

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

Dr Venkat Pulla^{†*} and Charles Kalinganire[‡]

Abstract

This study, written collaboratively with a native Rwandan author, briefly recalls the historical reality from a Rwandan perspective and addresses the consequences of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Furthermore, the way the Western world was a passive spectator to the economic, political and social pillage and Genocide that occurred in the last part of the 20th Century, that was, in 1994, is discussed.

How is reconciliation fostered in the communities across Rwanda? In particular, the sites and communities where massacres were held? Strong community ties and community being central to social work practice is observed in most East African countries, with no exception to Rwanda. While social work pedagogy is something new and possibly introduced by Western idiom, the tradition of welfare and mutual caring (would have been/ has been part) of the Kinyarwanda culture, language, and manner of living. What factors have worked for reconciliation, reconstruction of the society? How were people made to understand violence, and what did they replace it with? How is the post-genocide moral narrative shaped? The traditional indigenous processes that have been utilised, including the Gacaca, unique court process, are briefly discussed. How do people implant hate into people? By the same token, how do people put peace and love into people? These are a few questions that were central to this study throughout.

Keywords: 1994; Rwanda Genocide; Rwanda Reconciliation Plan; Tutsi & Hutu; Healing Rwanda

[†] Foundation Professor, Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice, and Senior Research Fellow, ILWS, Charles Sturt University, NSW, Australia

^{*}Corresponding Author, Email: dr.venkat.pulla@gmail.com

[‡]Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, University of Rwanda, P.O Box 117 Huye-Rwanda
Email: kalinganirecharles@gmail.com

©2021 Pulla & Kalinganire. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Introduction

On 18th March 2018, along with representatives of the international social work community, I took part in a peaceful March on the streets of Kigali to celebrate World Social Work. Our march moved on and culminated into a Gathering at Kigali Genocide Memorial. This was my true

awakening to a history of the Land of a Thousand Hills and its people who epitomise a living meaning for the resilience of individuals and communities (Figure 1). They have rebuilt this beautiful country with grace shaking off the ashes of the 1994 genocide to transform into one of the fastest growing and cohesive economies in Africa.



Figure 1: The First Author along with world-renowned social workers at the Remarkable Rwanda pavilion on the way to a peace march to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, the final resting place for more than 250,000 victims of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

In Rwanda, the ostensible conflict was between ethnic groups, the majority Hutu and the minority Tutsi. However, since many moderate Hutus were killed, the lines had become blurred, and anyone who has studied the history of the African Great Lakes Region would notice that the groups were frequently related, and their differences were used by European powers to divide and conquer. Typically, this is what the Europeans did across the world: divide and rule, while perpetuating the stereotypes of Africans

as either savage killers or worthless victims. The European world has many civilised governments, many democracies, and yet they have one value for themselves and another set of values to judge their instigated and perpetuated crimes in other nations. Unfortunately, their allowances included lesser justice afforded to the victims of this gruesome tragedy in Rwanda. In the case of Rwanda versus Nteziriyayo and others,¹ for example, the Rwandan government fought for the extradition of several alleged genocidaires to

¹ Government Of Rwanda Versus Emmanuel Nteziriyayo, Vincent Brown (Aka Bajinya), Charles Munyaneza, Celestin Mutabaruka, Celestin Ugirashebuja and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lord Justice Irwin Mr Justice Foskett, in the High Court of Justice Queen's Bench Division Administrative Court, Royal Courts of Justice, Case Nos: Co/311/2016, Co/312/2016, Co/313/2016, Co/314/2016, Co/315/2016, Strand, London, Wc2a 2ll. <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Rwanda-V-Nteziriyayo-And-Others-Judgment-20170728.Pdf>

prosecute them. The British courts denied the extradition request. One of the reasons the extraditions were blocked was that there was a risk that the alleged genocidaires would not have been granted a fair trial (Ochab, 2020). As a result, such prosecutions have not taken place in the United Kingdom because Rwandan authorities have refused to assist cases on the UK soil. This is just one in many instances involving the European nations, demonstrating that much work remains to be done to ensure smooth cooperation among states to enable such prosecutions of genocidaires.

Nonetheless, some criminal investigations are still ongoing; Fabien Neretse, for instance, a former Rwandan official, was found guilty of war crimes for his role in the Rwandan Genocide by a Belgian court in December 2019. This is perhaps the first such conviction in Belgium. Similarly, in September 2020, a French-Rwandan former hotel driver will stand trial in Paris, France, for his role in the atrocities. According to reports, Claude Muhayimana, who was working as a driver at the time at a hotel on Lake Kivu in western Rwanda, is described as complicit in the Genocide (Ochab,2020).

Even more recently, the bodies of victims began to be discovered. Indeed, even in early April 2020, authorities in Rwanda found a valley dam that possibly could contain about 30,000 bodies, of which less than 100 bodies may have been exhumed (Ochab, 2020).

Some countries are now pursuing cases related to the Rwandan Genocide, which gives victims and survivors hope that justice will be served. However, as demonstrated by timelines, the process could be lengthy, complex, and traumatising. Some experts believe that justice does not have to rely on purposefully established tribunal (Ochab, 2020).

In rendering this writing, I partnered with my social work colleague from the University of Rwanda, Charles Kalinganire, who explained many things and showed me reports that I needed to read. While this stands as a joint paper, its resemblance to an empathetical overview by an outsider is not an exaggeration.

