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The “Here and There” of Rwandan Reconciliation

Individual Actors Take Centre Stage

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Introduction. On exile and reconciliation in Rwanda

This thesis addresses the question of reconciliation in Rwanda. It sheds new light on this phenomenon by proposing a shift of perspective for its study. This perspective brings me to include the question of exile and return for exploring the meaning of reconciliation in contemporary Rwanda. As a matter of fact, since the 1950's Rwandan social logics have been shaped by massive movements of population in and out of the country. My argument thus being that the cyclical movements of exile and return fashion the logics of Rwandan reconciliation so that it can only be fully understood when considering its extraterritorial dimensions. Accordingly, in the frame of this thesis, I try to discover the meaning of reconciliation “from below”, by taking an interest in individual actors who engage for what they consider to be reconciliation. By focusing on individual militants of reconciliation, this thesis explores the meanings with which they invest it. This micro-perspective indicates that while they conceive reconciliation as an engagement to transform social relations, they ultimately seize it in reflexive terms. Through their various forms of engagement, they put the accent on the necessity to reconcile with oneself.

At the time of writing these lines¹, Rwanda is celebrating a very

¹A previous version of this text was presented in the frame of the workshop “Quelle mémoire au lendemain d’une guerre? Les fantômes post-conflit” organised by V. Rosoux (June 21/22, 2012 in Louvain-la-Neuve), “Atelier ‘post-conflit’ de l’Ecole doctorale de science politique de l’Université Paris I” (June 28, 2012 in Paris) and at the workshop “Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rule of Law in War and Post-War Countries (June 29, 2012 in Nanterre). It has been improved through the very

special day: the first of July 2012 witnessed the fusion of the celebration of 50 years of independence and the 18th anniversary of liberation. This event constitutes a break with the past because independence day has never been celebrated since 1994 even though it has always been a national holiday. It is actually not surprising that this day had not been an occasion for festivity in Rwanda until recently. Remembering this founding episode of was heavily influenced by the unfolding and the outcome of independence which was accompanied by massive massacres and the beginning of long periods of exile for a large part of the population, most of them Abatutsi². In order to understand the difficulties of celebrating Rwanda's independence in 1962, it is necessary to put this event in historical perspective, beginning with the day of liberation.

1. Massive population movements

Every year, since the 4th of July 1994, Rwanda celebrates a very special day: Liberation Day. This day represents the commemoration of the taking of Kigali by the fighters of the *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF) and consequently, the end of a hundred days of genocide and four years of war³. This public holiday, therefore, is the celebration of the victorious return *home* of Rwandans whose parents or who themselves were forced to take the road of exile from the late 1950's onwards. Since the 1950's and the massacres that systematically targeted the Abatutsi population, Rwanda has known successive waves of refugees exiting the country. Hence, this was a return not only of soldiers but also of an estimated 1,000,000 of exiles who returned to their homeland; many of them entering the country very quickly after the seizure of the capital⁴.

useful comments by the discussants H. Dumas and Y. Ben Hounet, and the other participants.

²Throughout this text I use the following expressions: Umutwa, Umuhutu and Umuhutu (singular); Abatwa, Abahutu and Abatutsi (plural). As K. Kayiganwa, one of our informants, has pointed out to us, these original terms through their common root (umu-, aba-) more correctly express the conception of the Rwandan people that had historically been considered to be composed of a trinity. A commonality that is visibly absent when abbreviating these terms by cutting off their common root; a habit that had been introduced by European colonisers.

³The war started on October 1, 1990 and the genocide on April 7, 1994.

⁴A compelling portrait of this period of return can be found in the text "Après le génocide. Notes de voyage" written by J. Kagabo (1995).

It is estimated that at the same time around two million fled the country (Newbury, 2005, 277) and settled in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, while others — mostly the former (political) elite — with the necessary connections moved to Europe and North America.

An exchange of diasporas During fieldwork in Brussels conducted in the frame of this doctoral research, a former RPF soldier gave his impression of this phenomenon by referring to a “*échange des diasporas après 1994*”⁵. While the former persecuted feel safe to return to Rwanda, another part of the population feels constrained to leave the country. The aim of mentioning these intersecting population flows is neither to make a value judgement by putting very different trajectories of exile side by side, nor is it to suggest relativity of suffering.

By drawing attention to these rather recent historical events, I would like the reader to consider the significance of this massive movement of population in the Rwandan context. When looked at from a long-term historical perspective, it stands out that a cyclical (forced) movement of exile and return has been a characteristic shaping the social logics of Rwandan society — and thereby the logics of reconciliation — since at least the 1950s. From the time of demands for independence by the elite formerly favoured by the Belgian coloniser, an important share of the Rwandan population found itself outside the country.

To cite one marking date in this chronology of departure, it would be the so-called *Toussaint rwandaise* of 1959 which resulted in the death of several hundred people, the burning and destruction of numerous houses and several thousands made refugees (for these estimates, cf. Vidal, 26; Viret, 17). Let it suffice to mention that most observers and academics concur as to the crucial importance of this period for the course of later events in Rwanda. C. Vidal, for instance, suggests that the country experienced a “radical transformation of its political system”⁶ and refers

⁵For the sake of rendering as faithful as possible the way that my interviewees expressed themselves, I will quote them in the language that they used during the interview. However, for the sake of honouring my pledge of confidentiality, I will not reproduce the entire text of the transcriptions and only use excerpts that are relevant for the object under study.

⁶An important number of academic works on Rwanda are published in French. For

to a “historical, violent and precipitated mutation” (Vidal, 1991, 28). A book written by the team of researchers of the Rwandan *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix*⁷ on the period of 1946-1962 asserts that events of this period have “modified everyday life of Rwandans” and that these changes have “profoundly modified the social configuration” (1).

Radical social transformation in the 1950’s Even though, authors from very different backgrounds agree as to the historical importance of this period, the interpretation of its meaning – just like (m)any question(s) concerning Rwanda – strongly polarised⁸. There seems to be no doubt concerning the transformation of social configurations and relations, however, the reactions to it are situated in a continuum ranging from praise to regret. Generally, praise or regret is determined by the interpretation of the character of social relations prior to colonisation. While the former reaction is sustained by the belief that pre-colonial Rwanda was characterised by tension and exploitation of the population by its rulers, the latter considers this period as harmonious.

Without being able to go into detail at this point, it seems important to bear in mind that at the time the Belgian coloniser, or tutelage, changed its ruling strategy by shifting from a preference for a system of rule by aristocracy, assimilated with the Abatutsi, to a system of rule by popular democracy, assimilated with the Abahutu. Looking back at this period it seems that with the arrival of J.-P. Harroy as governor of the then Ruanda-Urundi and a change in the “air de temps” of how Belgium ruled over its colonies, political functioning in Rwanda was bound to be transformed. J. Semujanga gives an impression of the caricaturist interpretation to which inside, and outside observers simplified the political situation at the time :

“Deux camps sont dressés face à face: les “traditionalistes”

the sake of readability, the quotes that are bound into the text have been translated into English. Longer quotes are marked apart from the text and have been left in their original version.

⁷www.irdp.rw

⁸For a good historians’ perspective on attempts of re-writing Rwandan history, cf. Dumas (2010).

et “féodaux” Tutsi et les “révolutionnaires” et “serfs” Hutu” (Semujanga, 1998, 162).

Although this question is of course also subject to controversy, many indicators seem to suggest that the order of the day (endorsed especially by the catholic church⁹ and the tutelage) was the “non-recognition of the customary Tutsi authorities mandated by the Belgian colonial administration and the overthrow of the existing social order” (ibid, 163). This impression is reinforced when considering that the special resident, the Colonel Logiest, decided to “replace the Tutsi of the politico-administrative hierarchy by Hutu” (Vidal, 1991, 26)¹⁰.

A final break between the formerly favoured elite and the colonial administration seems to appear with the foundation of the political party *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (UNAR) by François Rukeba and Prosper Bwanakweli¹¹ on September 3, 1959 which tried to regroup support around the king and asks for immediate independence (Semujanga, 1998, 163). The period witnesses what some refer to as a “social revolution” and others a “révolution assistée”¹², as J.-P. Harroy describes it in his memoirs (1989). As a consequence, Rwanda turns from a monarchy into a republic before its official independence in 1962.

Successive waves of exile It is possible that even this most succinct description is bound to attract polarisation (especially due to a lack of serious and systematic study of this period). What I am interested in here, however, is the fact that these social transformations have been accompanied by massive massacres of the population and resulted in “vagues successives” in 1959-60; 63,66; 73 (Kagabo and Karabayinga,

⁹For instance, the “Lettre Pastorale de Monseigneur Perraudin” vicar apostolic of Kabgayi (lent 1959).

¹⁰She refers to the published PhD thesis of F. Reyntjens (1985).

¹¹The UNAR general secretary, Michel Rwagasana, is executed in January 1964 together with P. Bwanakweli in Rwanda under G. Kayibanda’s presidency. The fact that Michel Rwagasana is today one of Rwanda’s “national heroes” that are celebrated every February 1st, the National Heroes Day, can probably give indications as to a certain ideological proximity.

¹²For a good overview, consult: Byanafashe (2004b) and Byanafashe (2004a)

1995, 66) of Abatutsi refugees who were targeted systematically¹³. No exact figures exist, but estimates place the number of refugees to be around several hundred thousands¹⁴. In this light, it is interesting to note two socio-political developments that resulted from this massive exodus. On the one hand, the UNAR set up a government in exile outside the country, and the period also witnessed the raids of the so-called *inyenzi* (1963; 65-66) who attempted an unsuccessful armed return (Kagabo, Semujanga).

This brings us back to the beginning of this introduction and the question why independence day had so far not been a cause of celebration in Rwanda. Considering the historical background of independence – especially the massive massacres¹⁵ and the beginning of long periods of exile for the families of those that returned in July 1994 – it is not surprising that the commemoration of this day was not a source of collective rejoicing. However, in 2012, the Rwandan government seems intent on avoiding the focus on the conflictual dimension of the events of 1962 by merging the independence day with liberation day under the theme “Rwanda 50 – A Journey of Resilience”.

2. The extra-territorial dimension of reconciliation

Given the background of the exodus from Rwanda, it is significant to note the reality of exile that has marked Rwandan history. In the light of the presence of an important number of Rwandans outside Rwanda, reconciliation cannot be considered as circumscribed to the national territory and frontiers only. I thus argue that Rwandans outside Rwanda also have to be taken into consideration when studying the dynamics of reconciliation in Rwanda.

¹³In this context, it is essential to consider the projects to re-settle the survivors of the massacres in the Bugesera region.

¹⁴J. Kagabo speaks of a “bataille de chiffres” raging between the different observers, and refers to a report by A. Guichaoua that treat this issue; “Le problème des réfugiés et des populations banyarwanda dans la région des Grands Lacs Africains” UNCHR. The book “Exilés, réfugiés, déplacés en Afrique centrale et orientale” edited by the same author (2004), although presenting a positioned interpretation of events, also offers an interesting collection of primary sources dating from this period.

¹⁵Some observers even date the beginning of genocide in 1959.

Coming back to liberation day, this year's festivities¹⁶ have been organised by the Rwanda Governance Board, under supervision of its CEO Professor Shyaka Anastase. Explaining the reasons for merging these two events, he explains in *The Rwanda Focus*

“there is a lot of evidence to show that Rwanda has benefited from self rule especially in the period following liberation in 1994. This is especially true because, if you look and analyze our history, you will find that while we were accorded independence in 1962, its promise was never realized until liberation. [...] Analytically therefore, I would say that at independence in 1962 and the period shortly before that, there were two main confusions that have brought us enormous suffering and that we have learnt from. The first was ideological. The other confusion related to the form of governance and democracy appropriate for the country. Ideologically, the idea of who a Rwandan citizen is was unsettled because Rwandans were divided in ethnic terms and not treated equally. Secondly, democracy was seen in the same light, in identity terms (i.e. Hutu, Tutsi and Twa). The two confusions were perpetuated in the post colonial era by a leadership deficit. The three were corrected at liberation.”¹⁷

This statement reflects the political rhetoric of the government regarding the past. It indicates an attempt to capture the symbolic benefit of the rupture between 1994 and the changes that succeeded it.

Independence as political reference Professor Shyaka, formerly director of the Center for Conflict Management (CCM) at the National University of Rwanda in Butare drew attention to the break that liberation created with regard to the past. His statement indicates the

¹⁶Many thanks to H. Dumas who hinted at the panafrican character of the conference and official events organised for this occasion.

¹⁷June 25th, 2012. “Our democratic and governance formula is succeeding – Prof Shyaka”. *The Rwanda Focus*. Online available: <http://focus.rw/wp/2012/06/our-democratic-and-governance-formula-is-succeeding-prof-shyaka/>

significance that the period of independence carries as a political reference until today. In the speech President Kagame made on the first of July 2012, he also refers to the fact that according to him, “it is only in the last 18 years that we have regained the dignity and identity that we lost twice – first, under colonialism and then, ironically, at the time of independence”¹⁸.

The intention here is not at all to settle the hotly debated question that Professor Shyaka makes allusion to with regard to its historical accuracy. I am instead interested in the social significance and the resonance of this period as a “reference and legitimation” so that “numerous Rwandan and foreign actors legitimate their actions and their current positions by restoring to the events that have happened during these years” (IRD, 1); as the statement by Shyaka shows. And while his position can be assimilated with those that support the current government, those in opposition would probably propose a very different historical analysis. Consequently, the period can be considered as a key for grasping past and present points of reference and carries considerable significance for a wide variety of actors.

The extension of political space beyond national frontiers. This period marked, through a complex and radical transformation of social logics, the beginning of cycles of exile and the presence of a very large number of Rwandans outside the country. As a consequence the political space extended beyond the strictly speaking national frontiers; which has important bearings in order to understand reconciliation today. Not at least since the formation of the UNAR government in exile¹⁹, the physically absent have therefore been symbolically present in politically imagery and discourse. While those outside are perceived as a potential threat, those that stayed behind often carried the burden of repression (Vidal, 27) which in turn created even more refugees.

¹⁸Speech by President Kagame at Amahoro National Stadium on 1st July 2012, available online: www.paulkagame.com

¹⁹The constitution of a government in exile in the 60's is a political precedent that has been followed by the Rwandan government that had been in place since April 1994 and whose members had taken flight to Congo in July, there they had set up a “gouvernement rwandais en exil”.

When considering the positions of the pre- and post-genocide governments vis-a-vis Rwandans outside national frontiers side by side they appear to be rather opposed. At the risk of simplifying very complex political configurations, it can be noted that prior to 1994 exiles have been present in political discourse through the theme of exclusion, the insistence to keep them out²⁰ was the argument that Rwanda was not big enough to hold all Rwandans.

Multiple interpretations of the refugee questions. It has to be noted, that depending on their respective standpoints, not all authors concur with this interpretation of the Habyarimana government's refugee politics. A. Guichaoua, for instance, insists on the creation of a "Commission spéciale sur le problème des émigrés²¹ rwandais" in February 1989 and that Habyarimana's official stance on the question can be taken at face value. In order to illustrate, he quotes from a discourse held by the president on June 4th, 1991:

"parce que le problème des réfugiés rwandais en Ouganda était sur le point d'être résolu définitivement [...] que l'adversaire a choisi d'attaquer²², puisque la mise en place de ces solutions ne l'aurait guère arrangé" (2004, 125).

Indeed, J. Kagabo underlines with regard to these variable interpretations of this period and the fate of the refugees that:

"sans que l'on en [histoire des réfugiés] connaisse ni les principales données, ni la trame, elle se prête à une pluralité de lectures, selon que l'on se place du point de vue des réfugiés ou que l'on défende la version officielle. [...] les autorités rwandaises se contenant, quant à elles, des éléments qui permettent de soutenir que l'exil des Tutsi procède d'un choix politique (ils ont choisi la monarchie contre la démocratie).

