceful selves: Personhood, nationhood, and the post-conflict moment in Rwanda*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Eramian, L., & Denov, M. (2018). Is it always good to talk? The paradoxes of truth-telling by Rwandan youth born of rape committed during the genocide. *Journal of Genocide Research*, *20*(3), 372–391. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2018.1459240

Ericsson, K. (2005). Introduction. In Ericsson, K. & Simonsen, E. (Eds.), *Children of World War II: The hidden enemy legacy*. Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books. 1–12.

Eriksson Baaz, M., & Stern, M. (2013). *Sexual violence as a weapon of war?: Perceptions, prescriptions, problems in the Congo and beyond*. London and New York: Zed Books.

Eriksson Baaz, M., & Stern, M. (2010). *The complexity of violence: A critical analysis of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. Sida working paper on gender-based violence, May. Uppsala, Sweden: The Nordic Africa Institute.

Erjavec, K. & Volčič, Z. (2010a). Living with the sins of their father: An analysis of self-representation of adolescents born of war rape. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 25(3), 359–386. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558410361373

Erjavec, K. & Volčič, Z. (2010b). 'Target', 'cancer' and 'warrior': Exploring painful metaphors of self-presentation used by girls born of war rape. *Discourse & Society.* 21(5), 524-543. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926510373981

Forna, A. (2010). *The Memory of Love*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.

Foundation Rwanda, (n.d) *About — Foundation Rwanda*. Foundation Rwanda. Website accessible at: https://foundationrwanda.org/about

Foussiakda, C. A., Anderson, K., Pasquero, L., & Blavier, A. (2023) Children born of conflict-related sexual violence: A review of interdisciplinary responses to their needs and experiences, *Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, 4* (1), 59–82. https://doi.org/10.7590/266644723X16875292791283

Fox, M. C. M. (2014). *Women's activism and social networks in post-genocide Rwanda.* University of Louisville: Honours Thesis. http://doi.org/10.18297/honors/89

Fox, N. (2021) *After Genocide: Memory and Reconciliation in Rwanda*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Fox, N. (2011). "Oh, did the women suffer so much": Impact of gender-based violence on kinship networks in Rwanda. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family, 37*(2), 279–305.

Fujii, L. A. (2010). Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence. *Journal of Peace Research, 47*(2), 231-241. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309353097

Fujii, L. A. (2009). *Killing neighbours: Webs of violence in Rwanda.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gahima G. (2013). *Transitional justice in Rwanda: Accountability for atrocity*. New York: Routledge.

Gakwandi, J. & Heidrich, K. (2015). *Solace: The story of solace ministries*. Kigali, Rwanda: Solace Ministries.

Gaparayi, I. (2001). Justice and social reconstruction in the aftermath of genocide in rwanda: An evaluation of the possible role of the gacaca tribunals. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, *1*(1), 78–106.

Gasanabo, J.-D., Nikuze, D., Nyseth Brehm, H., & Parks, H. (2020). Rwanda's inyangamugayo: Perspectives from practitioners in the Gacaca transitional justice mechanism. *Genocide Studies and Prevention, 14*(2), 153–172. https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.14.2.1642

Gasanabo, J-D. (2019). Peace in Rwanda: Balancing the ICTR and "Gacaca" in postgenocide peacebuilding. In Kulnazarova, A. & Popovski, V. (Eds.), *The palgrave handbook of global approaches to peace*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Gilbert, G, (2018). *From surviving to living: Voice, trauma and witness in Rwandan women's writing.* Montpellier, France: Presses universitaires de la Méditerannée.

Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2016). Breaking intergenerational cycles of repetition. In Gobodo-Madikizela, P., & Orange, D. (Eds.), *Breaking intergenerational cycles of repetition: A global dialogue on historical trauma and memory*. Berlin, Germany: Barbara Budrich Publishers. 1–11.

Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2023) The afterlife of apartheid: a triadic temporality of trauma, *Social Dynamics*, *49*(1), 67–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2023.2180215

Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2021). *History, trauma and shame: Engaging the past through second generation dialogue*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2016) Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela: Empathy, understanding, & our humanity. [video] *Omega Institute for Holistic Studies,* 12 September. Accessible at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZ2rqEbUwe0

Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2001). Traumatic memory. In J. Edelstein (Ed.), *Truth and lies: Stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.* Granta Books. 24–31.