The Novel, 'Un dimanche à la piscine à Kigali' was originally written in French, translation of which in English portrays a vivid and ethical depiction of the petrifying times, committed three decades ago in a tiny fertile inland country, Rwanda (Courtemanche, 2004). Courtemanche refuses to degrade the victims any further or simplify the situation so that it appears to be a fictional horror, which would have allowed the readers to detach themselves from the cruel reality. Instead, he implicates the reader in accusations against a world that has failed in its resuscitation. Although, as he was white, Gill only survivor of a disaster, does lament through the novel with sharp pain and screams aloud as he leaves his beloved, a native Rwandan woman and returns to Canada. He castigates the Belgian missionaries to seed ethnic hatred between Ethiopia's tall, fair-skinned Hutu and the darker, shorter, and possibly less attractive Tutsi. They let the enmity erupt into what the 20th Century refers to as 'ethnic cleansing,' the world was shocked, the horror compounded by the fact that the United Nations (UN) was already present as a peace-keeping force and did nothing. Courtemanche is unapologetic about this, claiming that well-trained and equipped UN troops could have handled the situation. Reading the translation, I could feel how barbaric it was (Courtemanche,2004).

The Tutsi were butchered with machetes by the Hutu. They severed the adolescent boys' feet, so that they could prevent them from becoming foot soldiers. The gory details in the narrative include rapes of women hacking their breasts and leaving them to die slowly in Rwanda (Courtemanche, 2004). In the following section, we discuss the early history of Africa, which (in)directly are responsible for the 1994 genocide.

Early History

The events that led to Rwanda's Genocide in 1994 are deeply rooted in Africa's early history. During the "scramble for Africa" of the 1890s, European countries divided Africa into countries they quickly claimed as extensions of their empires. Following World War, I, Germany claimed Rwanda, but it was lost to Belgium in

1919. Rwandans were classified into three ethnic groups: Hutu (the majority), Tutsi, and Twa. A superiority mindset developed during Belgian rule, favouring the “less negro” Tutsis, who gained political power, education, and land acquisition (Aoki and Jonas, 2016). Both colonial and missionary discourse strengthened Hutu and Tutsi dualistic identities, while other researchers suggest that cultural distinctions persisted even after power shifted from settlers to natives (Aoki and Jonas, 2016). The definition and meaning of Genocide in Rwanda are discussed in the next section.

What is Genocide?

Against the backdrop of the UN Convention on Genocide, it was only less than three decades ago, 1 million people were slaughtered, the majority by neighbours with machetes; that was the horror that began 30 years ago today in Rwanda and all of that in 90 days. Yet, even seventy years later, the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and its effectiveness is still disputed.

We will attempt to understand the concept of Genocide from the charter of the United Nations. In its resolution 260 (III) A of the Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide (in its General Assembly on 9/12/1948), the UN specifies that Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group.
 - Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.
 - Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.
 - Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.
 - Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
- (UN, 1948)

‘So, Rwanda genocide can be referred to as a “popular” genocide, in the sense of

being carried out by the common people. The difference between the Holocaust, and the Genocide of the Batutsi in Rwanda, is that Rwanda happened live before the world's eyes. Everybody in the international community, including the Catholic Church, was aware of what was taking place. The international community had the opportunity to stop the Genocide in Rwanda, but they did not. Was it blindness or complicity?’ (Soudan, 2015, pp. 55-56)

In the following two sections, we first discuss the methodology then the geography of Rwanda. Then we discuss the tumultuous history of the country linked to Genocide.

Methodology

We investigated several studies that have been written by native authors and some by the first generation. This review has utilised sources such as books, reports, articles, speeches, and statements from eminent people, including internet searches. Radio and TV programs were also used to collect new information on subsequent commemorations of Genocide against the Tutsi, including the latest that took place during the period of lockdown due to COVID-19. The information provided by the native Rwandan author, a social work influencer, provided a different eyewitness account and added value to the data. From a social work perspective, it brought to light approaches to promote social cohesion and community organisation for sustainable healing and development. Following a description of the country's geography and a brief but turbulent history of Rwanda, as authors, we explore the factors that played a significant role in reorganising communities, particularly in regions where massacres were high and its aftermath devastating.

The Geography of Rwanda

Rwanda is a landlocked, hilly, and densely populated country of the African mainland with an estimated population of 12,374,397 on a surface of 26,338 sq. km² in 2019, according to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda

(NISR). In the 90s, Rwanda was labelled a barbaric country due to the unprecedented and abominable 1994 genocide against the Tutsi that culminated diabolical events of recurrent killings

of this category of the population since 1959. Figure 2 presents the political map of Rwanda displaying the geographical boundaries of the state.