²⁰The intransigent position of the Habyarimana government with regard to return is epitomised in an often-quoted speech the former president is reported to have said: "The glass is full, and we do not know where to put the rest of the water."

²¹Given that the Rwandans outside Rwanda had not left Rwanda voluntarily but out of fear, this terminology seems awkward.

²²He refers to the attack launched by the RPF on the first of October 1990.

Cette histoire qui est encore assez sujette à caution, porteuse aussi d'une forte charge émotionnelle dans les témoignages de ceux qui l'ont vécue, pose un grand problème de sources et de critique. De sorte que nous-mêmes sommes obligés de l'envisager par bribes, sans autre ambition que d'illustrer la précarité de la situation de réfugié" (1995, 68).

We therefore note the divergence of interpretation but insist on the importance and reality of exile that has uprooted and marked Rwandan history.

Inclusion of Rwandans abroad in national policies. In the post-94 period, Rwanda's attitude to its nationals abroad has witnessed a marked shift. Today, the borders of Rwanda are considerably open to the "Rwandais de l'extérieur" as they are frequently referred to. They are invited to "Go and Tell" (*Ngwino Urebe*); i.e. the government pays for their tickets so that they can visit Rwanda and return to their countries of residence and "tell" their experience to other Rwandans. This openness is not going well with everyone. A generalised indignation has been observed, especially among survivor groups, when it became apparent that two Rwandans living in Belgium and widely known to be *génocidaires*, Ernest Gakwaya, also known as Camarade, and Eugène Mbarushimana had as well visited Rwanda in the framework of *Ngwino Urebe*. Although, the knowledge of their involvement in the genocide seems to have been wide-spread and public²³, the Belgian authorities did not react until this affair created a media buzz in 2011. This incident was of course quite embarrassing for the *Ngwino Urebe* campaign and raised criticism concerning too much willingness to invite Rwandans from the outside to come to Rwanda.

Furthermore, Rwandans "from outside" are encouraged to contribute to the economic development of the country. In 2007 a special *Diaspora Unit* has been created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Diaspora*

²³The RTBF documentary by M. Klaric entitled "Les génocidaires rwandais sont-ils parmi nous?" from 2008 had pointed to the fact that several Rwandans, that are designated to have participated in the genocide, such as Camarade, had not been prosecuted in Belgium.

General Directorate; DGD since 2008). The mission of the DGD is to “mobilize Rwandan Diaspora for unity/cohesion among themselves targeted for the promotion of security and socio-economic development of their homeland”. Examples worth mentioning include the “Diaspora One Dollar Campaign for Genocide Survivors”, which encouraged Rwandans abroad to donate one dollar, or the 4th Diaspora Global Convention that was held end of 2009 in Kigali under the theme “Mobilising Savings in Diaspora for investment promotion in Rwanda”. An estimate by the Rwandan Central Bank states that remittances were estimated to amount to \$166.2 million in 2012²⁴. These economic aspects are also in line with the overall strategy of the Rwandan government that puts an important accent on socio-economic measures meant to bring about stability in the wake of genocide. Here we would mention “ubudehe” or the “One Cow per Poor Family” campaign²⁵

In this regard, it seems important to also underline the role of the *Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission* which is in charge of the demobilisation, re-education and integration of former rebels/combatants. Let it suffice to mention here that the case of Paul Rwarakabije (who has become a mascot of the *Demobilisation Commission* as Commissioner General of Rwanda Correctional Services) is an illustration of the fact that the government is trying to dissuade armed rebels to take military action from strongholds in neighbouring countries by offering them options to return to the country and be reintegrated without being prosecuted for their past crimes. A fact that does not go without criticism. Indeed, given the importance of the theme of the possibility of return in the ideology of the RPF (a topic worthy further study), it is probably not surprising that the “Rwandais de l’extérieur” are today considered as a “sixth province”. The acceptance of double nationality and the rather open definition of Rwandan diaspora by the DGD as “all Rwandans including foreigners holding Rwandan nationality, who left their country voluntarily or were forced to live in other countries of the world, and

²⁴Source: Butera, S. February 28, 2012. “Rwanda’s remittances up by 69.2 percent”. *The New Times*. Online available: www.newtimes.co.rw/news/index.php?i14916 a50719

²⁵This economic dimension of reconstruction is the object of the very detailed publication by Ensign and Bertrand (2012).

are willing to contribute to the development of Rwanda²⁶” indicate the political will to open frontiers and the inclusion of Rwandans abroad in national policies in order to reduce the level of political opposition abroad.

Rwandans abroad as potential threat. Given that this openness to Rwandans from all walks of life arouses considerable criticism and results in a configuration of extremely complex and problematic co-habitation, one could wonder about the underlying motivation. This questions merits serious analysis. A tentative answer certainly includes elements of conviction concerning the importance of the possibility of return for Rwandans (shaped by the experience of exile by leading decision-makers) and a feeling of threat emanating from (armed) opposition. This constellation was resumed by one of our interviewees in the following way:

“Parce que le Rwandais c’est vraiment quelqu’un de très attaché à son pays, à sa terre natale. Même le FPR des Tutsi qui ont attaqué par après ce qu’ils avaient c’est qu’ils étaient attachés à leur terre natale. Pour ne pas la perdre on va y aller, y retourner par tous les moyens. [...] On sait [au Rwanda] que tôt ou tard il y aura cette guerre pour justement rentrer”

While A. Guichaoua refers to a “security frenzy”²⁷ and is convinced that internal and external security are considered as “permanently menaced by the escaped genocidal forces or any structure open to this ideology” (2004, 166), it is probably more sensible to take into consideration the different perceptions of this external threat. Indeed, the “guerre des infiltrés” (1996) and the presence of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) on the borders of Rwanda are a constant reminder of the presence of armed Rwandans that are opposed to

²⁶*The Rwanda Diaspora Policy*. Kigali, p. 8.

²⁷In this line, the controversies concerning the role of Rwanda in Eastern Congo (i.e. the 2011 UN report that included allegations concerning a “double génocide”, support of the rebel group M23, the dismantling of the Kibeho camp in RDC, etc.) have to be mentioned but are far from our object of study. Chapter 4 will consider the impact of massive return of refugees in 1995 and 1996 to Rwanda, following the military dismantling of refugee camps by the RPF.

the current government and who are waging an armed revolution from outside the national territory.

Political opponents abroad. However, the national borders are not the only place where Rwandan opponents can be found. Europe and North America also take in large numbers of Rwandans. Belgium²⁸ has a particular status owing to the fact that it not only “hosts the largest community of Rwandese living in Europe, or more generally in the west” (Omaar, 2008, 182)²⁹ but also the persistence of historical ties between the former elite and Belgian counterparts or friends makes it a special case. Sociologically, it is interesting to note that generally speaking the strong presence of Rwandans in Belgium is attributed to past colonial ties and to personal and professional links that the “educated class in Rwanda in 1994” (ibid) built through studies and work in Belgium. Concretely, this means that much of the former Rwandan pre-genocide elite and high-ranking officials are today living in Belgium³⁰. It is important to note that Rwandans living in Belgium represent very diverse profiles and are far from forming a homogeneous community³¹. The conclusion of the afore-mentioned report states that there is “a substantial concentration of high-ranking ex-FAR [*Forces Armées Rwandaises*; the pre-genocide name of the national armed forces] officers who have settled in Belgium” and that Belgium also hosts “many prominent genocide suspects” (like

²⁸Belgium was labelled a “pays de concentration” and “un autre Rwanda hors du pays” by a DGD official in an interview in 2010 estimating that about 20 000 to 30 000 people of Rwandan origin live on Belgian territory. This is one of the reasons why the Rwanda 1035 project was launched in 2009 by the International Organisation for Migration in Belgium. It may also be worth mentioning that Robert Masozera, former DGD director general, is today the ambassador in Brussels.

²⁹The quoted report is the output of research conducted by R. Omaar, director of *African Rights*, who worked as a research consultant for the *Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission*. It seems that this organisation and her director, especially since the publication of their report on the genocide, “Death, Despair and Defiance” have become one of the preferred targets of websites of the Rwandan opposition in Belgium (e.g. www.musabyimana.net) and F. Reyntjens.

³⁰The report commissioned by the *Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission* puts forward that were exactly these friendship ties that have helped in the aftermath of the genocide to make “the necessary arrangements for them to travel to Belgium where they have remained ever since” (Omaar, 2008, 182).

³¹Given the background of genocide, it is not surprising that tensions have been “transported” from the country of origin to the country of residence.

Camarade) (Omaar, 2008, pp. 182).

In this context, it is interesting to bear in mind that S. Dufoix suggests that

“le choix du pays d’accueil n’est presque jamais un hasard, car il se détermine aussi en fonction de la tolérance dudit pays envers les activités politiques potentielles des exilés” (2005, 11).

The presence of the absent. These external political players, too are present in the internal political life. To mention but one example, we could refer to a speech given by President Kagame on April 7th, 2010 (at the genocide commemoration) where he stated that “some people want to encourage political hooligans. People come from nowhere, useless people – I have seen photos, some lady with a deputy who is a genocide criminal – saying that there is “one genocide but then there is another” and the world starts saying that she is an “opposition leader””³². These are some examples that allude to the presence of the physically absent in political logics. Considering the compelling presence of the absent, (political) exile is one of the key factors shaping political decision-making in contemporary Rwanda.

Replacement of political leadership. However, exile is also present in a more subtle way. Actually, it is constantly present in the form of an experience that shaped the trajectory of not only huge section of the Rwandan population but also of the political leadership, many of which have engaged militarily for return and experienced exile (and refugee camps³³). Indeed, Rwandan society has not only been shaped by an

³²Since this was in the run-up for the presidential elections of 2010, he probably refers to Victoire Ingabire, a candidate that had been set up by the opposition parties in exile and who has been imprisoned in 2011 in Rwanda before the elections on charges of propagating genocide ideology. In kinyarwanda, he orally also referred to “those in Matongé” which is the Congolese quarter of Brussels. The text of this speech can be obtained in the archive of the on the following website: www.paulkagame.com

³³Kinzer relates the experience of Rwandan exiles in refugee camps in Uganda. President P. Kagame explains his memories of exile in this book “you were always reminded, in one way or another, that you didn’t belong there, that you were not supposed to be there. You have no place that you can call yours. You have no right to

exchange, movement and disappearance of its population but also a replacement of its political leadership after July 1994. The celebration of victorious return indicates the celebration of political rupture and discontinuity vis-a-vis the government that had organised the genocide. In order to understand the reach and magnitude of the celebration of a victorious armed return – which in the Rwandan case is interpreted as “rescuing ourselves from a pre- and post-independence leadership that fostered and promoted hatred, sectarianism and genocidal ideologies – culminating in the decision to exterminate its own citizens”³⁴ – we need to reflect on the actual meaning of (political) exile.

3. Reconciliation in the light of return

Indeed, the importance of exile and return is crucial for understanding Rwandan reconciliation. Above we have discussed to what extent these two events have shaped Rwanda’s recent history. Today, given the huge percentage of Rwandans that have left the country in the 1950’s or had been born in exile, return and its consequences determine social relations. When thinking about reconciliation, a crucial element for its understanding is the co-existence of Rwandans with very diverse experience and from different walks of life. The country reunites today Rwandans of a dazzling diversity. As already mentioned earlier, D. Gishoma (2007) explains that Rwanda after the genocide could be compared to a

“rond-point plongé dans une circulation routière dense sans l’existence d’un code de la route. Tout était réuni pour qu’il y ait des collisions ininterrompues jusqu’à ce qu’aucune circulation de vie ne soit plus possible. (...) Mis à part le

speak” and the author of the books goes on to explain that “with an almost mystical focus, they came to believe fate and history had assigned them a transcendent task: to find their way back to a homeland many of them barely remembered, but all idealised” (Kinzer, p. 15).

³⁴Speech by Paul Kagame on Liberation Day, 4 July 2009, Kigali, available on www.paulkagame.com. Note the ambiguity of celebrating a return which also meant victory over a share of the population that had either killed or engaged in combat. This insistence on the responsibility of political top-down manipulation of the population is probably a means to attenuate possible and existing tensions.

fait que ce petit pays était devenu dans l'après-génocide une mosaïque de souffrance et de violences, il avait également acquis presque les mêmes caractéristiques que la tour de Babel. Certains parlent le kinyarwanda, d'autres le swahili, d'autres le lingala, d'autres le kigande. D'autres s'expriment en anglais à côté de ceux qui s'expriment en français, etc.”.

Besides this divergence in experience, the question of return entails an often uneasy coexistence of Rwandans that might be in conflict or have harmed each other (or their ancestors) in the past. And finally, given the salient issue of Rwandans abroad, coexistence also included the coexistence with those that are physically absent. How can reconciliation be apprehended in the light of geographical and symbolical proximity of different categories of Rwandans – ranging from killers to survivors, exiles and returnees? Let us come back to the meaning of (political) exile to throw some light on this question.

Political exile. Y. Shain affirms that political exiles “engage in political activity directed against the policies of a home regime, against the home regime itself, or against the political system as a whole so as to create circumstances favorable to their return”s (2005, 15). S. Dufoix refers to an

“ensemble d’activités politiques orientées vers la transformation de la situation politique dans le pays d’origine” and therefore “un espace logiquement orienté vers sa propre disparition” and “temporaire” (2005, 6).

If the home regime is perceived as a “common enemy”, the country of origin bears crucial importance and orientation through the idea of a “possible return” (ibid, 9). This perspective on the country of origin echoes a central theme in studies of movement and migration. Studies on so-called “diasporas” tend to insist on their “homeland orientation” (Brubaker, 2005, 5) and the omnipresent “myth of return” (Anwar, 1979; Shuval, 2000, 48). Looking again at the celebration of liberation in Rwanda, we may wonder what would happen to the project of armed

return turns out to be a success. As the space of exile dissolves and exiles become returnees, what happens to the *myth* of return once it has turned into reality?

Return as loss. The question is even more intriguing when considering that exiles who had returned to Rwanda were faced with a “country to some degree emptied of people” (Newbury, 2005, 277); by genocidal killing and flight. Therefore, liberation in 1994 has in many cases been associated with the realisation of loss. J. Kagabo, for instance, explains that one of the reasons for going to Rwanda in August 1994 was to “establish a complete assessment” (Kagabo, 1995, 106). Here, this means an assessment of how many of his family members have perished and how many survived; i.e. “to count the dead” (109). He explains to have discovered a

“histoire complètement folle. Les gens sont exterminés, les survivants ne savent pas comment ça s’est passé” (108).

A realisation of loss also for those who have taken up arms with the aim of protecting their families, and who fight a way back to Rwanda only to realise that they are all dead. It is once more J. Kagabo who notes that

“les jeunes du FPR se tuent tellement en voiture. Ils conduisent saouls, mais avec une idée en tête [...]: “On s’est battu pourquoi? Je me suis battu pour défendre ma famille, mais il n’y a plus personne...”³⁵ (117).

The myth of home. For those that arrive for the first time in Rwanda, liberation also brought with it the clash of an idealised vision³⁶ of the country with the reality of the devastation caused by genocide and war.

³⁵The panorama becomes even more complex when considering the occurrence of and wish for vengeance.

³⁶Hélène Dumas has rightly pointed out that it would be more than interesting to study in closer detail the “cultural mobilisations” around dance and music (e.g. of Cécile Kayirebwa and Muyango) for return and the images of Rwanda created through it. We will come back to this point in chapter 1, especially with regard to the Collège St-Albert in Bujumbura.

For those who returned after long years of exile, liberation has most certainly been accompanied by the realisation that the Rwanda that they had left in the 1950's, 60's or 70's was not the same as the one in the mid-90's. The anthropologists S. Jansen and S. Löfving suggest that considering the drastic changes induced by movement and violence, it might be more accurate to refer to a "myth of home" (2007, 9) than a myth of *return*. They underline that forced movement is accompanied by loss; "this includes loss of capital and entitlement, as well as dramatic disconnections from persons, objects, and environments invested with emotional attachments – often experienced as a loss of "home"" (ibid, 10).