Goodhart, M. (2007). Sins of the fathers: War rape, wrongful procreation, and children's human Rights. *Journal of Human Rights*, 6, 307-324.

Gourevitch, P. (1998). *'We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families': Stories from Rwanda*. London and Basingstoke: Picador.

Grayson, H., Hitchcott, N., Blackie, L., & Joseph, S. (2019). *After the genocide in Rwanda: Testimonies of violence, change and reconciliation*. London, UK: I.B. Tauris.

Grieg, K. (2001). *The war children of the world*. Bergen, Norway: War and Children Identity Project.

Grünfeld, F. (2007). *The failure to prevent genocide in Rwanda: The role of bystanders*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishers.

Hamel, M.-E. (2016). Ethnic belonging of the children born out of rape in post conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda. *Nations and Nationalism*, *22*(2), 287–304. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12151

Han, C. (2021). *Seeing like a child: Inheriting the Korean War*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Howell, S. (2003). Kinning: The creation of life trajectories in transnational adoptive families. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 9, 465–484.

Hielscher, S., Winkin, J., Crack, A., & Pies, I. (2017). Saving the moral capital of NGOs: Identifying one-sided and many-sided social dilemmas in NGO accountability. *Voluntas (Manchester, England)*, *28*(4), 1562–1594. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9807-z

Hirsch, M. (2012). *The generation of postmemory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Hirsch, M. (2008). The generation of postmemory. *Poetics Today, 29*(1): 103–128. https://doi.org/10.1215/ 03335372-2007-019.

Hirsch, M. (2001). Surviving images: Holocaust photographs and the work of postmemory. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, *14*(1), 5–37. https://doi.org/10.1353/yale.2001.0008

Hodgen, M. T. (1964). *Early anthropology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hoffman, E. 2005. *After such knowledge: Memory, history, and the legacy of the Holocaust*. New York: Public Affairs.

Hogwood, J., Mushashi, C., Jones, S., & Auerbach, C. (2018). "I learned who I am": Young people born from genocide rape in Rwanda and their experiences of disclosure. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *33*(5), 549–570. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558417713302

Hogwood, J., Auerbach, C., Munderere, S., & Kambibi, E. (2014). Rebuilding the social fabric: community counselling groups for Rwandan women with children born as a result of genocide rape. *Intervention, 12*(3), 393–404. https://doi.org/10.1097/WTF.0000000000000053

Igoe, J., & Kelsall, T. (2006). *Between a rock and a hard place: African NGOs, donors, and the state*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Ingabire, C.M., Kagoyire, G., Habarugira, N., Rutayisire, T., & Richters, A. (2022). "They tell us little and we end up being confused": Parent–child communication on familial experiences of

genocide and its aftermath in Rwanda. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 59*(3), 349–361. https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221078483

Interayamahanga, R. (2020). Women's role in transitional justice in Rwanda: The case of gacaca courts. *Never Again Rwanda*, 30 December. Accessible at: https://neveragainrwanda.org/womens-role-in-transitional-justice-in-rwanda-the-case-of-gacaca-courts/

Jaffal, Z. (2020). Rape as genocide crime in international criminal law: The case of Yazidi women in Iraq. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, *15*(2), 230–247. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3841256

Jefremovas, V. (2002). *Brickyards to graveyards: From production to genocide in Rwanda.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Jessee, E. (2012). Conducting fieldwork in Rwanda. *Revue Canadienne d'études Du Développement*, *33*(2), 266–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2012.687356

Jones, A. (2004). *Gendercide and genocide.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press

Kahn, S., & Denov, M. (2022). Transgenerational trauma in Rwandan genocidal rape survivors and their children: A culturally enhanced bioecological approach. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *59*(6), 727–739. https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221080231

Kahn, S., & Denov, M. (2019). "We are children like others": Pathways to mental health and healing for children born of genocidal rape in Rwanda. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *56*(3), 510–528. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461519825683

Kaitesi, U. (2013). *Genocidal gender and sexual violence. The legacy of the ICTR, Rwanda's ordinary courts and gacaca courts*. Cambridge, UK: Intersentia.