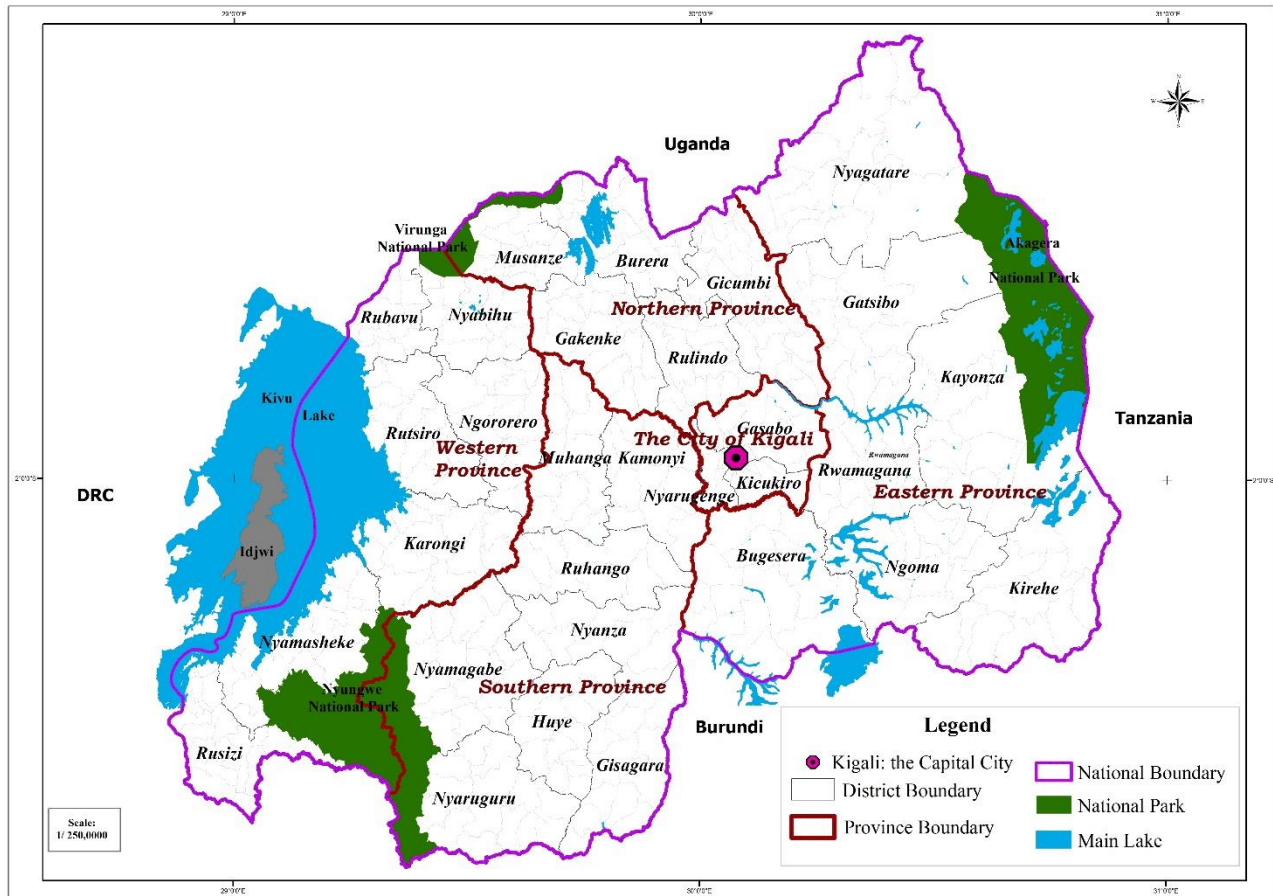


Figure 2: Administrative Map of Rwanda

Courtesy: Dr Gaspard Rwanyiziri, Director, Centre for Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing, College of Science and Technology, University of Rwanda (CGIS, 2021).

Turbulent History

Rwanda’s turbulent history that led to the unforgettable Genocide against the Tutsi is linked with colonialism. Indeed, Rwanda became a German colony in 1889. After the German was defeated in World War I in 1919, Rwanda became a mandated territory of the League of Nations under the administration of Belgium. On their arrival, the Belgians favoured the Batutsi ruling elite. However, on the eve of the independence, claim “spurred mainly by the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR) formed by the ruling elite, the Belgian authorities hastily nurtured another party called the Parti du Mouvement de l’Emancipation Hutu (Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement –

PARMEHUTU), founded on a sectarian, ethnic ideology (Kalinganire et al., 2017). This translates very well the ‘divide and rule’ political system that had been institutionalised by the Belgians (Soudan, 2015). As part of their colonising politics and policies, the Belgian administration and influenced by their Catholic Church divided Rwandan society into ethnic groups. In fact, they “ethnicised” the people and the politics of Rwanda, dividing and categorising people where before there was no such dividing existed. Their administration began their tyranny with identity cards establishing Bahutu, Batutsi or Batwa identities from the paternal side. Tragically, through schools, churches, and businesses, they told they began their stratifications and granted specific privileges and rights to one group over

the others, which finally resulted in the tragic events of 1994. It is in this sense that the seeds of division and hatred were gradually sown, and the population was led to believe that they were different, and thus, the Bahutu are entitled to everything because they are the majority and most powerful workers, while the Batutsi are considered strangers and enemies. With such a dogma, Genocide against the Tutsi became automatic and highly lethal, with the full participation of common people (Soudan, 2015).

It is strange to hear that people speaking one same language, Kinyarwanda, and sharing almost 'one culture' and mainly declaring themselves as Christians and united in one God were divided to the extent that one group engaged in the process exterminating the other counterpart group.

The Hutu and the Tutsi belong together as Rwandans. They speak the same language and share the same culture, including faith. In Rwanda, there is no specific region for the Hutu or the Tutsis, and since time immemorial, they have lived harmoniously together as a community. There is really no ground to identify the Tutsis or the Hutus as members of different ethnic groups. Unfortunately, every Tutsi was marked as an enemy to the nation by the Hutu elite during the so-called social revolution ... (Ndayishimiye, 2014, p. 1-2).

There have been very tricky manoeuvres in the planning and execution of the Genocide against the Tutsi. It clearly appears that all was orchestrated by the government very often surreptitiously.