Given that movement has been forced by the occurrence of extreme violence, it has to be born in mind that the context is characterised by "dramatic transformation such as war or socio-economic restructuring" (ibid) so that the home left behind is rarely unchanged. This is particularly true for a country that has experienced a massive extermination of its population through genocide and important movement and displacement of its population. So that in the Rwandan context, the following observation seems to be of particular pertinence: "the "home" that has been lost has not simply been left behind in another place. Rather [...] it has also been left behind in another time and is therefore often experienced as a previous "home", irrevocably lost both spatially and temporally" (ibid).

The imminent post-genocide period has for many brought with it the reality of this loss. One of the interviewees, Dr. Munyandamutsa Naasson resumes this feeling when he states that

"j'étais convaincu, c'était en 94, que je ne retournerais jamais dans ce foutu pays. Parce que un pays où n'habite pas ma mère, mes sœurs, mes frères, n'est pas un pays".

The drastic changes of what is considered to be *home* also continue in the post-liberation period. They are most visibly epitomised in the rapidly changing city-scape of Kigali. During fieldwork, many accounts of how much the city changes³⁷ – so that you would not be able to

³⁷It seems that the city changes at a much faster pace than the country side. A

recognise it even after a short absence; not to speak of a long one – have been collected. Comparing pictures of the city in 1959, 1962, 1973 1994, 2012 and those taken by the thinkers of the project *Vision 2020*, largely inspired by the economic model of the so-called *Asian Tigers*, probably most eloquently shows the changes inscribed in the land- and cityscape. It may also be worth pointing out that today it is nearly impossible to find physical traces (in the landscape) of neither the war nor of the genocide (except the traces of bullets in the parliament dating from the beginning of the genocide).

4. Operationalisation of the thesis

Given these striking features that the day of liberation brings to light, the question of reconciliation in the aftermath of genocide could also be associated with the question concerning the modalities of how to “re-peupler un pays” (Delpla).

Living with the dead. This question deserves to be addressed from several angles. First, in a post-genocide context, not only the physically absent are (symbolically) present but also the dead. As Assumpta Mugiraneza, director of the Centre IRIBA and co-author of “Enseigner l’histoire et la prévention des génocides”, explained in one of our interviews “*On vit avec les morts. Ça c’est le Rwanda*”. This presence is also more than symbolic considering that dead bodies had been horribly present for a rather long moment after the genocide, and referring once more to J. Kagabo, who quotes a friend who expressed this particular situation by declaring that “la ville sent encore la mort” (104). Even till today, it is not uncommon to stumble upon undiscovered mass graves when doing construction work. The dead are also visually present in the form of monuments dedicated to the dead. Considering this visual presence, the film-maker Kabera Eric and director of “Keepers of Memory”

tendency that some regret (or even ascribe to a vicious plan of the government, e.g. Melvin (2012)) while others hail the economic advantages of attracting foreign investment and furthering the image of a high-tech city (i.e. the installation of broadband internet) that could one day become an appreciated location for congresses and tourism; the “Switzerland of Africa” as some call it.

states in an interview:

“my country is full of graves [...] to me it’s just full of graves. If you take any road you will not go very far without seeing a mass grave, which constantly reminds you how many people have died” (Cieplak, 2009, 205).

These reflections also touch upon much-discussed contradictory claims to land. Who has the right to take the place of the dead? What does it mean to live on the very place of death? And whose claims are more legitimate? Those that have lived there for generations before being pushed into exile or those currently living there? The questions are endless.

Reconciliation beyond national borders. Second, in the light of what has been said above, we might want to consider what another of my interviewees stated: “*La Belgique c’est l’autre Rwanda. Si vous voulez vraiment toucher le Rwanda, il faut mettre un peu de sucre en Belgique*”. Given the extension of Rwandan political space beyond national frontiers, we may wonder about the resulting dynamics for public policies aiming at the creation of a pacified co-existence, as for instance the *National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation*. As the quote indicates, the actors to be considered may not be found only within the strictly speaking national frontiers of Rwanda but might as well include Rwandans residing outside these frontiers as well as their allies and networks and transnational logics, for instance in the former metropole. The quote hints to the idea that those that are in political exile today are somehow “aigri” and that in order to bring about (political) change, they need at least to be taken into consideration or best be transformed (changing from a state of bitterness with the help of “sugar”). This statement expresses the belief that political exiles can constitute a threat to the stability and peace of their home country if they are not integrated into “peace-building” efforts³⁸.

³⁸A belief also propagated in the relevant academic literature, where a frequent distinction is made between diasporas that are considered to be “peace-makers” or “peace-wreckers”, e.g. Smith and Stares (2007).

Interestingly, our interviewees insisted on the importance not only of considering the political activity of Rwandans in exile but also that of their allies and networks, especially in Belgium. A question very pertinently raised by another interviewee who mentions that “*il y a certains Belges qui en font leur histoire personnelle, qui s’impliquent comme des Rwandais tout simplement*”. One could, for instance, wonder if it was pure coincidence that during fieldwork, I discovered that Rwandans who were extremely opposed to the current government and who had left Rwanda around July 1994 are mostly associated with and supported by Belgians who lived and worked in Rwanda prior to 1994; and have rarely or never returned since.

Given this extension of political space, it could also be interesting to consider the conceptions of how Rwanda *should* be “re-populated”; not only by those that are opposed to the current government, but also by those that put into place initiatives aimed at stimulating harmonious “cohabitation” between different members of the diasporas³⁹. Furthermore, in order to fully grasp the scope of conceptions of and prescriptions of how Rwandans *should* live together, and its circulation, the very complex configurations of networks, alliances and oppositions between Rwandans and Belgians would have to be analysed in closer detail⁴⁰.

³⁹Such as for example the project entitled Project “Promouvoir ensemble l’art de vivre ensemble au sein de la diaspora des Grands Lacs Africains” that was mainly initiated by Marie-Gortetti Mukakalisa, Laurien Ntezimana and Didace Muremangingo (members of the Association Modeste et Innocent). Started in 2004, this ambitious “project of reconciliation” for the diasporas from the Great Lakes region was initially financed by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After this pilot phase of one year, the project received no more funding. However, the lack of financial support did not constitute the exclusive reason for “failure”. Indeed, as one of the interviewee personally involved in this project put it, the willingness to reconcile all categories of Rwandans living abroad was repeatedly perceived as “strange” or even “suspicious” (“On nous prend pour des fous”). We will come back to this project in chapter 4.

⁴⁰One might think of the project “Dialogue au sein de la diaspora rwandaise en Belgique” initiated by the Belgian NGO RCN Justice & Démocratie, or “Commission Diaspora” by the Belgian branch of Pax Christi. These projects integrate prominent Rwandans figures but rarely establish formal links with the projects set up by these very Rwandans.

The central puzzle.

The focus of our doctoral research has been centred around the question of how to translate the above-mentioned myth into practice. How to conceive of social relations between different categories of Rwandans – including killers to survivors, exiles and returnees – who live not only in intimate geographical but also symbolical proximity? The aim of the doctoral investigation is to shed light on this question from a micro-sociological perspective by focusing on the individual Rwandan actors that have appropriated what they consider to be reconciliation.

1. The research question & hypothesis. The general research question that has guided the present thesis is the following: *How to seize reconciliation in a society marked by genocide when the social context is characterised by massive and cyclical population movements in and out of national frontiers?*

Adopting the perspective that Rwandan reconciliation cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration this flux of populations and therefore the questions of exile and return, we are interested in social experiences of individuals. Therefore we argue that in order to study reconciliation in contemporary Rwanda, we have to examine the sense with which individuals that engage for it invest it. We will try to answer this question from a micro-sociological perspective by focusing on the local actors that engage for and have appropriated the cause of what they define to be reconciliation. And in the light of the very different experiences and walks of life, this sense given to reconciliation depends on their individual trajectory.

2. Theoretical tools.

For this purpose, we have followed the example of V. Foucher and used an emic⁴¹ definition of the term reconciliation. Therefore, we refer to individual actors of reconciliation as

⁴¹Cf. also Goodenough (1970).

“ceux qui se réclament de ce label pour justifier leur action”
(2009, 144).

Our reflection has been guided by a two-fold enquiry. On the one hand, the aim was to grasp the motivations for engaging in reconciliation. On the other, the conceptions and practices, understood as meanings and translations into practice, of it in order to shed light from a new angle on this admittedly fuzzy and “polysemic concept” (Rosoux, 2008) with the help of empirical data. In order to do this we adopt a perspective of sociology of individual militant engagement (Sawicki and Siméant, 2009). The theoretical corpus established by the sociology of individual (militant) engagement (Dauvin, Siméant and C.A.H.I.E.R., 2002; Fillieule, 2001; Cefaï and Trom, 2001) is what has been built upon. Therefore, this approach is inspired by a critical use of frame analysis by putting the accent on the sense that actors attach to their engagement. By focusing on the cognitive dimension of engagement, we give importance to the way that our interviewees express their implication. Therefore, I have analysed their way of expression inside a given cultural, social, political and historical context. As we shall see the choice for engagement for reconciliation is above all determined by the trajectory of these individuals and the way that they interpret it.

We have sought an articulation between the so-called objective and subjective dimensions of the “career”, a term often used interchangeably with “trajectory”. It is used here in the sense as it has been used by H.S. Becker in “Studies in the Sociology of Deviance”. In this book Becker refers E. C. Hughes’ definition of a “career”:

“objectively [...] as a series of statuses and clearly defined offices [...] typical sequences of positions, achievements, responsibility, and even of adventure [...]. Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him” (Becker, 1997, 102).

In the frame of this research it seems particularly promising to articulate and to “relier les deux façons d’envisager des trajectoires individuelles”

(Dubar, 1998, 73). Therefore, I will try to link up their “disposition et position” (Sommier, 2010, 117) inside Rwandan social worlds and logics and the subjective verbal expression of their reasons for engagement. Put in other words, I try to grasp how they make sense of their biography in retrospect.

3. Research design.

The empirical data has been generated through a qualitative field-study conducted between 2009 and 2011 in Rwanda and Belgium with Rwandan actors who are actively engaged since the past five years in what they define as aiming at reconciliation. The method for data generation has been qualitative biographical interviewing (semi-directive interviews) and participant observation. Interviewees were selected according to a snowball sampling method.

Although the actors studied are sociologically rather heterogeneous (with regard to age, gender or “ethnicity”) they all are part of Rwanda’s educated elite and have experienced/or still experience a sort of exile or at least an element of extraversion in their lives — although this had not been a criterion for selection. The fieldwork has indeed revealed the omnipresence of exile in the discourse of actors but also in their interpretations of reconciliation. While some were exiled in the 1950s, lived abroad for prolonged periods, studied abroad and are strongly interlinked with the international milieu today due to their education and experience others have experienced exile in refugee camps during the genocide. Still others have been exiled after the genocide, either to Europe or have spent a certain amount of time in the refugee camps of former Zaire. In any case, refugee camps seem to be a place of socialisation with the milieu of international peace-makers since all the interviewees have been hired in the camps by international NGOs or agencies as experts or translators. Another group of actors either chose to live in a state of “aller-retour” between their European place of residence and Rwanda (raising funds and support in Europe and putting in place initiatives in Rwanda) or were compelled in other cases to stay outside Rwanda, so that they set up initiatives, defined by themselves

as aiming at reconciliation, within the Rwandan diasporas.

It is interesting to note that despite these differences, they all share a very similar expression and conception of the sense of their engagement and reconciliation. They all express their trajectory, engagement and the sense of reconciliation as a rather internalised and individual conception. It is obvious that the actors studied are marked by exile so that their conceptions of reconciliation are closely linked to their trajectory.

The research design was oriented to put weight on the verbal expression of the interviewees. All interviews have been recorded and integrally transcribed. The transcriptions of which have been analysed with the help of the software package atlas.ti.

4. Research posture. The main research objective was to go beyond an idealisation or a cynical vision of these Rwandan actors as mere opportunists tapping into international funds or puppets acting on behalf of the Rwandan government. My posture is therefore not normative. The idea is to give a certain level of “sociological depth” (Lefranc, 2006, 8) to the bottom-up dimension of what is referred to as reconciliation between Rwandans. For this purpose, I have tried to “describe these policies before evaluating them” and to “submit to ordinary scientific treatment” (ibid). These questions will be further elaborated upon in chapter 1.

5. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured around four chapters. Chapter 1 localises the perspective of study of Rwandan reconciliation adopted in this dissertation. The subsequent chapters address three essential questions for the examination of individual militantism in favour of reconciliation:

Who? by exploring sociologically the profiles of these militants.

What? by presenting the meanings the terms carries for them.

How? by demonstrating the structure of extraversion that shapes individual as much as institutional practices and networks.

Chapter 1. “Locating Rwandan reconciliation”

In this first chapter of the thesis, we argue for a shift in the perspective of study of Rwandan reconciliation. The particular context that we find in Rwanda, namely the massive movement of populations through which reconciliation acquires an extra-territorial dimension and the crucial importance of the movements of exile and return, forces us to think of reconciliation to be situated between “here and there”. Therefore it is not confined to the national frontiers of Rwanda in terms of actors and meanings.

Chapter 1 begins with a review of the existing academic literature on reconciliation in Rwanda. With the help of this review, it is shown that due to a very strong polarisation between authors, it tends to be based on rather simplified and binary conceptions of Rwandan social dynamics. By seeing its society in this way, a lot of weight is given to political actors imposing reconciliation; which means that local actors have so far stayed invisible. Furthermore, the study of reconciliation is most often geographically limited to the national territory of Rwanda. Consequently, actors and initiatives spanning across borders and linking up social worlds and practices on a transnational scale have so far attracted very little attention.

It is in this sense that we describe reconciliation in Rwanda as a black box. In the remaining two sections, we will propose a shift in perspective that could offer ways to open this black box. The theoretical tools inspired by the sociology of individual militant engagement made use of are presented in further detail.

Finally, the research design will be presented. In this section research methods and techniques based on qualitative interviewing will be presented. Furthermore, given the micro-sociological approach, great care has been taken to fully account for positionality and reflexivity of the researcher while also addressing the issue of claims to knowledge in a “post-conflict” setting.

Chapter 2. “Militants of reconciliation”

Chapter 2 further delves into what has been proposed in the first one by studying in more detail those individual actors that have so far stayed invisible and take due account of the border-crossing character of their trajectory and their activity. Therefore this chapter takes a closer look at individual Rwandan actors that engage in reconciliation. In this chapter we are interested to understand their engagement in reconciliation. With the help of the sociology of engagement, we shed light on the motivations underlying this militant engagement for reconciliation of these actors. The aim is to bring to the fore the sense that this form of militantism carries for the individual studied. This issue is addressed by analysing their trajectories. We consider the objective and subjective dimension of this trajectory, thus combining an analysis of their trajectory and the way these actors make sense of it retrospectively.

The actors studied are rather heterogeneous in terms of sociological attributes. They also invest different domains of what they consider to be reconciliation activities – some practice Tai Chi, while others fund agricultural cooperatives, set up psychological help-groups or conduct action-research. Through the lenses of the biographical approach, it is striking to note that the experience of exile is the only similarity between (nearly all of) the interviewees — although this had not been a criterion for their selection. However, they have been in exile at very different moments in history, of their lives and for a different duration. Exile stands out as an experience that has crucially marked their external or geographical trajectory and is as well reflected in their subjective interpretations of it. While exile can be found as a biographical rupture, their interpretations all testify to the experience of an emotional turning point in their lives. The work of J. Siméant has already pointed out the weight of biographical ruptures for later engagement. What is remarkable in our case is the fact that it is mirrored in the narratives on engagement at a more symbolical or even spiritual level. Spirituality does rarely correspond with Christian religion but is often linked to new age or Indian philosophy. To resume, all live and describe the experience of a two-fold tuning point in their lives; while the first external

one is presented as causing a wound, the second internal one is lived as a moment of healing from the consequences of the first. And most important of all for our purpose is that they ascribe their motivation for engagement as resulting from this experience (in order to share it with the rest of the population).