Kantengwa, O. (2014). How motherhood triumphs over trauma among mothers with children from genocidal rape in Rwanda. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *2*(1), 417–434. https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v2i1.334

Kagoyire, M. G., Kangabe, J., & Ingabire, M. C. (2023). "A calf cannot fail to pick a colour from its mother": Intergenerational transmission of trauma and its effect on reconciliation among post-genocide Rwandan youth. *BMC Psychology, 11*(1), 104–104. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01129-y

Kagoyire, M., & Richters, A. (2018). "We are the memory representation of our parents": Intergenerational legacies of genocide among descendants of rape survivors in Rwanda. *Torture*, *28*(3), 30–45. https://doi.org/10.7146/torture.v28i3.111183

Kesselring, R. (2017). *Bodies of truth: law, memory, and emancipation in post-apartheid South Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kirby, P. (2012). *Rethinking War/Rape: feminism, critical explanation and the study of wartime sexual violence, with special reference to the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*. London School of Economics and Political Sciences: PhD Thesis. Available at: http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/586

Kleinman, A., Das, V., & Lock, M. M. (1997). *Social suffering*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Kleinman, A., & Kleinman, J. (1997). The appeal of experience; the dismay of images: Cultural appropriations of suffering in our times. In Kleinman, A., Das, V., & Lock, M. M. (Eds.), *Social suffering*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 1–23.

Kidron, C. A. (2009). Toward an ethnography of silence: The lived presence of the past in the everyday life of Holocaust trauma survivors and their descendants in Israel. *Current Anthropology, 50*(1), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1086/595623

Kimonyo, J. P. (2016). *Rwanda's popular genocide: a perfect storm*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Koji, M. (2018). Children of Bosnian war face secrets of their own roots 25 years after conflict. *The Mainichi*, 1 July. Accessible at https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20180701/p2a/00m/0na/003000c

Koomen, J. (2013). "Without these women, the tribunal cannot do anything": The politics of witness testimony on sexual violence at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. *Signs*, *38*(2), 253–277. https://doi.org/10.1086/667200

Kuper, A. (2005). Indigenous people: an unhealthy category. *The Lancet (British Edition)*, *366*(9490), 983–983. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(05)67374-6

Kuperman, A. J. (2000). Rwanda in Retrospect. *Foreign Affairs*, *79*(1), 94–118. https://doi.org/10.2307/20049616

Lamb, C. (2020). *Our bodies, their battlefield: What war does to women*. Glasgow, Scotland: William Collins

Lee, S., Glaesmer, H., & Stelzl-Marx, B. (2022). *Children born of war: Past, present, and future*. New York: Routledge.

Lee, S. (2017). *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century.* Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Lemarchand, R. (2008). *The dynamics of violence in Central Africa*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lewis, D., Schuller, M., Bernal, V., Bornstein, E., & Mannan, M. (2017). Engagements with a productively unstable category: Anthropologists and nongovernmental organizations. *Current Anthropology*, *58*(5), 634–651. https://doi.org/10.1086/693897

Liebling, H., Slegh, H. & Ruratotoye, B. (2012). Women and girls bearing children through rape in Goma, Eastern Congo: Stigma, health and justice responses. *Itupale Online Journal of African Studies*, 4, 18–24.

Longman, T. P. (2020). Twenty years after leave none to tell the story, what do we now know about the genocide of the Tutsi In Rwanda? *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*, *2*(2), 40-47. https://doi.org/10.7227/JHA.042

Longman, T. P. (2010). *Christianity and genocide in Rwanda*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Loning, L. (2023a). Beyond "born of war": Children, youth and young adults conceived in sexual violence. *Global Journal of Medicine and Public Health, Special Issue on Sexual Violence in Fragile Settings: Practice, Policies and Research*, July. 1–16.

Loning, L. (2023b). The aftermath of gendered violence: Kinship and affect in post-genocide Rwanda. *Critique of Anthropology*, *43*(4), 444–460. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X231216251

MacKenzie, M. (2009). The international politics of rape, sex and the family in Sierra Leone. *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, *2009*(203), 1–16.