The Hunting Metaphors

The use of hunting metaphors in the Genocide discursively likens the killing of Tutsi to the process of environmental culling or sanitation that the King sanctioned in traditional Rwanda. (The use of the term "cockroaches" for Tutsi is in a similar genre). Successive regimes had, in fact, likened the extermination of Tutsi to the elimination of dangerous animals from the environment. The discourse of hunting, closely

tied to *igitero* [attack], helped establish a purpose for killing, a justification for a degree of brutality that has no place in human society, and a way to avoid personal responsibility for the killing. Thus, when ordered to kill, it was not human beings they were ordered to kill: "Let no snake [Tutsi] escape you" (*Ntihagire inzoka ibacika*). Not even a baby, they argued, because a child of a snake is also a snake (*umwana w'inzoka ni inzoka nawe*) (Mugesera's speech in Kabaya in 1992)" (Mironko, 2006, p. 182).

As shown in the following section, the planning took various forms: ideological, political, and symbolic, and the planners used multiple mechanisms, including meetings, speeches, songs, newspapers, Radio and TV. As expressed by the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP):

The Genocide against the Tutsi was meticulously planned and perpetrated by the Rwandan Government. Starting from the time of independence up until 1994, Tutsi were subjected to a discriminatory system in schools, in administration and even in military enlistment. The same period was characterised by programs of Tutsi, killing parts of or entire families, any time the government felt threatened (IRDP, 2006, p. 3).

Key elements that characterise the planning of Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda was achieved by

- The discrimination of Tutsi and their designation as a public enemy of the nation constituted the logic behind the self-defence of Hutu, particularly by nocturnal patrols.
- The incitement to hatred using racist talks and the demonisation of the Tutsi.
- The role of Network Zero (*Réseau zero*), a small group close to President Habyarimana and considered indispensable as it was in control of everything; it excelled in refusing opportunities to Tutsi.
- The weakening of Tutsi living inside the country through exclusion from

education, access to employment and to posts of responsibility, arbitrary arrests, dismissal from work, blocking businesses of Tutsi businessmen between 1990 and 1994.

- The creation of a sense of insecurity in towns that later developed into looting and all sorts of violence.
- The division within opposition parties and its serious consequences leading to the rallying of factional “power” to ‘Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement’ MRND (Ruling Party) ideology, and the boycott of the Arusha peace accord². The establishment of Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) qualified as “Hatred Radio”, whose members were mainly politicians, public servants and prominent businessmen.
- The political assassinations of the leaders of political parties to incite the anger of its members.

The provision of training and equipment to militias and civilians is considered the final phase of preparation for Genocide (IRDP, 2006, pp.5-6).

The Unending Trauma of the Tutsi

Around one million Tutsi were slaughtered, and between 400,000 and 500,000 children were orphaned (Dona, et al 2001); an estimated 500,000 women were raped, a significant number were left widowed, and over 120,000 suspects were tried for the crimes they committed. Millions of Rwandans were scattered across the World (Kalinganire, Gilkey and Haas, 2017). As Verwimp (2006, p.33) stated:

In order to restore the loyalty of the Hutu population and to make Rwanda,

once and for all, a real peasant society, all Tutsi had to be killed. This annihilation would allow a redistribution of wealth from Tutsi to Hutu and implicate a large part of the Hutu population in the killing campaign. In the late eighties, the regime had lost the loyalty of the peasant population because of falling coffee prices, famine, corruption, land appropriation and nepotism at all levels. The regime increased repression and terror against one group of people (Tutsi) to secure the loyalty of another group (Hutu) (Verwimp, 2006, p.33).

Take, for instance, the US during Clinton as the President. The US government was aware of the Genocide early enough to intervene and save lives but passed up numerous opportunities to do so (Power, 2001). On a visit to Rwanda in March 1998, President Clinton issued what became known as the "Clinton apology," which was a carefully worded acknowledgement:

We come here today partly in recognition of the fact that we in the United States and the world community did not do as much as we could and should have done to try to limit what occurred (CBS News,1998).

This apology of President Clinton was made in Rwanda, in front of the crowd gathered on the tarmac at Kigali Airport. This implied that the US had done a good deal but not quite enough. The US did much more than failed to send troops. It led to a successful effort to remove most of the UN peacekeepers who were already in Rwanda. It aggressively worked to block the subsequent authorisation of the UN reinforcements. It refused to use its technology to jam radio broadcasts that were a crucial instrument in the coordination and perpetuation of the Genocide.

² The Arusha Peace Accord occurred between the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front, in order that the people recover peace, on 1 October,1990. This agreement aimed to end the conflict between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front signalling that the agreement created a Transitional Government specifying a timetable for implementation. The War between the patriotic front

and the Government of Rwanda was ended. The original signed documents can be seen at this site (The Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/RW_930804_PeaceAgreementRwanda-RwandesePatrioticFront.pdf)

And even as, on average, 8,000 Rwandans were being butchered each day, the US officials shunned the term "genocide" for fear of being obliged to act. The US in fact, did virtually nothing "to try to limit what occurred." Indeed, staying out of Rwanda was an explicit US policy objective (Power, 2001).

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-general of the United Nations found it challenging to accept that member states with more intelligence gathering capabilities than that of the UN did not know what was happening. Kofi Annan admitted that no one had the luxury of claiming ignorance and that the UN failed to prevent and subsequently to stop the Genocide in Rwanda. There was a persistent lack of empathy with, and sensitivity to, what was happening in Rwanda. The political will was absent. Kofi Annan further said that history would harshly judge everyone involved (Melvern, 2019). Secretary-General Annan admitted that there "There is a dark stain on the United Nations declared that he accepted the Report of Enquiry so far then, and declared he fully accepted their conclusions, including those which reflect on officials of the UN Secretariat, of whom he was himself one (UN, 1999).