Chapter 3. “Meanings of reconciliation”

The third chapter is dedicated to the question of the meanings of reconciliation. In order to understand what this concept may mean in a country marked not only by genocide but also cyclical flux of a big share of the population across national borders, we have to examine individual social experiences and representations of living together among this complexity. This reflection will break with global models of reconciliation developed so far by illuminating the use made of them by local actors. Contrary to prevalent models, local actors seem to embed their understanding of it in the experience of personal conversion and voice the idea that reconciliation is first and foremost “*une réconciliation avec soi-même*”.

This was the nearly unanimous answer to this question, whatever may be the backgrounds of the persons interviewed. One of the women interviewed is even quoted in the “Rapport sur le génocide au Rwanda de l’Organisation de l’Unité Africaine”: “Chacune d’entre nous a la responsabilité de se réconcilier avec elle-même”⁴². Others consider the fact that they returned after exile and the genocide (having lost all of their family) to Rwanda as a form of reconciliation with themselves: “*Et je suis beaucoup venu jusqu’à ce que je sois venu m’installer. Et je crois que ça c’est un bout de réconciliation avec moi-même*”. Reading this conception in the light of their trajectory, it is interesting to note again two tendencies oscillating between an internalisation of reconciliation in the face of an extraversion of their trajectory via exile. The very particular interpretation of reconciliation stands in stark contrast to the one of reconciliation as the (re-)building relationships found in the

⁴²Organisation de l’Unité Africaine. (2000). Rapport sur le génocide au Rwanda. Online available : <http://www.africaunion.org>

academic and practitioners' literature.

It is not without recalling the experience of personal healing described with regard to their turning point and the sense they make of the concept surely has to be attributed to this interpretation. However, it is also pertinent to contextualise it by considering that this very personified and internalised conception is very much in line with the spirit of a given type of social world of international peace-makers, which favour the expression of emotion, spiritual and individual healing experiences after violent conflict. In this sense, exile is not only a moment of rupture but can also be seen as a moment when new practices are acquired. Therefore, it seems of utmost importance to consider the "space of exile" beyond its purely political (opposition) dimension. The question will be addressed which social worlds of their place of exile, they frequent, which networks they evolve in and last but not least which affinities link them together. This brings us to the last point of reflection which is addressed in the final chapter.

Chapter 4. "Structures of reconciliation"

In this final chapter of the thesis, we come back to the questions that were raised at the very beginning with regard to the celebration of liberation day in Rwanda. As the space of exile dissolves and exiles become returnees, what happens to the *myth* of return once it has turned into reality? Indeed, an essential element for understanding the structural implications underlying reconciliation is the strategy of extraversion. This chapter will analyse the reverberations of massive population movements for social configurations. It shows that activities and actors span across borders and link a multiplicity of social fields. This is why we argue that Rwandan reconciliation takes place between "here and there". This extraverted dimension of reconciliation is mirrored in individual networks and practices as much as in political practices of reconciliation. This chapter thus proposes a tentative analysis of the reason why individual actors engaged on the field adopt such a strategy. It uses the tools offered by social network analysis to map the relationships between these actors and to further give insights to address this question through the

two-fold structural perspective of individual and institutional practices.

First, given the particular extraterritorial dimension of reconciliation in Rwanda, it examines more closely a new category of analysis to understand social worlds in the light of return. Here, the approach of J-F Bayart (1999) on “extraversion” is mobilised. Indeed, the position, links and lines of division between the militants can be much more comprehensively understood when placed in the perspective of extraversion. With this approach, it turns out that linkages are mainly influenced by spiritual practices that are inspired from outside Rwanda. Particular stress is laid on alternative practices, such as the *New Age*, that have so far remained invisible for the academic literature on reconciliation in Rwanda.

Second, it sheds light on extraversion with regard to political practices of reconciliation through a complex structure of extraverted networks, affinities and strategies. We will examine how the myth of return is translated into political practices. Taking seriously the very particular characteristics of post-genocide return, means interrogating public policies with regard to how the protagonists, both here and there, have imagined this very return. Essentially, this means that institutional practices have to be read in the light of the complex border-spanning positions of political actors. It is striking to note that these very practices have a heavy extra-territorial dimension by focusing on the physical return of those Rwandans that live outside the state’s borders.

Chapter 1

Locating Rwandan reconciliation

This chapter puts into perspective the location of the study of reconciliation in Rwanda. Social configurations in Rwanda are largely influenced by the massive movement of populations through which reconciliation acquires an extra-territorial dimension and the crucial importance of the movements of exile and return, forces us to conceive of reconciliation to be situated between “here and there” (Bhabha, 1994, 2). By studying reconciliation from this perspective, we are interested in how it is “formed ‘in-between’” (ibid) and argue that it is not confined to the national frontiers of Rwanda in terms of actors and meanings. This chapter’s objective is to describe the theoretical and methodological reconciliation approach of this thesis in which reconciliation is studied “from below”; i.e. focusing on individual actors that engage for it through a qualitative micro-sociology spanning beyond Rwanda’s national frontiers.

During the last decades, the prescriptions to reconcile have imposed themselves as an universalistic discourse, considered to resolve contemporary intra-state conflicts. It is in this vein that numerous so-called truth and reconciliation commissions have been set up during the last three decades. In the case of Rwanda, it was as early as 1993 (even before the genocide) that the Arusha Accords laid down the creation of a *National Unity and Reconciliation Commission* (*Komisiyo y’Igihugu*

y'Ubumwe n'Ubwiyunge, NURC)¹. After inaction during the genocide of 1994, an important number of international institutions, donors and NGOs, eager to promote what they call reconciliation between Rwandans, have been attracted to Rwanda. Thus, in the very complex Rwandan post-genocide context – where victims and culprits live in an often intimate proximity – it is with the idea of “national unity and reconciliation” that societal change is framed, especially among national political actors. A trend that can be inscribed in an emerging “global reconciliation industry” being evermore more tangible for the local populations targeted (Wilson, 2003, 383).

Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that the academic literature primarily paid attention to institutional initiatives, be they international or Rwandan, with the aim to reconcile. These works do indeed frequently adopt an evaluative rather than an analytical perspective – the result of theses evaluation eventually being very critical. Additionally, a converging academic consensus seems to emerge with regards to the idea that “the Rwandan government’s policy of national unity and reconciliation [...] represents a flawed approach” (Clark, 2010a, 145) and that it can be reduced to a “government-driven rhetoric of reconciliation” (Breed, 2006, 512). Accordingly, reconciliation in Rwanda has primarily been studied through the lenses of the government’s approach. However, this public policy has rarely been the object of study for its own sake. In order to give but one example the intriguing combination of “ubumwe” (unity) et “ubwiyunge” (reconciliation) has hardly been studied.

The shaping of Rwandan reconciliation is most often described in the literature as an imposition from above, so that it is either seen as stemming from the outside – being imposed on Rwandan national actors by international actors – or as imposed by the government on local actors. In this first chapter, we therefore propose to re-locate the perspective for studying Rwandan reconciliation. The idea is to consider

¹The *Protocol of Agreement on Power-Sharing within the Framework of a Broad-Based Transitional Government between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front* (annex III of the Accords) stipulates in Chapter IV the establishment of this Commission.

the location of reconciliation in the Rwandan context differently with regard to three aspects. First, it is put forward that new insights on reconciliation can be gained by studying Rwandan individual actors who engage for it. Second, we argue that in order to more completely grasp the dynamics of reconciliation in Rwanda, its transnational and extra-territorial dimension needs to be taken into consideration. Third, we propose another approach of studying it; namely qualitative biographical interviewing.

Structure of the chapter This chapter falls into four sections. In the first two sections, a review of the literature dealing with reconciliation in Rwanda is presented. With the help of this review, it is shown that due to a very strong polarisation between authors, it tends to be based on a rather simplified and binary conception of Rwandan social dynamics. By seeing its society in this way, a lot of weight is given to the political imposing reconciliation, so that local actors have so far stayed invisible. Furthermore, the study of reconciliation is most often geographically limited to the national territory of Rwanda.

Consequently, actors and initiatives spanning across borders and linking up social worlds and practices on a transnational scale have so far attracted but very little attention. It is in this sense that we describe reconciliation in Rwanda as a black box. In the remaining two sections, we will propose a shift in perspective that could offer ways to open this black box. The theoretical tools used and which are inspired by the sociology of individual militant engagement are presented in further detail. Finally, the research design — i.e. research methods and techniques based on qualitative interviewing — will be presented. Furthermore, given the micro-sociological approach, great care has been taken to critically account for issues of positionality while also addressing the issue of claims to knowledge in a post-conflict setting.

1.1 Exotic imaginary and scholarship on Rwanda

In *Rwanda – Le réel et les récits* Catherine Coquio explains that Rwanda in the eyes of Western explorers and colonisers “was at the same time

the heart of mysterious Africa and the vanishing point of the exotic imaginary” (2004, 21). The then kingdom of Rwanda constituted for a long time a “dark spot of the colonial cartography” and the centre of a particular “exotic prestige” (21) nourished by the “ancient mythology of the sources of the Nile” (Chrétien, 2000, 24). Being convinced of the inequality of the human *races* and the superiority of their own culture and heritage, the first Europeans to set foot in Rwanda were surprised on two accounts. On the one hand, the search for the sources of the Nile, inspired by Greek mythology and the promise of a sacred land, animated many so-called explorers. They expected to find the “country of the moon” (Coquio, 2004, 40) characterised by lakes, mountains, volcanoes and populated by pygmies and giants (ibid, 41). As noted by Coquio, the “discovery” in this part of Africa took the form of a “passion to believe at the same time in wonders and to recognise them” (ibid). This is why they *recognised* these particular green and hilly geographical features in the Rwandan landscape that “dazzled the whites” after “months of crossing dry forest and desert to the east and thickly forested areas to the west” (Chrétien, 2000, 24). On the other hand, they found

“Un royaume structuré, constitué sur une généalogie dynastique pluriséculaire, où le pouvoir et les charges se partageaient, au prix de tensions subtiles, entre une Cour royale, des fiefs et des clans lignagers, ainsi qu’entre trois chefferies [...], enfin entre trois groupes différenciés nommés Tutsi, Hutu et Twa. Ils découvraient donc une culture complexe, un système politique puissant [...] fait d’un gouvernement, d’une population et d’un territoire. Bref, un état.” (Coquio, 2004, 32).

This “discovery” did not match with their preconception of the inferiority of Africans. In face of this cognitive dissonance, the *Hamitic hypothesis* provided a useful tool for understanding and classing experience². This hypothesis states indeed that “everything of value ever found in Africa was brought there by the Hamites, allegedly a branch of Caucasian race” (Sanders, 1969, 521). This pseudo-academic construction then served to “explain the existence of a refined civilisation

²Cf. Semujanga (1998) and Rutayisire (2001)

in the very heart of Africa” (Coquio, 2004, pp. 32)³. And it is from this point onwards that the Abatutsi were seen as “Europeans under a black skin” (ibid, 33)⁴. The outsiders’ adoration for a kingdom that had become mythical in their eyes took on “hysterical” (41) forms and can probably explain the emotional charge that seems to overlay and colour most of the writings on Rwanda. According to Coquio, Europeans early on told

“L’histoire immémoriale des Twa, peuple de Pygmées chasseurs, premiers occupants de ces terres, refoulés dans les forêts par les Hutu, peuple de Bantous agriculteurs, bientôt promis à la domination fatale des Tutsi, peuple de Hamites pasteurs et guerriers venus du Nord” (2004, 25).

From the moment on that Europeans’ “racial frenzy” (22) entered into contact with Rwandan social reality, an oppressing mixture of imposition and appropriation of narratives fed by an “obsessional ethnography” (24) began to take hold and was bound to have tangible consequences. It is important to note that the Abatwa early on were marginalised from historical and political narratives⁵ so that dynamics then were focused on a “merciless binary mechanism - Hutu/Tutsi” (26). Whether ‘ethnic’ categories have been imported by Europeans or whether they simply took up what they found is subject to fervent debate in the scholarly community⁶. In the frame of this thesis let it suffice to say that “Westerners” - be they scholars, politicians or journalists - have been extremely enthusiastic about these “exotic fantasies” (23) and relayed it to scholarship on Rwanda⁷. All in all, the observed fascination that outsiders hold for Rwanda (in the most positive and negative extremes)

³See on this point also (Strauss, 2008b, pp. 20)

⁴Coquio notes that the “same human group in Rwanda has in fact been sublimed, aestheticised, privileged and then stigmatised and exterminated” (21).

⁵Indeed, rare are the academic works that explore the culturally central role of Abatwa in the development of arts, dance and music. More often than not, they are merely portrayed as victims and marginalised populations.

⁶For a good overview on the debate and the different arguments, cf. “Peuplement du Rwanda - Enjeux et perspectives”(Ntaganda, 2002).

⁷However, the impact of the writings of Alexis Kagame in establishing these stereotypical representations in the writing of history should not be ignored either.

engenders excessive emotions in those that deal with questions related to Rwanda. Indeed, the exposition to extreme forms of violence is psychologically very challenging for researchers. On the one hand, especially in the social sciences researchers are rarely equipped with the relevant therapeutical tools to deal with the impact their research may have on the ones observed and neither to deal with the traces his exposition to the field may leave on him/her. On the other, academia is supposed to be a domain free from the expression of emotions or personal reactions. As a consequence, this dimension of researching Rwanda is often confined to tacit understandings so that it stays implicit more often than not. However, even when not spelled out directly, it is remarkable in at least two ways. Indeed, we argue that colonial times resonate in academic writing on Rwanda up to today. First, it can be observed in the normative ontology of research on reconciliation in Rwanda. And second, scholarship seems to be structured around the binary mechanic mentioned above and as a consequence is deeply polarised. We will examine these two points in turn below.

1.1.1 The gnosis of Rwandan reconciliation

“Coming from Europeans, this word [reconciliation] has incontestably a paternalist and contemptuous connotation since ‘the Blacks’ are perceived as children who are invited to make a peace after a struggle” (Rosoux (2008))⁸

In a chapter entitled “Reconciliation as a peace-building process”, V. Rosoux underlines that the notion of reconciliation, especially when invoked by a former coloniser, carries a condescending meaning. The same holds true for the academic study of Rwandan reconciliation. When closely analysing the articles treating this issue, the question imposes itself whether the domain of peace and conflict studies has yet to be “decolonised”⁹? Indeed, with regard to our object of study, it can be

⁸V. Rosoux is quoting Immaculée Mukarwego.

⁹In her article “Decolonizing Conflict Resolution” P.O. Walker asserts that “Western societies’ power and willingness to implement their models without consideration of Indigenous worldviews perpetuates ontological violence, the forceful introduction

wondered whether certain colonial notions can be detected in the literature with regard to its manifest normative and ethnocentric underpinnings.

In the introduction to the special issue on Rwanda in the “Journal of Genocide Research”, N. Eltringham notes that “two pervasive characteristics of “reconciliatory” interventions” are “the presence of a virtual model of how “reconciliation” should proceed and that “reconciliation” can only proceed within the parameters of that visible, officially-sanctioned model” (2009, 5). It can be argued that the same applies to the academic writings on reconciliation. Most of the authors open or close their article with their personal conviction of *how* Rwandan reconciliation *should* be implemented. Rare are the articles that do not close with a range of political recommendations either addressed to the Rwandan government, the international “community” or other bodies¹⁰. Zorbas suggests that “some rethinking of development interventions along the lines in this paper is urgently required” (2004, 5), whereas Buckley-Zistel urges that “to focus on the micro level should be the first premise in planning wider national, as well as justice-related, reconciliation policies. [...] Only through changing the way Rwandans relate to each other today can future ethnicity-related violence be prevented” (2006*b*, 148).