Mafeje, A. (1998) Anthropology and Independent Africans: Suicide or End of an Era? *African Sociological Review, 2*(1), 1–43.

Malkki, L. (1995). *Purity and exile: Violence, memory, and national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mamdani M. (2001). *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Manderson, L. & Block, E. (2016). Relatedness and care in Southern Africa and beyond. *Social Dynamics, 42*(2), 205–217.

Markowitz, A. (2021). The better to break and bleed with: Research, violence, and trauma. *Geopolitics*, *26*(1), 94–117. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1612880

Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*. University of California Press.

McEnvoy-Levy, S. (2007). Human rights culture and children born of wartime rape. In Carpenter, R. C. (Ed.), *Born of war: Protecting children of sexual violence survivors in conflict zones.* Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press. 149–179.

medica mondiale (2023). *Rwanda: Solidarity overcomes social exclusion*. News, 3 June. Accessible at: https://medicamondiale.org/en/violence-against-women/news/rwanda-solidarity-overcomes-social-exclusion

medica mondiale (2018). *Improvement of social integration of survivors and their children born from sexual and gender-based violence during the genocide in Rwanda*. Evaluation. Accessible at: https://reliefweb.int/report/rwanda/improvement-social-integration-survivors-and-their-children-born-sexual-and-gender

Melvern, Linda. (2000). *A people betrayed: the role of the West in Rwanda's genocide*. London and New York: Zed Books.

Miller, D. E. (2020). *Becoming human again: An oral history of the Rwanda genocide against the Tutsi*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mochmann, I. C., Lee, S., & Stelzl-Marx, B. (2009). The children of the occupations born during the Second World War and beyond — An overview. *Historical Social Research, 34*(3), 263–282.

Mookherjee, N. (2022). Introduction: On irreconciliation. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *28*(S1), 11–33. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13751

Mookherjee, N. (2015). *The spectral wound: Sexual violence, public memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mookherjee, N. (2007). Available motherhood: Legal technologies, 'state of exception' and the dekinning of 'war-babies' in Bangladesh. *Childhood, 14*(3): 339–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568207079213

Moore, J. (2016). This is the story a UN court didn't want three rape survivors to tell. *BuzzFeed News,* December 18. Accessible at: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/jinamoore/this-is-the-story-a-un-court-didnt-want-three-rape-survivors

Mukamana, D., & Brysiewicz, P. (2008). The lived experience of genocide rape survivors in Rwanda. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, *40*(4), 379–384. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2008.00253.x

Mukangendo, M. (2007). Caring for children born of rape in Rwanda. In: Carpenter, R. C. (Ed.), *Born of war: Protecting children of sexual violence survivors in conflict zones*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press. 40–52.

Mulla, S. (2014). *The violence of care: rape victims, forensic nurses, and sexual assault intervention*. New York: New York University Press.

Mullins, C. W. (2009a). “He would kill me with his penis”: Genocidal rape in Rwanda as a state crime. *Critical Criminology, 17*(1), 15–33. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-008-9067-3

Mullins, C. W. (2009b). We are going to rape you and taste Tutsi women. *British Journal of Criminology*, *49*(6), 719–735. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azp040

Musafiri, E., Gona, G., Ombongi, K., & Shyaka, A. M. (2023). Voices of youth born of genocidal rape in Rwanda: Their social exclusion after 26 years of genocide. Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies, 5(1).

Mutamba, J. & Izabiliza, J. (2005). *The Role of Women in Reconciliation and Peace Building in Rwanda: Ten Years After Genocide*. Kigali, Rwanda: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC).

Mwambari, D. (2017). Women-led non-governmental organizations and peacebuilding in Rwanda. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, *7*(1), 66–79. https://doi.org/10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.7.1.05

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) (2023). *The fifth Rwanda population and housing census, main indicators report*, Kigali, February. Accessible at: https://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/main_indicators_2022

Ndahiro, K. (2014). Dehumanisation: How Tutsis were reduced to cockroaches, snakes to be killed. *The New Times*, 13 March. Accessible at: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/104771/National/dehumanisation-how-tutsis-were-reduced-to-cockroaches-snakes-to-be-killed

Neenan, J. (2017). *Closing the protection gap for children born of war - Addressing stigmatisation and the intergenerational impact of sexual violence in conflict*. London School of Economics: Centre for Women, Peace and Security.