Kofi Annan's explanation was remarkably similar to President Clinton's: "Looking back now," he told the Rwandan Parliament, "we see the signs which then were not recognized. Now we know that what we did was not nearly enough, not enough to save Rwanda from itself." (Union, 2008; UN, 1999)

Anger and bitterness towards the UN will linger in Rwanda for decades. Hundreds of thousands of genocide victims believed that they would be safe with the UN in their country. However, the barbarians were eventually allowed to triumph. The West can now say nothing to the Rwandan people to make up for their failure to intervene in their hour of need (Union, 2008; Melvern, 2019).

The western view or lack of compassion is further corroborated by Beardlsey & Dallaire (2003) in their book titled *Shake hands with the*

devil: the failure of humanity in Rwanda. Fathoming the unbelievable destructive killings of Tutsi in Rwanda, the authors have raised the question, "Are we all human, or are some more human than others?" (Beardlsey & Dallaire, 2003, p. 522). Their assertion was that the developed world acted in a way that amplified their beliefs that their lives were worth more than the lives of other citizens of the planet. As Beardlsey & Dallaire (2003, p. 522) argue:

An American officer felt no shame as he informed me that the lives of 800,000 Rwandans were only worth risking the lives of ten American troops; the Belgians, after losing ten soldiers, insisted that the lives of Rwandans were not worth risking another single Belgian soldier (Beardlsey & Dallaire, 2003, p. 522).

The authors conclude thus:

we are in desperate need of a transfusion of humanity. If we believe that all humans are human, then how are going to prove it? It can only be proven through our actions. Through the dollars we are prepared to expend to improve conditions in the Third World, through the time and energy we devote to solving devastating problems like AIDS, through the lives of our soldiers, which we are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of humanity.... We have lived through centuries of enlightenment, reason, revolution, industrialization, and globalization. No matter how idealistic the aim sounds, this new century must become the Century of Humanity, when we as human beings rise above race, creed, colour, religion, and national self-interest and put the good of humanity above the good of our own tribe. For the sake of the children and of our future

(Beardlsey & Dallaire, 2003, p. 522).

According to Ndayishimiye (2014), a million Rwandans were not fortunate enough to continue living even though they wished to. Instead, they were brutally murdered and

abandoned. He wrote that he was convinced that miracles have saved some Rwandans, and that God's kindness is perhaps most evident in the peaceful coexistence of genocide survivors and their former perpetrators. These are extraordinary facts in post-genocide Rwandan society. In his opinion, these post-genocide factors are not the result of Rwandans' determination alone. He believes that these were miracles that God continues to perform in his country and suggests that the people of Rwanda ought to recognise the extraordinary nature of these blessings (Ndayishimiye, 2014).

By the time the Genocide was halted the country was already destroyed, and the question on every Rwandan mind was how we would revive? Nonetheless, it was resuscitated, and it is today recognised as "one of the most successful countries in Africa for the general social and economic progress it has made. Not only has it made significant progress on a range of development indicators, but on many of these it has narrowed the gap between the poorest and the better off" (Abbott, Sapsford & Binagwaho, 2017, p. 103). Rwanda has achieved its MDG targets in almost all aspects, and it is determined to do so for the 17 SDGs by 2030.

As Healing Begins

When we witness profound and unexpected tragedies what enables people to cope in the aftermath of the events? What contributes to their recovery? What factors contribute to individuals' and communities' ability to create positive futures "from the ashes"? These are the compelling questions and concerns that suggest that life is not always like "still waters." (Pulla, 2013b).

We began raising the above questions as we proceeded with triangulating materials at our disposal, and hopefully, this study will provide those answers. As authors, we explore the factors that played a significant role in reorganising communities, particularly in regions where massacres were high and their aftermath devastating. How people's minds were reshaped so that ferocious perpetrators and innocent survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi

cohabit and undertake together development projects has been a matter of curious investigation in our attempt. To this end, a particular focus is infused into the understanding of moral ethics with its different slants, and by linking them with a specific group and community intervention approaches, coupled with the Rwanda Home Grown Initiatives (HGIs), including largely the following three central system interventions:

- Gacaca—the community-based courts system
- Girinka—donation of pregnant cows to the needy households and,
- Imihigo—leaders public vow to achieve certain goals—and face public humiliation if they failed.

It is interesting to note and portray that the community socio-cultural ingredients became fundamental imperatives in shaping the people's lives in their journey towards the reconciliation and sustainable development process. In the following sections, we describe the above three processes in detail.

The Gacaca System

The Gacaca is a system of 12,000 community-based courts that sought to prosecute genocide criminals while encouraging victim forgiveness, criminal ownership of guilt, and community reconciliation as a means of moving forwards. The modern practice of Gacaca's restorative conception and intentions were explicitly designed as an alternative to Western models of retributive justice to offer a more efficient, effective, and long-term solution to the problems of national suffering and divisions. As a result, this study contends that Gacaca is a restorative justice experiment that never fully achieves its own goals (Clapham, 2012). Restorative justice, which was designed as an alternative to the retributive processes embedded in Western justice forms, fundamentally provides a radically different framework in which to think about and respond to the problem of crime. Its unmistakably victim-centred structure reflects the shift in emphasis

from crime as a violation of laws accountable to the state to crime as harm is done to individuals and communities (Clapham, 2012). The intention to repair the damage done to victims and communities clearly formed at least part of Gacaca's design as a primary function of restorative justice. Although the issue of reparation is complex, the nature of Gacaca as a local and community-based justice process makes it unique (Cunneen, 2003).