A last point most clearly illustrates the normative tone that underlies an important number of publications. The following quote is an extract from the published PhD thesis of the Flemish scholar F. Reyntjens. At the end of the introduction of the book, he refers to a book by R. Louis which states that “failure characterised German colonialism in Ruanda-Urundi more than success”. In the face of this already very curious evaluation (given that other German colonial enterprises resulted in the genocide of the Herero), F. Reyntjens adds another one by concluding that

“ce jugement est sans doute trop dur si l’on se rend compte

of one worldview to the extent that it marginalizes or suppresses another worldview” (Walker, 2004, 546). Even though the questions asked in this article are very pertinent, the author’s conception of “Indigenous” borders on a rather simplifying essentialism.

¹⁰This is not only limited to the case of Rwanda, but can also be inscribed in the hands-on-character of peace and conflict studies in general.

que l'Allemagne n'a réellement administré le Rwanda que pendant moins de dix ans" (Reyntjens, 1985, 30).

Against this backdrop, the questions posed by V.Y. Mudimbe concerning African *gnosis* spring to mind:

"Who is speaking about it? Who has the right and the credentials to produce it, describe it, comment upon it, or at least present opinions about it?" (Mudimbe, 1988, x).

Even though Mudimbe is not explicitly writing on reconciliation, his line of argument can be transposed with quite some pertinence to the subject under study here. It is significant to address the question of who is considered legitimate to produce knowledge and expertise on Rwandan reconciliation. In this context, it is important to note that works produced by Rwandan scholars are rarely taken into consideration by Western scholars. An illustrative example of this is the "commemorative issue of *Peace Review*" edited by M. Hron which in its introduction stipulates that it "endeavoured to be as inclusive and representative as possible. The call for papers solicited submissions from Westerners and Rwandans alike" (Hron, 2009a, p. 278). Yet, all the authors are non-Rwandan, the section dedicated to "submissions" from Rwandans are interviews conducted by the editor with J. Ndwaniye, C. Sekajugo, E. Kabera and O. Gaikere Katese. The same can be said of the special issue in *Journal of Genocide Research* directed by N. Eltringham. The relative neglect of Rwandan contributions can partially be explained by the limited access to mainstream sources of publication by Rwandan scholars. Their work is often much more difficult to access in practical terms than that of scholars who publish in well-known journals. Nonetheless, the impression of a relative isolation of Rwandan scholarly production remains.

P. Uvin underlines that "the new post-conflict agenda allows donors to make life and death decisions that are often bound to be wrong; yet those suffering the consequences of these errors are never those making the decisions" (Uvin, 2001a, 185). So one can wonder which type of

academic study on the most “effective” (Kaufman, 2006) peace-building mechanisms to employ will policy makers use to implement their policy. M. Eastmond very rightly points out that nowadays peace-building is grounded on “the liberal model” i.e. “liberal democracy, a market economy, and human rights” (2010, 3), and that these initiatives take on characteristics of “interventionism in which Western powers rebuild state order and reconstruct war-torn societies for the sake of global stability and security” while becoming more and more “coercive operations” (2010, p. 4). This approach sharply brings to mind the idea of “eurocentrism” which “marks contemporary culture imposing itself as a strongly conditioning model for some and a deculturation for others” (Mudimbe, 1988, xi, quoting I. Sachs). These elements contribute to the impression of the emergence of a discourse on reconciliation by outsiders for outsiders.

1.1.2 The polarisation of academic debate

Above, we have pointed to the binary reading that since the first contact between of Europeans with Rwanda, has been applied to this society. This binary reading is also very strongly present in contemporary academic debates on Rwanda.

While many concur that the divergent views on Rwandan history constitute a “war of memories” between Rwandans (Licata, Klein and Gely, 2007), we argue that this war equally takes place between some scholars who participate in the elaboration of highly conflictual academic discourses on Rwanda. So that in order to do “conflict analysis” it is interesting to also sociologically analyse the conflicts between scholars writing on Rwanda.

Indeed, P. Uvin remarks that “intense degree of politicization of even the most basic concepts and research questions” (2001, p. 76) can be observed. According to this author, the “division¹¹ follows lines of personal animosity, political ideology, and often ethnicity¹²” (ibid). This

¹¹For further information, on the divisions of the scientific community, consult Bernault, 1998; De Villers, 1995; Dumas, 2010.

¹²The term is used with caution here; due to the problematic implications it can carry and the question of its pertinence in the Rwandan context Amselle and M’bokolo

deep division is what we consider to be a filter or looking glass through which research data is processed. The three factors identified by P. Uvin are translated into a binary and opposed positioning towards the current (and pre-genocide) Rwandan government. While some refer to a “prevailing positive assessments of Rwanda’s post-genocide recovery” (Straus and Waldorf, 2011, 6) others put forward that

“Il est difficile de se prémunir contre “l’idée reçue” selon laquelle l’hostilité, en général, et en l’occurrence, l’hostilité au Rwanda, plus précisément l’hostilité au FPR, est un gage d’objectivité” (Sebasoni, 2009, 85).

The “merciless binary mechanism” pinpointed by C. Coquio is therefore transposed to analysis of Rwandan contemporary politics; so that writers easily speak of a “Hutu” or “Tutsi” government, while the current government is equated as being Tutsi¹³. And as S. Turner mentions “many a scholar has thus been drawn into the futile dilemma of being called pro-Hutu or pro-Tutsi” (p. 1178). Here it is important to note that this debate is not at all limited to Rwandans, but very much includes non-Rwandan scholars and militants. It is striking that numerous authors seem to willingly take position in this constellation. Furthermore, the cross-cutting character of polarisation merits to be noticed. With regard to the Belgian context, P. Uvin points out a certain affinity between “the Flemish” and the “Habyarimana-Hutu regime” and that “their foremost scholars reflect this position”. He explains this affinity with the argument that “they identified with the oppressed Hutu masses, seeing a parallel between Hutu and Flemish disenfranchisement from ruling aristocracies” (2001*b*, 77). This tendency has certainly been observed during fieldwork even though additional well-founded arguments are needed to explore seriously these cross-cutting dividing lines in the Rwandan and Belgian conflict¹⁴.

(1985).

¹³This is the reason why criticism of the currently governing party can acquire stark racist connotations (cf. Péan (2005) or Kuperman (2004)).

¹⁴For more information on the divisions of the scientific community, consult (Bernault, 1998; De Villers, 1995).

In many cases, therefore, scientific objectivity gives way to political judgment and a large share of the literature is concerned with the evaluation of reconciliation, so that S. Straus and L. Waldorf stipulate that “the principal source of disagreement is how to understand and evaluate Rwanda’s post-genocide recovery in both normative and theoretical terms” (2011, 5). Even though there are of course exceptions to the rule it appears that this positioning colours the analysis of many a scholars. This leads to parallel debates which, at different degrees, constitute mutually exclusive spaces of discussion and creation of knowledge. Combined with the relative neglect of Rwandan scientific production, these parallel debates leave the impression of the emergence of a discourse on reconciliation produced by outsiders for outsiders.

To cut a long argument short, this evaluative and normative positioning structures how authors frame the essential issues underlying the very idea of reconciliation. The existing polarisation impacts the readings of Rwandan social relations, prior and after the genocide. Evaluations of reconciliation can vary from acclaim to disapproval. Let us look at the two extremes. Here the cover of S. Kinzer’s book is a good illustration:

“Killers and survivors have embarked on a breathtaking path toward reconciliation, and Rwanda has become one of the most promising countries in the developing world” (Kinzer, 2008, cover).

The opposed evaluative stance can involve total disapproval, especially with regard to the question of links between governmental policy and so-called civil society:

“Les figures imposées de l’unité nationale et de la réconciliation constituent une forme d’oppression d’Etat qui pèse sur la vie quotidienne du peuple” (Thomson, 2010, 47).

To sum up, the focus of attention is rarely put on the social and political processes that structure reconciliation. Consequently, two blind-spots in the literature have been detected: the invisibility of local actors and the absence of a definition of reconciliation. Two points that we will elaborate on in further detail below.

1.2 Reading Rwandan social relations

This backdrop is of crucial importance for understanding the academic conceptions of reconciliation. It is since the time of the colonial intrusion that outsiders' writings are posing an external regard on Rwanda and have therefore placed the debate on social relations in a space that is somehow situated outside Rwanda and mostly nourished by polarised scholars and "experts". In order to understand how reconciliation is understood, we need to examine how social relations between Rwandans are read. It is, in fact, depending on these readings how reconciliation in contemporary Rwanda is understood.

In the remainder of this section, we shed light on two dimensions of the existing academic readings of reconciliation. First, the **conceptual and theoretical readings** are examined. Four points have been identified here: the parties involved, the absence of a definition, its relational character and a top-down character. Second, this section focuses on the question of **actors** of reconciliation that have so far been studied and concludes that individual militants have so far remained invisible.

1.2.1 Conceptualising reconciliation

The review of the literature suggests that a focal point with regard to the conceptualisation of reconciliation are divergent historical readings of social relations. These interpretations in turn influence contemporary evaluation. As it was mentioned above, the rather polarised positioning of many authors structures how they frame the essential issues underlying the very idea of reconciliation. An author's position may vary as to whether prior to colonisation social relations were harmonious or not. When assuming that relations between different groups of Rwandan society have always been conflictual, conciliation makes more sense than re-conciliation.

In order to mention just one example, we will refer to the posthumously published PhD thesis of Allison Des Forges (2011). The editor, D. Newbury, changes the historical introduction written by A. Des Forges (without showing the original version) in order to update it. He

explains that his reading of social relations was not shared by Des Forges but that new research contradicting her vision needs to be taken into consideration (in fact the texts he cites are primarily his own). The point of disagreement resides mainly in how they conceive of social organisation during times of royalty. Where A. Des Forges sees a complex yet rather harmonious social system, D. Newbury refers to the “violence” that “increasingly became the currency of the Court politics” (Des Forges, 2011, xxxv). Therefore, he literally re-writes her version of history¹⁵.

The question underlying this interminable discussion is the quality and nature of social relations in Rwanda prior to colonisation. Most attention is given to the question of whether Abahutu and Abatutsi lived in harmony or not. Often social organisation is summed up by assuming that the royal court represented the Abatutsi and that the rest of the population is equated with being Abahutu. In this way, the binary reading can be found again¹⁶. This vision has an impact on how “living together” is perceived today.

In the same line, little is known and investigated about lineages and clans that were cross-cutting elements of social organisation. As a consequence, the stress is often put on elements that divided society rather than on those that united. Therefore, we agree with J. Rumiya (1992) who notes that the premises for inequality within Rwandan society are sought in the structures of pre-colonial society at the risk of obliterating the upheaval created through the arrival of missionaries¹⁷ and colonial conquest. We will come back later to the important impact that the

¹⁵During her lifetime A. Des Forges was perceived as “pro-government”; recently, however, her work is more and more incorporated in writings that tend to be situated on the other end of the spectrum.

¹⁶Often the European model of feudalism is transposed as a model for reading Rwandan pre-colonial society. This of course has normative implications since this model of society is considered as socially “unjust” in the West today. Note also that many authors do not hesitate to use the concept of “race” to describe relations between Rwandans (i.e. Newbury in the above-mentioned text).

¹⁷He demonstrates that the *corvée* imposed by the first missionaries on Rwandans can be considered as heavy or even heavier for society at large than the so-called *ubuhake*, sometimes depicted as the tool of oppression of the royalty of the population. The radical changed introduced through missionaries’ activity is also studied in Vidal (1974).

shift of support by colonial rulers of elites had on Rwandan society.

Reconciling whom?

Since this moment, society is seen as being composed of homogeneous blocks so that reconciliation becomes possible and necessary. This brings along a particular conception of reconciliation. First, the different fragments of Rwandan society are portrayed as rather homogeneous and static and are seen as mutual enemies. S. Thomson states that “[t]he policy is designed to promote unity between Tutsi and Hutu, by creating one Rwanda for all Rwandans” (Thomson, 2009a, 314). Other authors treating the policy of reconciliation argue in a very similar way. For instance, McLean Hilker who argues that “a key plank of the RPF-dominated Government’s “reconciliation strategy” has been to create a unified “Rwandan” identity and to rid society of the “divisive” identities “Hutu”, “Tutsi” and “Twa” (McLean Hilker, 2009, 82). To show that these are not isolated cases, another example taken from an article by L. Waldorf presents the same approach: “In its reconciliation policies, the government seeks to (re)create the non-ethnic, harmonious society that supposedly existed before colonialism and Catholicism practised divide and rule on Rwanda” (Waldorf, 2009, 103). J. Melvin refers to an “encounter” between “perpetrators and survivors” (2010, 935). Reading the existing literature on reconciliation one can wonder whether these definitions do justice to the high complexity of fault-lines traversing Rwandan society (e.g. region of origin, country of exile, socio-economic status, country or city dwellers, etc.). In other words, the issue of towards who reconciliation is targeted remains critical.

The absence of a consensual definition

Although the concept of reconciliation is readily referred to in the scientific literature, few explicit definitions can be found of it. V. Rosoux refers to a “polysemic concept” (2008). It appears that so far no consensus neither as to its exact meaning nor as to the validity of the hypothesis that reconciliation is a necessary condition for peace could be reached. To mention one example, Kaufman stipulates that “stable

peace [...] requires not just a political settlement but also reconciliation” (2006, 206) while noting that “[e]vidence that reconciliation initiatives promote peace are sparse” (p. 212). The often-cited formula “Reconciliation = Closure + Healing” put forward by J. Galtung (2001, 4) gives the impression of a somewhat simplified conception. What applies to reconciliation in general, is most certainly true for reconciliation in Rwanda.

Numerous are the researchers working on Rwanda to note that the literature on reconciliation is “under-theorized and under-developed” (Zorbas, 2009, p. 130). And even though questions such as “What does reconciliation after genocide mean?” (ibid) are abundant, the answers are rather sparse. In fact, most of the authors do not explicitly define the term - even though many use it in their title (e.g. Mgbako, 2005; Ntaganda, 2002; Kamanzi, 2004). In an article entitled “Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda”, E. Zorbas only defines reconciliation by referring to a “a societal or macro-level process, the necessary groundwork for the very private process of individual reconciliation to become thinkable” in a footnote (2004, p. 30).

Concerning reconciliation policy, it is often rather loosely defined. Thomson in “La politique d’unité et de réconciliation nationale au Rwanda: figures imposées et résistance au quotidien”, for instance, mentions that the policy of reconciliation encourages

“une réconciliation entre les survivants du génocide et ceux qui l’ont perpétré”(51).

All in all, our understanding of contemporary reconciliation could be nourished by in-depth analysis of its historical socio-genèse. For instance, exhaustive analysis of the “Urugwiro Talks”, i.e. the reflection meetings held in the office of the president of the Republic from May 1998 to March 1999 that lay the foundation for the establishment of the NURC (cf., e.g. Ensign Bertrand, 2010; Clark, P., 2010) could be very indicative.

To conclude, in the light of the very divergent points of views on contemporary Rwanda and the absence of a definition, the meaning of reconciliation so far lies in the eye of the beholder. In a recent article, J.

Melvin (2012) refers to the “veneer” of reconciliation. She argues that reconciliation serves as a veneer for the Rwandan government to cover up other hidden policy aims (i.e. development) and human rights abuses. However, it could be argued that the concept of reconciliation is also used as a veneer by academia and often serves as a pretext to address other (normative) issues, such as evaluations of human rights and democracy in Rwanda. In the end, even though most of the authors aim to improve the understanding of reconciliation in Rwanda, most of them avoid the very essential clarification of the term¹⁸.