Newbury, C. & Baldwin, H. (2000). *Aftermath: Women’s organisations in postconflict Rwanda.* Washington DC: Center for Development Information and Evaluation, USAID. Accessible at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnacj324.pdf

Nieuwoudt, S. (2006). No justice for Darfur rape victims. Institute for War and Peace Reporting. 25 October. Accessible at: https://iwpr.net/global-voices/no-justice-darfur-rape-victims.

Nikuze D. (2013) Parenting style and its psychological impact on rape born children: case of raped survivors of the 1994 genocide perpetrated against Tutsi in Rwanda. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability, 2*(2), 1084–1098.

Nowrojee, B. (1996). *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath.* New York: Human Rights Watch. Accessible at: http://www.hrw.org/ reports/1996/Rwanda.htm.

Nyamnjoh, F.B. (2012a). Blinded by sight: Divining the future of Anthropology in Africa. *Africa Spectrum,* 2(3): 63–92.

Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2012b). 'Potted plants in greenhouses': A critical reflection on the resilience of colonial education in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *47*(2): 129–154.

Nyirandamutsa, F., Niyonsenga, J., Gaju, K. L., Izabayo, J., Kambibi, E., Munderere, S., Sebuhoro, C., Muhayisa, A., & Sezibera, V. (2023). Perceptions of the intervention utility and effectiveness in supporting and reintegrating youths born of genocidal rape in Rwanda. *Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics*, *14*, 141–151. https://doi.org/10.2147/AHMT.S412300

Ohlheiser, A. (2017). The woman behind 'Me Too' knew the power of the phrase when she created it – 10 years ago. *The Washington Post*, October 19. Accessible at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2017/10/19/the-woman-behind-me-too-knew-the-power-of-the-phrase-when-she-created-it-10-years-ago/

Otake, Y., & Tamming, T. (2021). Sociality and temporality in local experiences of distress and healing: Ethnographic research in northern Rwanda. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 58*(4): 546–560. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461520949670

Paquette, D. (2017). Turning pain into hope. *The Washington Post,* 11 June. Accessible at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2017/06/11/rwandas-children-of-rape-are-coming-of-age-against-the-odds/?utm_term=.6fe68e4f44f8

Pells, K., Breed, A., Uwihoreye, C., Ndushabandi, E., Elliott, M., & Nzahabwanayo, S. (2022). 'No-one can tell a story better than the one who lived it': Reworking constructions of childhood and trauma through the arts in Rwanda. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, *46*(3), 632–653. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-021-09760-3

Pells, K., Pontalti, K., Williams, T.P. (2014) Promising developments? Children, youth, and post-genocide reconstruction under the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *8*(2): 294–310.

Pells, K. (2011). "Keep going despite everything": legacies of genocide for Rwanda's children and youth. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *31*(9/10), 594–606. https://doi.org/10.1108/01443331111164179

Pillen, A. (2016). Language, translation, trauma. *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 45, 95–111. http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102215-100232

Polgreen, L. (2005). Darfur's babies are on trial from birth. *The New York Times,* 11 February. Accessible at: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/11/world/africa/darfurs-babies-of-rape-are-on-trial-from-birth.html?mcubz=0

Pontalti, K. (2018). Kinship 'matters': Continuity and change in children's family relations across three generations in Rwanda. *Childhood, 25*(2), 173–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568217753523

Porter, H. E. (2017). *After rape: Violence, justice, and social harmony in northern Uganda*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pottier, J. 2002. *Reimagining Rwanda: Conflict, survival and disinformation in the late twentieth century.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Powell, S. (2001). East Timor's children of the enemy. *The Weekend Australian,* March 10. Accessible at: https://etan.org/et2001b/april/01-7/00etchild.htm

Prunier, G. (1995). *The Rwanda crisis 1959–1994: History of a genocide.* London, UK: Hurst.