Gacaca served to give the Rwandan people a sense of "ownership" over their own and unique conflict experience. As a result of removing the state's direct interference and orchestration, Gacaca demonstrated the capacity of communities to conduct a traditional and community-led process of administering justice, thus adhering to a restorative model over the Western method. Furthermore, this sense of victim empowerment is related to the exclusion of elites from the role of judges, such as magistrates, elected officials, and clergy (Clapham, 2012).

Girinka

During the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, 90 per cent of the country's cattle were slaughtered. Livelihoods were decimated, and the cow was recast as a symbol of inequality and deprivation, rather than of wealth and social status. After the Genocide, cows simply reminded many Rwandans of the tragedy that had befallen their country. As poverty worsened, the gap between those who had cows and those who did not grew wider.

Girinka is a programme founded in 2006 by current Rwandan President Paul Kagame to combat the country's high rates of poverty and child malnutrition (Hahirwa & Karinganire, 2017). The Rwandan government has thus reclaimed the cow as a traditional symbol of prosperity. The novel programme provides pregnant dairy cows to low-income families. In the Rwandan language of Kinyarwanda, the word Girinka can be translated as "may you have a cow." The name refers to a long-held Rwandan tradition of donating cows to others as a token of gratitude or respect. Girinka falls under the

umbrella of Rwanda's Home-Grown Solutions, a set of sustainable development programs rooted in already present cultural practices. As such, much of Girinka's implementation occurs at the local level. The programme functioned as follows. The Rwandan Agricultural Board (RAB) purchases cows with funds provided by the Rwandan government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and wealthy citizens. The only cows purchased have passed strict health guidelines that include, among other things, ensuring the cow is pregnant, disease-free, and healthy (Hahirwa & Karinganire, 2017; Justice Compromised, 2011).

Following that, the recipients of the purchased cows are chosen. Each individual *ubudehe*, or village, selects the recipients during community meetings in which the village leader compiles a list of community members who would benefit the most from receiving a cow (Hahirwa & Karinganire, 2017; Justice Compromised, 2011).

Teaching coping while living through post-genocide trauma is not easy. Yet, the central theme of social work seems to be about building resilience and undertaking both individual centred and community centred practices. It is said 'that recovery from any calamity does not involve the restoration of the status quo but instead requires the development of pathways leading forward to possible and preferred futures. In response to both man-made, and natural disasters, individuals and collectives face the challenge of '[w]hat now and what next?' amidst the damage, loss or the central preoccupation of the social work profession that played and continue to play an invaluable role throughout the process and that it is how the remaining critical challenges to effective social cohesion will be overcome' (Pulla, 2013a, p.5).

Overall, many achievements were registered in the last three decades, and people do not really understand how it was possible to unite the divided citizens into unity and reconcile them so quickly as it seems it remains a significant challenge in various post-conflict countries across the world.

Imihigo

It was unthinkable that the Genocide against the Tutsi would be carried out publicly in front of the entire world, with no repercussions. On the other hand, it is impressive to see how Rwanda was able to rebuild from the ashes despite numerous obstacles from various sides. The changes that have occurred in the aftermath of the genocide result from unprecedented strategies that have drawn on the endurance of Rwandans themselves, who have resolved to turn all sufferings into opportunities. Indeed, the Genocide against the Tutsi was unique in its genre, and the resulting consequences and problems necessitated exceptional and unusual solutions. Without ignoring external aid, the emphasis is on good internal governance and people-centred approaches that promote 'Home Grown Initiatives.'

On 07 April 2019, President Kagame commented on his official Twitter account that 'there is no way to fully comprehend the loneliness and anger of survivors' (President Kagame, 2019). The President continued:

we have asked them to make the sacrifices necessary to give our nation new life. Emotions had to be put in a box. Someone once asked me why we keep burdening survivors with the responsibility for our healing. It was a painful question, but I realised the answer was obvious. Survivors are the only ones with something left to give: their forgiveness (President Kagame, 2019)

Imihigo is a Kinyarwanda term that translates as a self-defined policy target that a public servant/political leader, elected officials, professionals, district council members vow to achieve and accept accountability if it is not met. Bureaucratic accountability— *Imihigo*, thus enables any social program evaluations to trace the source of failure back to everyone's specific responsibility. Peer accountability is seen as vital in democratic societies. *Imihigo* advocates for more transparency than it does for democracy as defined by the ability to allow competing

viewpoints on the same choices (Kamuzinzi & Rubyutsa, 2019). *Imihigo* literally translates as a performance contract between the President and the Mayor of each district. Each leader enters into a reciprocal agreement with the entities above and below them, all the way down to individual citizens [households]. It is a participatory planning process designed to allow every Rwandan to participate in local development and hold their leaders accountable for progress (Corry, 2012). Individual households report to their villages, villages to cells, cells to sectors, and so on to the district level for planning. The district development plan reflects the central government's priorities, and both district leaders and the President sign the contract. It is seen as a means for Rwanda to decentralise policymaking while still maintaining accountability. Leaders are held accountable at yearly *Imihigo* contract reviews, the results of which are published and widely disseminated (Corry, 2012).

Traditional Rwandan values deemed it valuable to support all recovery alternatives, specifically Home-Grown Initiatives, to keep people from severe suffering and sustainably rebuild strong relationships. This is consistent with the belief that "Rwanda cannot be Rwanda without its own traditions." They are the foundation upon which we will build." (Soudan, 2015, p. 80, interview with President Kagame)

This is well stated by the President of the Republic as follows:

I [also] thank my fellow Rwandans, who joined hands to recreate this country. In 1994, there was no hope, only darkness. Today, light radiates from this place.... How did it happen? Rwanda became a family, once again. The arms of our people, intertwined, constitute the pillars of our nation. We hold each other up. Our bodies and minds bear amputations and scars, but none of us is alone. Together, we have woven the tattered threads of our unity into a new tapestry... To survivors, I say thank you. Your resilience and bravery represent the triumph of the Rwandan character in its

purest form... Through it all, we had guardians of virtue, Abarinzi b'Igihango, and other righteous citizens. Our rebirth was seeded by their actions. (President Kagame, 2019).