Reconciliation as a relation

In fact, the bewildering complexity of the uses of the term reconciliation, V. Rosoux has proposed a classification of existing approaches in the literature. In figure 3.2 this classification is reproduced in the form of a schema put up by the author herself.

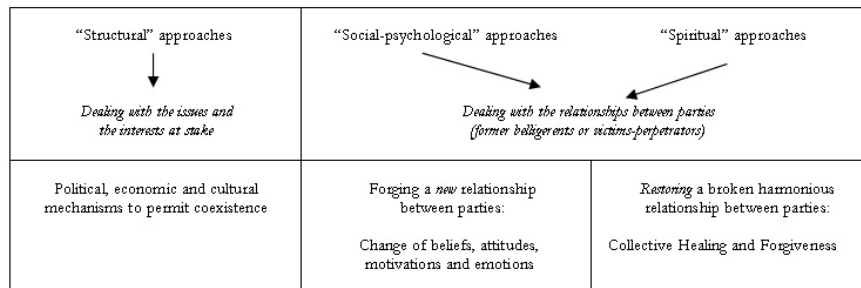


Figure 1.1: A classification of three approaches to reconciliation according to Rosoux (2008).

It distinguishes approaches according to their way of reading reconciliation through either “structural”, “social-psychological” or “spiritual” lenses. All these three approaches have in common that they are interested in the way that relations and/or coexistence can be re-

¹⁸It could be interesting to note at this point that the *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix* together with the South African *Institute for Justice and Reconciliation* has recently produced a “Rwandan Reconciliation Barometer” set out to quantitatively measure the state of reconciliation in Rwanda. Although the quantification of this admittedly fuzzy concept is certainly questionable, this study could potentially provide much needed clarification based on “homegrown” data.

established between antagonistic groups after violent conflict. This is why we argue that reconciliation has been so far foremost conceptualised as a relation.

First of all, in line with the works of P. Lederach and others, many authors tend to associate reconciliation with the “rebuilding of relationships” (Melvin, 2010, 935). P. Clark also explains that “reconciliation involves the rebuilding of fractured individual and communal relationships after conflict, with a view towards encouraging meaningful interaction and cooperation between former antagonists” (Clark, 2010*b*, 44). reconciliation is therefore seen as a relation between two antagonistic groups.

Secondly, keeping this in the back of our minds this conception founded on a relation with an ‘other’, it is pertinent to question who the parties of this relation actually are. J. Melvin speaks of an “encounter” between “perpetrators and survivors” (p. 935). This resonates with what has been pointed out above about the question of who is to reconcile with whom, which created the impression of a society made up of two rather monolithic groups.

Reconciliation from above

Although little analysis has been conducted on the formal functioning of the public policy of reconciliation (e.g. “National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation” from 2007, that guides political action in the domain or the exact functioning of the NURC), some points are recurring.

First, the idea is put forward that reconciliation is imposed on Rwandans from above by the *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF) and that the population in general is merely a passive recipient of this policy (that it resists, cf. Thomson (2009*b*)). Bromley, for instance, refers to the RPF as the “midwife” (Bromley, 2009, 183) of reconciliation which clearly illustrates how much the ruling party is seen as the sole significant actor. In the same manner, Buckley-Zistel states that “the government fabricates unity without reconciliation” (Buckley-Zistel, 2006*a*, 102). Grohmann also is convinced that “the top-down approach of the Rwandan government negates the daily reality of its people” (Grohmann,

2009, 16).

Second, the ruling party/government is portrayed as a unitary and homogeneous actor. E. Zorbas, for instance, explains that “[t]hough the RPF is not a homogeneous group, my premise is that there is substantial consensus on key issues within the influential circle around Paul Kagame. I thus use “RPF” as shorthand for this small circle of people.” (Zorbas, 2009, p.143).

Third, literature is based on the premise that only one reconciliation discourse/narrative exists throughout Rwanda. To cite just one example, Bromley (2009, 183) speaks of a “state-sponsored discourse of reconciliation which is at odds with the day-to-day realities of those in Rwanda trying to live with the pressures and tensions of an uneasy co-existence” (cf. also Pottier).

Finally, research is mostly based on the simplified idea that a policy exists as an independent unit that does not necessitate analysis. Consequently, when referring to the government’s approach to reconciliation authors easily refer to “its unity and reconciliation policy” (Buckley-Zistel, 2006a, 103) which then is sometimes resumed in very simplistic terms (so that analysis does rarely consider the elaboration, actors involved or structure of decision-making).

1.2.2 The invisibility of local actors

One of the most recent books on Rwanda states that “few scholarly books have been written on post-genocide Rwanda” (Straus and Waldorf, 2011, 5). The existing works tend to privilege a top-down and outsider’s perspective and are largely dedicated to top-down initiatives; be they stemming from international institutions (e.g. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) or the Rwandan government (e.g. gacaca or the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission). This is by no means specific to the Rwandan context, M. Eastmond notes that “as a highly normative formula with universalist claims, the reconciliation discourse tends to make context a blind spot [...] it leaves out the social conditions, uncertainties, and power asymmetries that mediate how its measures are interpreted and acted on by the various local actors

involved” (2010, p. 5).

Below, we will provide a non-exhaustive overview on the perspectives from which academia has so far analysed Rwandan reconciliation (the prevailing perspectives are visualised in figure 1.2 below).

International “community”

After deadly silence and inaction by the international “community” during the genocide, governments and international institutions have been hard pressed to take part in and impose their vision on “reconstruction” and “reconciliation” efforts in Rwanda. Buckley-Zistel explains that “all donors¹⁹ have made a considerable effort to promote the liberal peace agenda through supporting governance projects and institution-building; there has been a dramatic increase in donors’ willingness to intervene in those fashionable areas of social and political engineering” to an “unprecedented” extent (Buckley-Zistel, 2008, 29-30). In this sense it is not surprising that a large share of the literature is dedicated to initiatives stemming from this actor. Some examples are Clark and Kaufman (2008), Uvin (2001*a*), or Shyaka (2004).

Rwandan government

Some studies have also been dedicated to the Rwandan government’s “National Unity and Reconciliation Policy” (e.g Thomson, 2010 or Clark, 2010) or gacaca which has been the object of the book “The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice Without Lawyers” by P. Clark (2010*b*) and a PhD thesis under preparation by H. Dumas.

Many of the other works strongly reflect the normative approach mentioned above, are mainly focused on evaluating the government’s policies in the domain and tend to be very critical. A. Kohen, M. Zanchelli and L. Drake declare a “lack of progress toward genuine reconciliation to date” by the “Rwandan political leadership” (Kohen, Zanchelli

¹⁹For a comprehensive overview on the role of the international development community in peace building in Rwanda, cf. (Buckley-Zistel, 2008).

and Drake, 2011, 3). That is why they also suggest that “with an historical consensus on past human rights abuses as a solid foundation, the Rwandan government would then need to overhaul a number of its post-genocide policies to truly encourage political reconciliation between Hutu and Tutsi groups” (20). Not only does this suggest that reconciliation in contemporary Rwanda is not “genuine”, that it is not “truly” promoted but also that it should happen between “Hutu and Tutsi groups”.

F. Reyntjens, ten years after the genocide evaluated the situation as “Rwanda is experiencing not democracy and reconciliation but dictatorship and exclusion” (Reyntjens, 2004, 177). S. Thomson in 2010 referred to a

“trompeuse apparence d’unité nationale et de réconciliation”
(Thomson, 2010, 45).

It is interesting to observe that the measurement of success or failure of reconciliation is ascribed to the nature of measures or (non-)action by the national political leadership. The absence of “genuine” reconciliation or the “flawed approach” to it (Clark, 2010a) is then explained through a negative evaluation of government measures in place. R. Lemarchand criticises legislation with regard to genocide denial²⁰. J. Sarkin (2001) is dissatisfied with the absence of a “truth and reconciliation commission” because “catharsis and reconciliation can be the fruits”²¹. C. Vidal (2004) puts forward that the way memorials are conceptualised, namely the exposure of skeletons, is a hindrance to reconciliation since it not only constitutes a “violence symbolique” by the government but also serves as a constant reminder of the fact that one part of Rwandans killed another.

²⁰ “When one considers the restrictions placed on “revisionism, denial and trivialization” the prospects for any such effort towards reconciliation are out of the question” (Lemarchand, 2006, 30).

²¹ He adds the very helpful recommendation that “because so many of the Rwandan people are both rural and illiterate, in order to reach the widest audience possible, its report should be broadcast over national radio” (172)

International NGOs

A great deal of practitioners' and academics' works have been focused the participation of international NGOs (such as CARE, World Vision, Search for Common Ground, etc.) in the "peace-building" process in Rwanda. Here, the accent is also often put on the institutional approach to reconciliation (e.g. (Fisher, 2005)).

Rwandan population

Several studies have been conducted dealing with the attitudes of local population to the public reconciliation policy (e.g. Thomson, 2009a or Burnet, 2005). There are also studies on the so-called "justes" and their position in contemporary Rwanda (e.g. Penalty Reform International, 2004). Here one could also refer to the extensive journalistic portrait that J. Hatzfeld has constituted of post-genocide society (Hatzfeld, 2010). It has been pointed out that "although both research and practice have often focused on state-building and institutional reconstruction, considerably less is known of the ways in which the intended beneficiaries make sense of and deal with the various external efforts at reconciliation and the outcomes of such encounters" (Eastmond, 2010, 4). In the case of Rwanda; however, several studies have been conducted dealing with the attitudes of local population to the public reconciliation policy. Those are mainly studies positing at local "resistance" to reconciliation (e.g. the PhD Thesis of S. Thomson entitled *Resisting Reconciliation: State Power and Everyday Life in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Thomson, 2009b)).²²

Rwandan militants

Researchers, practitioners and policy-makers alike concur as to the significant role of local actors, or "civil society", for reconciliation. V. Rosoux, for instance, underlines that reconciliation "must proceed bottom-up and top-down simultaneously" and that "middle-level leaders such

²²See also: *Genocide Lives in Us: Amplified Silence and the Politics of Memory in Rwanda*, (Burnet, 2005)

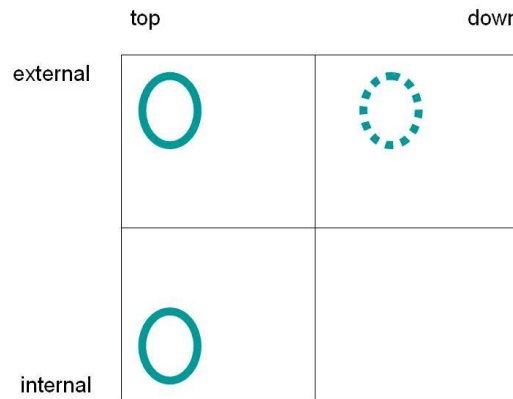


Figure 1.2: Prevailing angles of analysis of Rwandan reconciliation.

as prominent figures in ethnic, religious, economic, academic, intellectual, cultural or artistic circles, play an important role to initiate and implement policies of reconciliation” (2008, p. 552, cf. also Grohmann, p. 16). Several authors do indeed mention the existence of these actors in Rwanda, and the fact that they contribute to national reconciliation (e.g. Buckley-Zistel, 2006, p. 147; Rosoux, 2006; Grohmann, p. 16). However, little is known of the sociological features of these actors. Therefore, the word “invisibility” is used to indicate that these actors have so far not been the object as such of an academic study.

The relative absence of detailed description of these actors could be due to two prevailing understandings of their position in Rwandan society. As demonstrated in our discussion of the polarisation of the academic debate above, the beliefs in a certain functioning of Rwandan society determine to a large extent the understanding of the practices of the actors that we are interested in. First, many seem to think that

“les organisations de la société civile et toutes autres formes
de vie associative n’existent que sur ordre du gouvernement”
(Thomson, 2010, 46).

These authors attach great importance to the political structure that renders local actors somewhat passive followers of national policy. Grohmann, for instance, argues that “caused by the very policies of the government,

no NGO, church, or institution can shirk its duties and refrain from being somehow involved “in reconciliation” (2). Indeed, if local actors are considered a relay of the government, there is no need to study or mention them independently of government actions.

Second, other approaches focus on the massive presence of international donors and the consequent availability of funds for so-called “reconciliation activities”. Within this frame of analysis local actors are seen as rather strategic, trying to tap into international resources and adapting their action in function of international funding schemes. Inside this perspective, Rwandan militants do not necessarily need to be studied in their own right since their action is more a result of adaption than a self-defined agenda.

As a consequence, not much in-depth empirical analysis of Rwandan individual actors has been produced, so that they have largely remained invisible in the literature. Nonetheless, fieldwork has clearly indicated the empirical relevance of these actors in contemporary Rwanda. When accompanying the members of the *Association Modeste et Innocent*, which will be presented in further detail below, during their activities in rural Southern Rwanda it became perceptible that these individual militants have an important and visible role in society. Indeed, their white jeep decorated with their logo attracted great numbers of people in the villages. And after their workshop, the inhabitants of the village waited for them with a meal and cold drink for a chat and to send them home refreshed and with a full belly. Furthermore, it can be noted that their active engagement for a cause that has numerous critics and staunch opponents sets them apart in a very particular way. Indeed, as T. Brudholm and V. Rosoux (2009) show the very idea of “forgiveness” and “reconciliation” can be met with “resistance” in the Rwandan context. Accordingly, the relevant literature had a lot to gain by systematic study of who, sociologically speaking, these actors are to allow for a more dynamic and complex model of post-genocide reconciliation in Rwanda. That is why we argue for an approach to Rwandan reconciliation via the study of actors.

To conclude this section, let us sum up the most important ele-

ments mentioned above for the analysis to come. The polarisation of the academic debate results in a marked politicisation of research. The importance and the weight accorded to the political in the functioning of Rwandan society leads to a very particular reading of political and social dynamics with regard to reconciliation. Whereas the prevailing conceptions seem to refer to a top-down movement that is either situated within the national frontiers of Rwanda, or implies the one-way movement from international actors imposing their version of reconciliation on Rwandans, we would like to draw attention to the fact that reconciliation is located “in-between” these geographical spaces. In fact, it is important to give more complexity to the phenomenon studied by acknowledging the movement of actors and conceptions. Instead of basing the analysis on a uni-directional top-down model, the thesis proposes to think reconciliation as a practice that is at the same time acquired and imposed.

1.3 Opening the black box

In this section, we will describe the approaches with which we propose to open the black box by re-situating it sociologically and geographically; in terms of actors studied and methods used. The idea is to contribute to the academic literature dedicated to post-genocide Rwanda by making use of a political sociology approach. More specifically, we wish to propose a sociology of practices aiming at reconciliation in Rwanda. Or, to put it in the words of S. Lefranc, to

“banaliser la question, de revenir aux contextes dans lesquels ces politiques sont conçues et mises en œuvre” (2006, 8).

1.3.1 An empirical micro-sociology

In order to do that, this thesis focuses on the Rwandan actors that are implicated in the social dynamics summed up as “reconciliation process”. As we have shown above, although the literature has so far not analysed them in detail, there are numerous initiatives conceived by local actors aiming at the “guérison des cœurs” (Kamanzi, 2004); be they

Tai Chi teachers, agricultural cooperative coordinators or representatives of cultural associations. To take up the words of one of them: “the heart is at the heart of the matter”; they insist on the possibility of an interior reconciliation that according to them is the only guarantee for stable peace. In order to grasp better the object under study, it appears interesting to

“banaliser des objets dont la nature est prompte à susciter un jugement moral et qui sont bien souvent activement enchantés par les acteurs qui participent à leur invention (dont les scientifiques [...]), ou inversement trop rapidement réduits à l’expression inéluctable du vice politique” (Lefranc, 2006, 8).