Purdeková, A. (2015). *Making ubumwe: Power, state, and camps in Rwanda's unity-building project.* Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books.

Rafferty, J. (2018). "I wanted them to be punished or at least ask us for forgiveness": Justice interests of female victim-survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and their experiences with Gacaca. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, *12*(3), 95–118. https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.12.3.1556

Rettig. M. (2013). Gacaca: Truth, justice, and reconciliation in post-conflict Rwanda? *African Studies Review, 51*(3): 25–50. https://doi.org/ 10.1353/arw.0.0091

Reyntjens, F. (2013). *Political governance in post-genocide Rwanda.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rohwerder, B. (2019). Reintegration of children born of wartime rape. *Helpdesk Report,* Institute of Development Studies. Accessible at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d431080ed915d09d7280ce4/628_Reintegration_of_Children_Born_of_Wartime_Rape.pdf

Rollason, W. (2017). Youth, presence, and agency: the case of Kigali's motari. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *20*(10), 1277–1294. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2017.1324134

Ross, F. C. (2010). An acknowledged failure: Women, voice, violence, and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Shaw, R., Waldorf, L., & Hazan, P. (Eds.), *Localizing transitional justice: Interventions and priorities after mass violence*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 69–91.

Ross, F. C. (2003a). *Bearing witness: Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*. London: Pluto Press.

Ross, F. C. (2003b). On having voice and being heard: Some after-effects of testifying before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Anthropological Theory, 3*(3), 325–341. https://doi.org/10.1177/14634996030033005

Ross, F. C. (2001). Speech and silence: women's testimony in the first five weeks of public hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Das, V., Kleinman, A., Lock, M., Ramphele, M., & Reynolds P. (Ed.), *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering, and Recovery*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 250–280.

Russell, D. (2014). Children of rape. *The Survivors Fund.* Accessible at: https://survivors-fund.org.uk/awareness-raising/children-of-rape/

Rutsibuka, I. (2022). Genocide women survivors empowerment in the Rwanda post-1994 genocide against Tutsi: Case study of AVEGA-AGAHOZO women survivors of Nyange Sector, Ngororero District (2015-2019). *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, *7*(2), 64–75. https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.72.9

Sadruddin, A. F. A. (2020). The care of "small things": Aging and dignity in Rwanda. *Medical Anthropology*, *39*(1), 83–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/01459740.2019.1643852

Shapiro, M. J. (1988) *The politics of representation: Writing practices in biography, photography, and policy analysis*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Savelsberg, J. J. (2021). *Knowing about genocide: Armenian suffering and epistemic struggles.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Schimmel, N. (2020). *Advancing international human rights law responsibilities of development NGOs: Respecting and fulfilling the right to reparative justice for genocide survivors in Rwanda.* New York: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50270-6

Schneider, D. M. (1980). *American kinship: A cultural account.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Schretter, L., Kuramitsu, K. & Sersté, N. (2022) Ethical challenges in conducting interviews with children born of war: Reflections on navigating participants' expectations. In Lee, S., Glaesmer, H., & Stelzl-Marx, B. (Eds.), *Children born of war: Past, present, and Future.* NY: Routledge. 59–74.

Sebatukura Gitimbwa, S. & Philippot, P. (2019). Non-hospital services of mental health in Rwanda: Analysis of their functioning and challenges. *Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, 9* (1), 13–27.

Seto, D. (2013). *No place for a war baby: The global politics of children born of wartime sexual violence.* Surrey, UK: Ashgate publishing.

Shanks, L. & Schull, M. (2000). Rape in war: The humanitarian response. *Canadian Medical Association Journal, 163*(9): 1152–1156.

Shaw, R., Waldorf, L., & Hazan, P. (2010). *Localizing transitional justice: Interventions and priorities after mass violence*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Shaw, R. & Waldorf, L. (2010). Introduction: Localizing transitional justice. In Shaw, R., Waldorf, L., & Hazan, P. (Eds.), *Localizing transitional justice: Interventions and priorities after mass violence*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 3–26.