Aside from securing and rehabilitating legislation and regulation, several initiatives were undertaken to rehabilitate genocide survivors, particularly in the context of reshaping their lives. As a result, various organisations have been formed, such as IBUKA (Remember): National Umbrella Organisation for Survivors of Genocide against the Tutsi; FARG: Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund; CNLG: National Commission for the Fight against Genocide; AEGR: Genocide Survivors Students Association; AVEGA Agahozo: Association of Genocide Widows and FAWE-RWANDA: the Rwanda Forum for African Women Educationalists. All these organisations or groups were formed to bring survivors together and assist them in recreating human warmth because loneliness was exacerbating individual trauma.

The Rwandan government initiated various mechanisms or channels through which people could revive common ideals and benefit from collective healing for the general regeneration and consolidation of the social fabric.

Here, we can mention programmes such as remembrance and collective mourning (Kwibuka); exhumation and inhumation of victims in dignity in decent memorial sites; organisation of talks at various levels, including in churches, supplemented by testimonies; recognition of and provision of "Unity Reward" to "Protectors of Friendship Pact" (Abarinzi b'Igihango), people who demonstrated outstanding acts of humanity in helping thousands of Rwandans survive the 1994 genocide and integration of Genocide studies into education.

'I am Rwandan' Programme

A programme of utmost importance is the programme of re-inculcating patriotism in the people. The country and its leadership have made a pledge to urge all guiding actors to join

forces to make a difference in the world while remembering the collective pledge of "Never Again" and forever recognising their unique identity of *Ndi Umunyarwanda* (I am Rwandan).

Several of the practices discussed in the sections mentioned above of this study point to fundamental values such as 'Ubumwe' (Unity), 'Gufashanya' (Solidarity/self-help), 'Ubunyarwanda' (Rwandanness), 'Igihango' (Covenant), and others. Observance of these increased social cohesion and facilitated the process of reconciliation. As a result, the pledge "Together, we can" makes sense. It was repeatedly stated that Rwandans should focus first on their strengths because, as the saying goes in Kinyarwanda, *Ak'imuhana kaza imvura ihise* (The external aid comes after the rain shower). An insight from a young student is of particular interest in this context.

'Growing up, I remember being taught about the ethnic divide that led to the genocide, but also about the concept of *Ndi Umunyarwanda* ("I am Rwandan"). *Ndi Umunyarwanda* is a national program that aims to promote unity and reconciliation by encouraging conversation about the causes and consequences of the Genocide, and about how to rebuild the country by focusing on the national theme, "Remember-Unite-Renew.... Rwanda was able to advance significantly in its pursuit of unity and reconciliation through several home-grown solutions, implemented at the community level. Those include the Gacaca (local community courts); bunzi (community mediators); itorero (youth civic education camps); ingando (solidarity camps); and many more. I had the opportunity to attend an itorero camp in 2015. It not only broadened my knowledge of Rwanda's history, but also reinforced my Rwandan values, namely *Ndi Umunyarwanda*' (Orietta Agasaro, 22 April 2020).

Conclusion

While the above-selected insights into the homegrown initiatives inform about the strides achieved in the country, it would suffice to say that its communities have utilised the communities culturally based practices in the spirit of reconciliation as a collectivist society. The community values reinforcement to a large extent accounts for the current processes of healing, unity, and resolution of peace within the communities. However, there is a long-term social development ahead for social work.

Social workers have been intervening directly or indirectly in the perspective of healing, rebuilding relationships and resilience among the citizens. They have been intervening at both the three levels (individual, group and community) and to deal with trauma, reference to HGIs but also to the standard therapeutic approaches, primarily the "Exposure therapy" (INVIVO and Imaginal Exposure). Some of their actions involve participation in Gacaca, attending or organising the mourning events, advocating for the survivors of Genocide, etc.

However, the key challenges remain in the hidden trauma, especially among the perpetrators of Genocide against the Tutsi and the survivors of Genocide against the Tutsi that seem to be seeking compensation for injuries suffered. Some of the perspectives suggested are to encourage perpetrators, particularly the elite, to plead guilty and to give testimonies, programmes that assist striving for inner peace based on cohesive traditional values; and undertaking promotion of empathy that could form the true reconciliation strategy for community members, ensuring that the younger generation is taught the truth and truth alone.

Genocide against the Tutsi resulted from the political and ideological intoxication of the population throughout the socialisation process. And the principal agents of this socialisation were the elites, the family, and the. However, the de-intoxication may also be effective through a well-thought socialisation process, mainly through renewed education philosophy. They were clearly matching the positive values

with the cohesive HGIs and inculcating these in the new generations. Indeed, there is a clarion role of Social work for open engagement and a reflective and critical engagement at the grassroots level.