Therefore, we follow this approach proposed and aim to “describe these policies before evaluating them” and “submit them to ordinary scientific treatment” (ibid). The aim is not to take a position in the debate on the evaluation of the politics of reconciliation, to give indicators as to its “efficiency”, to sum up the “best practices” and neither to settle, which would be the best model for Rwanda. Our approach is sociological and non-normative, so that we will not prescribe whether Rwandans should reconcile or not, we will, first of all, aim to “understand” (Hollis and Smith, 1991) our object of study.

In the beginning of our research, reconciliation presented itself just like the famous elephant that several blindfolded persons try to describe, and while all of them touch a different part of it, they put forward characteristics so divergent that considered from the outside do not seem to form a coherent whole. While outside observers put particular stress on its top-down, imposed character and the unwillingness of the population to be part of it; fieldwork and informants suggested that an important number of people had somehow appropriated this concept and also dedicated their work to it. The observation that many associations and individuals pursue their work independent of (and often without) financing and sometimes go without pay, contradicted the claim concerning their engagement in this domain for the sake of funding available.

Without wanting to (and neither having the means to) evaluate the moral sincerity of these actors, I was more and more intrigued to know how they explained why they chose this path of life (bearing in mind that nearly all of them are highly educated and could obtain far better remunerated positions in Rwanda's fast growing economy) and how they made sense of and translate into practice the idea to reconcile Rwandans after genocide. I was also particularly curious to understand why many seemed to favour a rather spiritual approach, proposing Tai Chi, Reiki and told me about Indian philosophers that had shaped their vision on life. A piece of the puzzle that is hardly ever mentioned in the literature on Rwanda.

The further I documented myself, the further the impression took hold of me that these actors had up to now indeed stayed invisible and that their ways of interpreting and implementing what they refer to as reconciliation had been totally ignored by the scholars up to now. Furthermore, while the existing approaches unmistakably locate reconciliation within the geographical frontiers of Rwanda, fieldwork suggests that actors and meanings of the concept clearly span beyond this space.

This is the reason why this thesis locates reconciliation differently. First, it studies it from below. Instead of analysing it from the top, it wishes to grasp what reconciliation can mean for a person involved in its implementation regularly. Second, it gives importance and explores its extra-territorial dimension. This has been done with the help of qualitative methods that are particularly prone to capture emic meanings.

1.3.2 An emic definition

As has been laid out above, the focus of doctoral research is on the question of how the "myth of return" is translated into practice in contemporary Rwanda. In other words, how to conceive of social relations between different categories of Rwandans – ranging from killers to survivors, exiles and returnees – who live not only in intimate geographical but also symbolical proximity? The aim of our investigation is to answer this question from a micro-sociological perspective by focusing on the individual Rwandan actors that have appropriated what they conceive

to be reconciliation. For this purpose, we have followed the example of V. Foucher, who works on the conflict in Casamance, and used an emic definition. Therefore, we refer to individual actors of reconciliation as

“ceux qui se réclament de ce label pour justifier leur action” (2009, 144).

In line with the early anthropological work of W. Goodenough (1970), we therefore, aim to produce a conceptualisation of reconciliation in terms that are meaningful for the actors under study.

1.3.3 The sociology of individual engagement

The fieldwork has indeed revealed the existence of an important number of Rwandan individuals that mobilise for reconciliation. Instead of treating them as either puppets of the Rwandan government or opportunists benefitting from international funding schemes, we propose to problematise their engagement for reconciliation. Our reflection has been guided by a two-fold enquiry. On the one hand, the aim was to grasp the motivations for engaging for reconciliation. On the other, the conceptions and practices, understood as meanings and translations into practice, of it in order to shed light from a new angle on this admittedly fuzzy concept with the help of empirical data.

In order to do this, we adopt a perspective of sociology of individual militant engagement (Sawicki and Siméant, 2009). The theoretical corpus established by the sociology of individual (militant) engagement (Dauvin, Siméant and C.A.H.I.E.R., 2002; Fillieule, 2001; Cefai and Trom, 2001) is what has been built upon.

The profiles of Rwandan actors, or militants as we will refer to them, have been selected with the aim of presenting varied walks of life. Analysis of the empirical data has sought an articulation between the so-called objective and subjective dimensions of a “career”, a term often used interchangeably with “trajectory”. It is used here in the sense as it has been used by H.S. Becker in “Studies in the Sociology of Deviance”. In this book Becker refers E. C. Hughes’ definition of a “career”:

“objectively [...] as a series of statuses and clearly defined offices [...] typical sequences of positions, achievements, responsibility, and even of adventure [...]. Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him” (Becker, 1997, 102).

Therefore, we will try to link up their “disposition and position” (Sommier, 2010, 117) inside Rwandan social worlds and logics and the subjective verbal expression of their reasons for engagement.

Approaches putting the accent on individual actors and the micro-sociological level are most prone to help apprehend our object of study. More explicitly, privileging the “biographical tool” for an analysis of careers corresponds to our research objectives. In the frame of this research, it seems particularly promising to articulate and to “link up the two ways of envisaging individual trajectories” (Dubar, 1998, 73). Making the link to the militants whom we are interested here, the concept of career allows to

“comprendre comment, à chaque étape de la biographie, les attitudes et comportements sont déterminés par les attitudes et comportements passés et conditionnent à leur tour le champ des possibles à venir, restituant ainsi les périodes d’engagement dans l’ensemble du cycle de vie” (Fillieule, 2001, 201).

This approach can help us to render the needed sociological depth to what is referred to as reconciliation between Rwandans. Militant engagement is conceived as an “individual and dynamic social activity” (Fillieule, 2001, 200). The aim is to reveal “the sense that this specific social activity that is militantism bears for these individuals” (ibid, 203). In the following analysis, we wish to bring to the fore this sense while considering the different dimensions of socialisation, i.e. the “personal identity (what I say that I am/what I would like to be)” and the “social identification (how I am identified/what is said that I am)” (Dubar, 1998, 74).

What is true for the sociology of collective action, is certainly true for the Rwandan case; namely that the forms and reasons for individual engagement of local actors have so far stayed “opaque” (Fillieule, 2001, 199)²³. In order to shed light on this dimension of reconciliation in Rwanda, we inscribe ourselves in a critical use of frame analysis by putting the accent on the sense that actors attach to their engagement. In this sense, we will combine the openly strategic approach on framing of mobilisation entrepreneurs and their efforts to “fashion shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996, 6) and the more cognitive dimension for their engagement. By focusing on the cognitive dimension of engagement, we give importance to the way that our interviewees express their implication. Thereby analysis tries to give importance to the complementarity of an “articulation of the interiority (the subjectivity, the identity) and the exteriority (the social worlds)” (Fillieule, 2001, 207). In other words; we try to grasp how they make sense of their biography retrospectively. The main research objective is to go beyond either an idealisation, such as represented by the distribution of prizes to model Rwandan peace-makers, or a cynical vision of them as mere opportunist tapping into international funds or puppets acting on behalf of the Rwandan government.

1.4 Research design

The focus of this thesis is centred on the question of how the myth of return is translated into practice? As the space of exile dissolves and exiles become returnees, what happens to the *myth* of return once it has turned into reality? We chose to examine this question from the angle of the conceptions of social relations between Rwandans. How to conceive of social relations between different categories of Rwandans – ranging from killers to survivors, exiles and returnees – who live not only in intimate geographical but also symbolical proximity? The aim of the doctoral investigation is to answer this question from a micro-

²³Cf. also Sawicki and Siméant (2009).

sociological perspective by focusing on the individual Rwandan actors that have appropriated what they conceive to be reconciliation.

1.4.1 Research question & hypothesis

The general research question that has guided the present thesis is the following: *How to conceive of reconciliation in a society marked by genocide when the social context is characterised by massive and cyclical population movements in and outside national frontiers?* Adopting the perspective that Rwandan reconciliation cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration these flux of populations and therefore the questions of exile and return, we are interested in social experiences of individuals. Therefore we argue that in order to study reconciliation in contemporary Rwanda, we have to examine the sense with which individuals that engage for it invest it. We will try to answer this question from a micro-sociological perspective by focusing on the local actors that engage for and have appropriated the cause of what they define to be reconciliation. And in the light of the very different experiences and walks of life, this sense given to reconciliation depends on their individual trajectory.

1.4.2 Case selection

With regard to the question of reconciliation in the light of return, the case of Rwanda is a particularly intriguing case. First of all, in the aftermath of genocide, and more specifically with regard to an international “*air du temps*” very favourable to it, reconciliation is considered as inevitable to be addressed and/or achieved. The existence and stability of peace is presented as dependent on the success of reconciliation within the population.

Many observers have pointed out the intriguing aspect of a society where victims and culprits live in proximity and often interdependence. So it is often argued that an understanding of how relations between these categories can be (re-)established are crucial for the future of the country. On the one hand, the Rwandan case has this in common with other “post-conflict” situations (i.e. Bosnia). On the other hand, we

argue here that this proximity also has an extra-territorial dimension through the presence of the physically absent but also the cohabitation of very divergent categories of former exiles and returnees, which sets it apart from other cases. It is this extra-territorial dimension of reconciliation in the Rwandan context that makes the consideration of the importance and significance of massive population movements and exile for the understanding of it so paramount.

Since the thesis aims to provide comprehensive accounts on reconciliation in this specific post-genocide context, we drew on a case-oriented research design in order to produce “thickness” through detail and nuances (Geertz, 1973). In line with this research objective, the research design is based on a single case.

In academia, the qualitative approach based on small-n case studies has been the centre of numerous debates. Here, we would like to make a point with regard to the implications for generalisation²⁴ of this approach for our research findings. In a recent article, Blatter and Blume (2008) suggest to go beyond the supposed dichotomy of what empirical data can contribute to theory in terms of generalisation. On the one hand, it is often argued that case studies’ contribution to science is theory testing. On the other it is argued that they are a means for hypothesis generation (Dupuy, 2012, 122). In line with Blatter and Blume (2008), the academic contribution of this thesis is inscribed in a third alternative to these two options. The approach to generalisation (and representativeness) is not sought in a statistical sense. Rather, it is aimed to amend existing theories. The research process has confirmed that “case studies are an especially fruitful tool for theoretical innovation because a broad set of theories and/or quite abstract theories can be connected to empirical information. A broad range of theoretical lenses does not only lead to a more comprehensive understanding of a specific case. The diversity of observation which can be collected, and the intensity with which a researcher can reflect on the relationship between concrete observations and abstract concepts [...] make it possible to use the empirical findings for drawing conclusions towards a comprehensive

²⁴For an excellent overview on this debate and its theoretical implications for the qualitative small-n methods can be found in Dupuy (2012).

and diverse range of theories” (Blatter and Blume, 2008, 344). As shall be presented below, the empirical findings and their conceptual interpretation amend existing approaches to reconciliation; neither confirming nor refuting them but adding a new dimension of complexity which lies in the idea of reconciling with oneself (cf. chapter 3).

1.4.3 The choice of methods

The general aim of this research being the exploration of the meanings and interpretations that the actors studied attribute to the concept of reconciliation, a qualitative and inductive approach seems particularly adapted. This does also comply with the aim to stress the importance of subjective meanings. Therefore, the research design has been modelled to give a lot of room for exploratory fieldwork. Informed by the nature of the phenomenon to be studied, the research design made space for data to “emerge”, in the frame of the possible (Kelle, 2005). That is the reason why qualitative interviewing, learning from informants and observation have been the privileged research tools.

Inspired by grounded theory. In addition, the willingness to generate a new and original conceptualisation of the phenomenon under study that would carry meaning for those interviewed, our research has been inspired by the propositions of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). They strongly support the use of an inductive approach to inquiry and closely link up the process of theory generation with that of data verification. Both are here inherently interlinked, which leads to a flexible research design and a constant interplay between data and theory. The underlying aim is that concepts developed through empirical research will be appropriate with regard to what they are meant to represent. Conversely, in their own words: “Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research” (Blaikie, 2009, 6, quoting Glaser and Strauss).

Inductive approach. This is why we opted for an *inductive approach* for our research. This is very important for the understanding of the way that data and its link to theory is presented. Once more, this has allowed to establish fully a focus on the meaning that the individuals studied attach to reconciliation in Rwanda and to obtain a portrait as complex as possible of the situation (Creswell, 2009). This is also the reason why research has not been started off with a hypothesis, but the hypothesis is the result of the collection and analysis of data.

A cyclical research design. As N. Blaikie states “the process of designing research is spiral or cyclical in nature rather than being a set of linear steps. As the implications of the earlier decisions are explored, they may turn out to be impractical or unachievable. Therefore, the process is likely to require a number of iterations before a consistent and workable set of design decisions can be taken” (Blaikie, 2009, 44). Given the grounded theory and inductive approach this flexibility and cyclical nature have been very important for the research design.

Indeed, I had already started interviewing Rwandans in Belgium before even officially starting the PhD thesis in the frame of a EU-funded research project (cf. below). In order to adapt the research design to the findings that did eventually “emerge” through data collection, it remained very flexible right until the end. This very much inscribes us in the tradition of sociological inquiry as represented by J.C. Passeron (1991). The research process has indeed been characterised by a “*va-et-vient*” between empirical observation and theoretic elaboration.

1.4.4 Strategies of enquiry

The technique of data collection was in-depth interviews (Duchesne, 1996) and to a lesser extend observation. Qualitative interview studies seemed particularly appropriate given that the aim was to produce holistic descriptions on the reasons for individual engagement for reconciliation. Furthermore, qualitative interviews constituted our method of choice due to their capacity to render interpretations of and experiences, in particular, constellations visible (Weiss, 1994, 10). The inter-

views have been assembled in two phases: exploratory interviews and in-depth interviews.

We complemented this method with participant observation and tried to spend as much time as possible with the people involved. In the phase of preparation of fieldwork and especially during it, key informants have played an important role.

Relations with key informants Accordingly, the author has been guided by orienting figures who helped not only with regard to the identification of potential informants for later interviews but also to preliminary immersion into the field (Beaud and Weber, 2003) which was needed to acquire profound understanding of the issues at stake.

Sampling In order to recruit interviewees, the method of “snowball sampling” (Weiss, 1994, 25) was applied. Cases were selected with the aim of presenting varied profiles; however, not aiming to reach exhaustiveness nor representativeness in a statistical sense, i.e. of the larger population. Rather a sociological representativeness was sought. This means to account for the diversity of the type of actors that were studied (Siméant, 1998). As has been mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the theoretical interest of these actors lies in their so-far invisibility. It is this type of profile that was selected through sampling.

As a matter of fact, these individual militants play a role as leaders with regard to the rest of the population through their engagement for reconciliation. Indeed, this went along with a level of education that has been quite elevated for all of them (especially with regard to the rest of the population, cf. chapter 2); which means that all of them spoke either French or English. For the quality of access and the possibility of having a direct exchange with them (without needing a translator) this has been of advantage given the focus on the qualitative interview.

Ethnography/observation Due to the obvious language barrier, direct observation (Arborio and Fournier, 1999) has been used as a complementary tool for qualitative interviewing and not as a primary research tool. I have observed several activities of associations that are

linked with or have been founded by the individuals whom I interviewed. I have for instance accompanied the *Association Modeste Innocent* on campaign (“Amatora Neza”) that was organised prior to the presidential elections in 2010 and meant to raise awareness against the use of violence and the importance of voting in the South. I also spent a day with members of *Prison Fellowship Rwanda* in the East and observed a “séminaire de réconciliation” in the East. Another example is my presence at the set-up of the *Centre Ubuntu* in the West by Marie-Goretti Mukakalisa.

Qualitative interviewing

Semi-structured qualitative interviewing was the most-used technique of fieldwork. Given the interest in the trajectory; or “career” (cf. page 27), interviews have mainly used the “biographical tool” (Dubar, 1998). In line with our interest in the subjective and objective dimension of the trajectories of our interviewees, the biographical method has aimed systematically to “elaborate the codification of the interview in a way as to identify themes, having separated out the ‘lived life’ from the ‘told story’” (Bornat, 2008, 347). Therefore, attention has been paid in the collection of biographical narratives to the “chronological sequence” and the “way that the story was told” (ibid). This approach seemed particularly appropriate to explore the “expression of the self” as much as focusing on “feelings and emotions providing insight into individual perceptions and understandings of situations and experiences” (ibid, 345). At the same time, for the analysis of the narratives collected we have accounted for the fact that “narratives not only account for past experiences but position speakers within networks of social and cultural expectations”, i.e. the “continuous move between cultural canon and individual expression” (Hyvärinen, 2008, 457).