Smith, H. (2000). Rape victims' babies pay the price of war. *The Guardian,* April 16. Accessible at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/apr/16/balkans

Soh, S. (2008). *The comfort women: Sexual violence and postcolonial memory in Korea and Japan.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sommers, M. (2012). *Stuck: Rwandan youth and the struggle for adulthood.* London, UK: University of Georgia Press.

Staub, E. & L. A. Pearlman, L. A. (2001). Healing, reconciliation, and forgiving after genocide and other collective violence. In Helmick, S. J. & Petersen, R. L. (Eds.), *Forgiveness and reconciliation: Religion, public policy and conflict transformation*. Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press. 205–217.

Stern, D. N. (2018). *The interpersonal world of the infant: A view from psychoanalysis and developmental psychology*. New York: Routledge.

Stewart, K. (2017) In the world that affect proposed. *Cultural Anthropology, 32*(2): 192–198. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.2.03

Straus, S., & Waldorf, L. (2011). *Remaking Rwanda: State building and human rights after mass violence*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Straus, S. (2006). *The order of genocide: Race, power, and war in Rwanda.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Strecker, A. & Temkin, E. (n.d). Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape. *Interview*. Accessible at: https://www.lensculture.com/articles/jonathan-torgovnik-intended-consequences-rwandan-children-born-of-rape

Taylor, C. (1999a). *Sacrifice as terror: the Rwandan genocide of 1994*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Taylor, C. (1999b). A gendered genocide: Tutsi women and Hutu extremists in the 1994 Rwanda genocide. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, *22*(1), 42–54. https://doi.org/10.1525/pol.1999.22.1.42

Taylor, S. (2019). The long shadows cast by the field: Violence, trauma, and the ethnographic researcher. *Fennia, 197*(2), 183–199. https://doi. org/10.11143/fennia.84792

Theidon, K., Mazurana, D., & Anumol, D. (2023). *Challenging conceptions: Children born of wartime rape and sexual exploitation*. New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197648315.001.0001

Theidon, K. (2022). *Legacies of war: Violence, ecologies, and kin*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478023005

Theidon, K. (2015). Hidden in plain sight: Children born of wartime sexual violence. *Current Anthropology, 56*(12), 191–200. https://doi.org/10.1086/683301

Theidon, K. (2014). 'How was your trip?' Self-care for researchers working and writing on violence. Social Science Research Council: Working papers on research security. Accessible at: http://webarchive.ssrc.org/working-papers/DSD_ResearchSecurity_02_Theidon.pdf.

Thomson, S. (2013). *Whispering truth to power: Everyday resistance to reconciliation in post genocide Rwanda*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Torgovnik K. (2019). Rwanda's children of rape have come of age. *The New York Times*, 30 March. Accessible at: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/30/opinion/rwandas-children-of-rape-have-come-of-age.html

Torgovnik J. (2009). *Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape*. Aperture.

Trott, V. (2020). Networked feminism: counterpublics and the intersectional issues of #MeToo. *Feminist Media Studies*, *21*(7), 1125–1142. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1718176

Umuhoza, C., Oosters, B., van Reeuwijk, M., & Vanwesenbeeck, I. (2013). Advocating for safe abortion in Rwanda: how young people and the personal stories of young women in prison brought about change. *Reproductive Health Matters, 21*(41): 49–56. DOI: 10.1016/S0968-8080(13)41690-7

Umulisa C. (2015). We are also mothers: Rwandan women with children born of genocide. In Sgoutas A., & Takseva T. (Eds.), *Mothers under fire: Mothering in conflict areas*. Bradford, Ontario, Canada: Demeter Press. 137-154.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2023). *UNDP Rwanda Annual Report 2022*, 30 March. Accessible at: https://www.undp.org/rwanda/publications/undp-rwanda-annual-report-2022

Uwizeye, G., DeVon, H. A., McCreary, L. L., Patil, C. L., Thayer, Z. M., & Rutherford, J. N. (2022). Children born of genocidal rape: What do we know about their experiences and needs? *Public Health Nursing, 39*(1), 350–359. https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.13023

van Ee, E., & Kleber, R. J. (2013). Growing up under a shadow: Key issues in research on and treatment of children born of rape. *Child Abuse Review, 22*(6), 386–397. https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2270

van Ee, E., & Kleber, R. J. (2012). Child in the shadowlands. *The Lancet (British Edition)*, *380* (9842), 642–643. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61360-9

Veale, A., Mckay, S., Worthen, M., & Wessells, M. G. (2013). Participation as principle and tool in social reintegration: young mothers formerly associated with armed groups in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Northern Uganda. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma, 22*(8): 829–848.