References

- Abbott, P., Sapsford, R., & Binagwaho, A. (2017). Learning from Success: How Rwanda Achieved the Millennium Development Goals for Health. *World Development*, 92, 103-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.11.013>
- Aoki, E., & Jonas, K. M. (2016). Collective Memory and Sacred Space in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Reconciliation and Rehumanization Processes in Mureithi's ICYZERE. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*. 9(3), 240-258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2016.1195007>
- Agasaro, O. (2020, 22 April). *Keeping the Flame: UGHE Student Reflects on Rwanda's Post-Genocide Growth*. <https://www.pih.org/article/keeping-flame-ughe-student-reflects-rwandas-post-genocide-growth>
- Beardsley, B., & Dallaire, R. (2003). *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*. Random House Canada.
- C.B.S News (1998, 25 March). *Text of President Clinton's Address to Genocide Survivors at the Airport in Kigali, Rwanda, as Provided by the White House*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/text-of-clintons-rwanda-speech/>
- Clapham, C. (2012). *Jul 30, 2012, Gacaca: A Successful Experiment in Restorative Justice?*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/07/30/gacaca-a-successful-experiment-in-restorative-justice-2/>
- Cunneen, C. (2003). Thinking Critically about Restorative Justice. In E. MvLaughlin, R. Fergusson, G. Hughes, and L. Westmarland (eds.). *Restorative Justice: Critical Issues*. Sage Publications, 182-194.
- Courtemanche, G (2004). *A Sunday at the Pool*

in Kigali. Trans. Patricia Claxton. Toronto: Vintage

Doná, G., Kalinganire, C., & Muramutsa, F. (2001). *My Child is Yours and Ours—The Rwandan Experience of Foster Care for Separated Children*. Kigali, Rwanda: UNICEF.

Hahirwa, J. G., & Karinganire, C. (2017). Exploring the Success and Challenges of the Girinka1 Programme and the Need for Social Work Involvement: Southern Province, Rwanda. *Rwanda Journal*, 4(1), 121-155.

Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) (2006). *Genocide in Rwanda: Causes, Execution and Memories*.

Justice Compromised (2011, 31 May). *The Legacy of Rwanda's Community-Based Gacaca Courts*.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/05/31/justice-compromised/legacy-rwandas-community-based-gacaca-courts>

Kalinganire, C., Gilkey, S. and Haas, L. (2017). Social Work Practice in Rwanda: The Challenges of Adapting Western Models to Fit Local Contexts. In M. Gray (Ed.). *Handbook of Social Work and Social Development in Africa*. Routledge, 315–328.

Kamuzinzi, M & Rubyutsa, J. (2019). When Tradition Feeds on Modern Accountability Mechanisms in Public Policy Implementation. The Case of “Imihigo” in Rwanda. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 42(3), 632-656, DOI:10.1080/15309576.2018.1494018

Melvern, L. (2019). *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*. (pp.384). Zed Books.

Mironko, C. (2006). Igitero: Means and Motive in the Rwandan Genocide. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6(1), 47-60.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1462352042000194700>

Ndayishimiye, H. (2014). *Heritage from Father: Healing Genocide Wounds through Gratitude and Faith*. Balboa Press.

NISR, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.
<https://www.statistics.gov.rw/>

Ochab, U. E. (2020, 6 April). Decades Later, the Perpetrators of the Genocide in Rwanda Will Face Justice. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2020/04/06/decades-later-the-perpetrators-of-the-genocide-in-rwanda-will-face-justice/?sh=2e6038c965ee>

Power, S. (2001, 1 September). Bystanders to Genocide. *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/09/bystanders-to-genocide/304571/>

Pulla, V. (2013a). Coping and Resilience: People's Innovative Solutions. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 1(1), 1-18.
https://www.ijicc.net/images/Vol1iss1/Final_pulla_article.pdf

Pulla, V. (2013b). Contours of Coping and Resilience: The Front Story. In V. Pulla, A. Shatte, & S. Warren (eds.). *Perspectives on Coping and Resilience*. Authors Press. (1 ed.), 1-24.

President Kagame, P: [@UrugwiroVillage]. (2019, 7 April). [There is No Way to Fully Comprehend the Loneliness and Anger of Survivors. And Yet, Over and Over Again, We have Asked them to Make the Sacrifices Necessary to Give our Nation New Life. Emotions had to be Put in a box.]. *Twitter*.
<https://twitter.com/urugwirovillage/status/1114853459185012736>

Soudan, F. (2015). *Kagame: Conversations with the President of Rwanda*. Enigma Books and Nouveau Monde Éditions.

Verwimp, P. (2006). Machetes and Firearms: The Organization of Massacres in Rwanda. *Journal of Peace Research*. 43(1), 5-22. DOI 10.1177/0022343306059576

Union, A. (2008). Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide—International Panel of Eminent Personalities.
<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4d1da8752.pdf>

(United Nations). U. N. (1948). *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*.

<http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>

(United Nations). U. N. (1999). United Nations Secretary-General, "Statement on Receiving the Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," 16 December 1999.

Conflict of Interest

As authors, we have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the *peer referees* who approved an earlier draft of this study. we thank the *anonymous referee* and the *copyeditors* for helping us in finalising this article. In addition, we are grateful for the suggestions from the *native scholars* from Rwanda for this study's cultural correctness and sensitivity.

We both are grateful that a final pre-publication version was further meticulously reviewed by

Hormisdas Ndayishimiye, an Independent researcher and a theologian. Ndayishimiye, lost most of his family during the 1994 Genocide while he was a studying at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Roma, Italy. *Heritage from Father: Healing Genocide Wounds through Gratitude and Faith*. Balboa Press (2004) that we have referred to in our paper is his most sought after contribution for its depth and for its approach to spiritual resurgence and rekindling of hope in people of Rwanda, post Genocide.

Author Contribution Statement

The first author developed the concept, prepared the abstract, conducted the research and finalised the draft.

The second author helped the first author prepare the first draft through his suggestions and other valuable academic inputs, including literature search.