Verdeja, E. (2004). Derrida and the impossibility of forgiveness. *Contemporary Political Theory*, *3*(1), 23–47. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300103

Wale, K., Gobodo-Madikizela, P., Prager, J. (2020). *Post-conflict hauntings: Transforming memories of historical trauma*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wax, E. (2004). Rwandans are struggling to love children of hate. *The Washington Post*, 28 March. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2004/03/28/rwandans-are-struggling-to-love-children-of-hate/dd942c7b-9287-42cc-8763-bd0675c0b73f/

Weinstein, H. M., Fletcher, L. E., Vinck, P. & Pham, P. N. (2010). Stay the hand of justice: Whose priorities take priority? In Shaw, R., Waldorf, L., & Hazan, P. (Eds.), *Localizing transitional justice: Interventions and priorities after mass violence*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 27–48.

Weitsman P. A. (2008). The politics of identity and sexual violence: A review of Bosnia and Rwanda. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 30, 561–578.

Weitsman, P. (2003). The discourse of rape in wartime: Sexual violence, war babies, and identity (Paper presented). *Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Portland, Oregon*. February 26 – March 1.

Whitworth, W. (2006). *We survived: Genocide in Rwanda*. Dover, TN: Quill Press.

Williams, T. (2020). *The complexity of evil: perpetration and genocide*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. https://doi.org/10.36019/9781978814332

Williamson Sinalo, C. (2023) 'Do the Media Make Sexual Violence ‘Congolese’? Phallo- and Ethnocentrism in the International Coverage of Dr Mukwege’s Story'. In Williamson Sinalo, C. & Mandolini, N. (Eds.), *Representing Gender-Based Violence: Global Perspectives*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 25–46.

Williamson Sinalo, C., Irakoze, P. C., & Veale, A. (2021). Disclosure of genocide experiences in Rwandan families: Private and public sources of information and child outcomes. *Peace and Conflict*, *27*(4), 642–653. https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000521

Williamson Sinalo, C. (2018). *Rwanda after genocide: Gender, identity, and post-traumatic growth*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wolfe, S., Kane, M., & Ansah, T. (2023). *In the Shadow of Genocide Justice and Memory Within Rwanda*. New York: Routlege.

Wood, E. J. (2006). Variation in sexual violence during War. *Politics & Society*, *34*(3), 307–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329206290426

Woolner, L., Denov, M., & Kahn, S. (2019). "I asked myself if I would ever love my baby": Mothering children born of genocidal rape in Rwanda. *Violence against Women*, *25*(6), 703–720. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218801110

Zorbas, E. (2009). What does reconciliation after genocide mean? Public transcripts and hidden transcripts in post-genocide Rwanda. *Journal of Genocide Research*, *11*(1), 127–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520802703707

Zorbas, E. (2004). Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, *1*(1), 29–52. https://doi.org/10.1163/221097312X13397499735904

Zraly, M., & Kagoyire, M. G. (2021). Resilience and ethics in post-conflict settings: Kwihangana, living after genocide rape, and intergenerational resilience in post-genocide Rwanda. *Global Mental Health Ethics*, 207–224. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66296-7_13

Zraly, M., Rubin, S. E., & Mukamana, D. (2013). Motherhood and Resilience among Rwandan Genocide-Rape Survivors. *Ethos, 41*(4), 411–439. https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12031

Zraly, M., & Nyirazinyoye, L. (2010). Don't let the suffering make you fade away: An ethnographic study of resilience among survivors of genocide-rape in southern Rwanda. *Social Science & Medicine*, *70*(10), 1656–1664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.01.017

Zraly, M. (2008). *Bearing: Resilience Among Genocide-Rape Survivors in Rwanda.* Case Western Reserve University: PhD Thesis. Accessible at: http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=case1189191843