Exploratory interviews They were also used in order to obtain background information, get a better picture of the context, meet the institutional actors, etc. A lot of time was as well invested in understanding the mechanisms that link Rwandans abroad and their country of origin.

For instance, I spent a lot of time with Mukakalisa Marie-Goretti, who has worked for AMI in Butare before spending two years in Belgium and had been involved in the “Projet Art de Vivre” (cf. below), in her now-home in France, and followed the set-up of her new organisation Centre Ubuntu in rural Bwira for one week in 2010.

In-depth interviews Based on a systematic analysis of the exploratory interviews, a smaller sample of actors presenting their work as aiming at reconciliation were chosen to conduct a second round of interviewing in 2011 and in-depth analysis of their background, trajectory but also in order to ensure a certain level of representativeness (such as gender, origin, domain of intervention, etc.).

1.4.5 Fieldwork

The empirical data has been generated through a qualitative field-study conducted between 2009 and 2011 in Rwanda and Belgium. I have spent one month in Rwanda in 2009, two months and a half in 2010, one month in 2011. Since during the research I lived in Brussels, interviews in Belgium could be conducted easily. The actors chosen are Rwandan actors who are actively engaged in practices that they define as aiming at reconciliation since at least 5 years. In total, 47 persons were interviewed, including informants and knowledgeable experts. A complete list of all the interviewees and the length of the interviews can be found in annex 1 (page 301).

Although the actors studied are sociologically rather heterogeneous (with regard to age, gender or “ethnicity”) they all are part of Rwanda’s educated elite and have experienced/or still experience a sort of exile or at least an element of extraversion in their life — although this had not been a criteria for selection. The fieldwork has indeed revealed the omnipresence of exile in the discourse of actors but also in their interpretations of reconciliation. While some have been exiled in the 1950ss, lived abroad for prolonged periods, received education abroad and are strongly interlinked with the international milieu today due to their education and experience others have experienced exile in refugee

camps during the genocide. Others again have been in exile after the genocide (either to Europe or a certain time in the refugee camps in former Zaire). Another group of actors either chose to live in a state of “aller-retour” between their European place of residence and Rwanda (raising funds and support in Europe and putting in place initiatives in Rwanda) or are compelled in other cases to stay outside Rwanda, so that they set up initiatives, defined by themselves as aiming at reconciliation, within the Rwandan diasporas.

Additional data For the exploratory phase, qualitative semi-directive interviews have been chosen. They were conducted while working as assistant research director for the European Commission funded FP7 INFOCON research project²⁵. In February and March of 2009, interviews were conducted with leaders and members of 15 civil society organisations representing Rwandans in Brussels. For the purpose of this research, the stress was put on the relations between Rwandans in Belgium and their links to Rwanda. The fieldwork very clearly indicated that Rwandans living in Brussels are far from forming a homogenous group²⁶.

Furthermore, all throughout I have worked for the *GRAPAX* (“Groupe de recherche en appui aux politiques de paix”), a Belgian inter-university research network examining post-conflict transitions in the Great Lakes region. This project has financed a big share of my field-trips and has also contributed to the acquisition of background data and contact to strategically placed decision-makers.

Finally, my participation in a research mission in Bujumbura organised by the the French ANR research project *Irène* “Les sciences internationales de la paix – Production et diffusion d’un savoir pratique” has helped me in seeing the wider regional and international dimension of practices of reconciliation.

²⁵For more information on the project, please consult: www.infocon-project.org.

²⁶The results laid out here have been presented in a paper co-written with Valérie Rosoux during the conference *Diasporas and Conflict Importation in Urban Settings* at SciencesPo Paris in December 2009 under the title “The Rwandan diaspora(s) in Belgium”.

Data recording procedures and analysis All interviews were integrally recorded, with consent of interviewees. These interviews have been integrally transcribed, which is indeed a very “labor intensive” task (Weiss, 1994).

1.4.6 Data analysis

Coding In a next step they were systematically analysed with the software package atlas.ti. With the help of this software, coding has been operated on the exploratory interviews with the aim of a first overview on the themes to be treated in later interviews. In the end, I systematically coded the transcriptions of 10 interviewees (sometimes including two interviews per person). For the first step of coding I made use of “topic coding” (Richards, 2009, 100) which helped to sort the data, get a first overview on the emerging themes and allocated passages of the interviews to topic codes. For the more systematic analysis, I used the tool of “analytical coding” (ibid, 102) which helped to create categories and thereby the interpretation of the data.

How the interviewees presented themselves In the Rwandan context, the concept of “ethnicity” is hotly contested and as much subject to polarisation as many other topics in the Rwandan context. As a rule of thumb, the “ethnic” category has been taken into consideration but first and foremost as a criteria of auto-identification. By using these contested terms I do by no means wish to arbitrarily classify and impose them on the people from the outside.

Whenever I use them with regard to my interviewees, it is according to the way that actors identify themselves. During the coding of the interview material, I have also taken care to mark the words that our interviewees use to speak of themselves. Several references to the “ethnic” category could be found in the interviews. Here are some extracts to provide a general idea of them:

- “*Tu vois, moi mon père était Hutu et ma mère était Tutsi. [...] Le fait d’être (.) au milieu de ces deux ethnies là, ça m’a en tout cas permis de comprendre comment ça se passait, oui.*”

- “*j’ai des amis Hutu*”
- “*de pas m’occuper des Hutu parce que moi je suis.. C’est ça.*”
- “*Sur notre colline nous étions les seules Tutsis au milieu de familles Hutu.*”
- “*je suis Hutu, je suis du Nord*”

For the rest, I am very doubtful about the analytical utility of the concept of ethnicity. First of all, the term “ethnicity” does, strictly speaking, not apply in the Rwandan case. Or, as expressed by J.-P. Chrétien:

“Voici des “ethnies” qui ne se distinguent ni par la langue, ni par la culture, ni par l’histoire, ni par l’espace géographique occupé” (1999, 129)

This quote already indicates, that according to the anthropological criteria, the term “ethnicity” does not apply in Rwanda where all Rwandans speak the same language, live side by side on the same territory, share the same culture (and originally religion) and history. The original social and much more fluid meaning has acquired a different meaning today and has more often than not been shaped by outsiders:

“L’ethnicité se réfère moins [...] à des traditions locales qu’à des fantasmes plaqués par l’ethnographie occidentale sur le monde dit coutumier” (ibid, 164)

This is of course not to deny the historical meaning of the terms and the tangible consequences that political instrumentalisation has had on these “phantasms”. So that today, and especially through the genocide that operated along these criteria, the meaning has been hardened and we are faced with a

“conscience ethnique dans un pays sans ethnies dignes de ce nom” (ibid, 130).

However, one of the main research findings is that this element of identification tends to become less important at the expense of others. Especially categories created through the variable of exile (e.g. language spoken, country of exile, date of departure) seem to be more meaningful and transcend the “ethnic” one (cf. chapter 2 and 3).

Researching reconciliation in Rwanda, I thought it to be crucial not to participate in the social construction (in the sense of F. Barth (1969)) of these groups so that knowing of the deathly consequences that outside labelling has had on Rwandans, I have tried to make my own the precautions put forward by C. Vidal:

“L’analyste étranger [...] s’il tient à l’objectivité, ne doit pas s’imaginer sans parti, faute de quoi, en toute conscience, il en prendra un. De l’auto-observation et l’on constate que l’on en vient à dire ou à penser “les Tutsi, les Hutu...” comme si cette désignation se suffisait à elle-même, et c’en est fini du travail d’objectivation”. (Vidal, 1999, 184)

1.4.7 Data presentation

The boxes

At selected spots throughout the text, little boxes have been inserted. These boxes are meant to introduce the reader to some of the interviewees that have contributed to this research. Hopefully this can contribute to giving more depth to the description of their profiles. They are also meant to guide the reader’s understanding of our analysis — for which a grasp of their different backgrounds can be crucial. What is even more, these boxes are a means that permits to give voice to the Rwandans that have been interviewed. Here, we start with one example of a such box in order to introduce Joseph Nyamutera, whom we have interviewed at two occasion (in 2010 and 2011). Although it renders some elements of his very personal trajectory, it already indicates some of the commonalities that have been identified with regard to all of the interviewees; especially how he describes his personal “liberation”.

Box 1 (Joseph Nyamutera).

Joseph deals with his past in a very open way, so that his life story and “testimony” can be found on the website of *Le Rucher Ministries*^a, an organisation he is currently working for as director of the reconciliation ministry. He presents himself at several moments during our interview as a “*Hutu du Nord*”; originating from Northern Rwanda (Gisenyi). In 1990 Joseph becomes a “new-born” Christian, so that today he is an adherent of the Pentecostal church (and its honorary pastor). He was among those Rwandans that left Rwanda in 1994 in the immediate aftermath of genocide and arrival of the *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF). He and his family have spent two years in a refugee camp in Goma (RDC) until they had been “repatriated” to Rwanda in 1996. He lost several of his close family members in the camps due to cholera and describes his internal state as being “*aveuglé par mes préjugés*”. In his auto-biographical narrative, this state is described as having changed with a healing seminar lead by R. Lloyd under the auspices of *African Evangelist Enterprise*, an organisation he came to work with from then on. Describing this moment to me during the interview, he refers to a “*libération*” that allowed him to “*accepter moi-même*”.

^awww.lerucher.org/Content/Reconciliation/Joseph_Bio.html

Style of presentation

Let us conclude this subsection with one last remark on the presentation of the interview data. At the end of this dissertation (on page 301) a list of the names of all the interviewees can be found. This list also indicates the place, date and length of the interviews conducted. For the sake of the fluidity of reading, this information is not mentioned when I refer to the interviewees or quote them throughout the text. In the frame of analysis no distinction has been made between the different interviews that I conducted with the same person, treating them as a single body

of text. Furthermore, given the question of confidentiality some of the names have been changed when referring to very personal information. In other cases, the interviewees have consented that their name can be linked to their words or this information is publicly available. In these cases, their names are mentioned.

As has been mentioned, the ways that our interviewees express themselves not only with regard to the concept of reconciliation but also their trajectory is of central importance to this thesis. This is why all the quotes are presented in their original language. Furthermore, we wanted to take up the original form of the interview such as reflected in the transcription so that a short introduction to the general rules that have been followed, can be handy here:

- person interrupts him/herself in the middle of a word/sentence: ..
- person marks a break in his speech: (.)
- comments inserted by the transcriber²⁷: (**laughter**)

Given that in nearly all cases the interviews were conducted in a language that was neither the mother tongue of the researcher nor necessarily that of the interviewed, a number of grammatical errors have been found in the transcription. For the sake of comprehension these errors have been corrected with as much respect as possible for the original phrasing. Also I have sometimes taken out repetitions. In the same way, it has been necessary in some cases to ensure readability by taking out sentences that have been judged confusing for the reader.

1.5 Positioning research and researcher

In order to position the researcher, the question concerning the choice of topic seems crucial. Trying to find an answer to this potentially very personal interrogation, I cannot help but reflect upon the remark made by one of the interviewees, Hope Azeda, who said when asked about the reason for choosing her work:

²⁷Four of the interviews have been transcribed by Anh Thy Nguyen on funding of the Grapax.

“These subjects, they are very addictive. Because when you start working on these subjects, you become an adult, you think a lot all the time. [...] And I told my father how long am I going to work on this kind of subject? And my father said: ‘It is your history, it is your shadow; you cannot run away from it’”.

Since Rwanda’s history is not directly my personal history, the question imposes itself why to choose a country rather far away from my place of residence and a culture that I do not even speak the language²⁸ of. Being German has, in my opinion, socialised me in wanting to understand what it is in human nature that can push some to the point of extreme evil and others to go beyond it in order to rebuild a life, a society and a country.

However, the truth to be told, I have trouble understanding (not to speak of explaining) why I chose my dissertation topic to begin with. The superficial answer is a referral to chance and circumstances (such as funding possibilities). Nonetheless, this does not seem very convincing when considering that I chose to work on one of the darkest pages of human history: genocide. In the end, it seems very difficult to find a satisfactory answer to the following question:

“What are we doing when we work as “scholars” with objects that we do not like and that fill us with outrage, repulsion, fear, disgust; in short, with objects we find abhorrent? Why expend so much energy analysing objects that appal us? Why spend so much time reading frightful tracts written by people we loathe, listening to accounts of barbarity and contemplating the dynamics of destruction, when history offers so many works of culture that we as academics have a responsibility to discuss if we want this culture to remain alive?” (Zawadzki, 2002, 519)

²⁸To my dismay, it has to be admitted that up to now I have not managed to master this extremely beautiful language, in spite of several endeavours in Brussels and Kigali (at the *Ecole Belge*).

Ethical considerations

P. Zawadzki makes a point that has made itself painfully felt more than once throughout the duration of this research. Indeed, it is not an easy task to research an object whose “tendency is towards death rather than life” (ibid). Although of course, the orientation of the research question is towards the life after violence, it is impossible not to contemplate and stumble over the massive legacy of genocide. M. Hovanesian (1992), working on Armenians in France and the consequences on later generations of genocide, notes something that can also be applied to our case:

“le génocide ne fût pas l’objet de cette étude, néanmoins nous l’avons perçu dans les formes d’expression de l’appartenance” (280).

Although the genocide as such was not our main object of enquiry, doing research in and on Rwanda one cannot avoid it at all. The experience of genocide is indeed omnipresent in Rwanda. Especially with regard to our empirical fieldwork it cannot be underlined enough that even though none of the questions or primary interests of investigation had been directly linked to the experience of genocide, it could be perceived in a multitude of expressions.

While P. Zawadzki is convinced of the usefulness of research on abhorrent objects as a means of action and denunciation if not prevention, I am less convinced of this scope of academic research. At the risk of appearing overly critical, a word of caution seems expedient. In “Fieldwork under Fire”, it is advised that Western researchers “question their motives in studying non-Western peoples” since a researcher asserting “to “give voice” to those less able to do so [...] is often engaged in little better than postcolonial discourse refashioned for a postmodern world” (Nordstrom and Robben, 1996, 11). This is why they insist on the urgent need for “self-critique”, as much as researcher as as “Westerner” (ibid).

Being fully aware of these inherent limitations, I have aspired to remain true to one guiding principle. Although, this may not constantly

have worked out, I have always tried to guard myself against the temptation of “simplification”. By this I hope to have avoided the risk of “saying that we know when we have everything to learn” (Pouligny, 2002, 532). In this sense, I have tried to comply with a triple dimension of responsibility: “responsibility to the field-worker’s safety, to the safety of his or her informants, and to the theories that help to forge attitudes towards the reality of violence, both expressed and experienced” (Nordstrom and Robben, 1996, 4).

1.5.1 Auto analysis, or how did the interviewees see me?

With the aim of situating the researcher let us turn to the positionality of the researcher. Here again, we would like to give the word to another interviewee, Assumpta Mugiraneza:

“J’ai toujours cette hantise d’un jour me retrouver menée par la passion qui suscite un tel sujet. Parce que la colère est un peu trop importante en moi aussi.. [...] je suis vraiment impliquée. Mais quand on le sait, qu’on fait des efforts de le gérer au bout d’un temps on réalise à quel point ceux qui se disent non-impliqués, donc qui ne prennent pas suffisamment de précautions, c’est eux qui se cassent la figure continuellement. Je vois énormément de biais dans le raisonnement des gens respectés parce que justement c’est une erreur de croire qu’on n’est pas impliqué dans ce génocide. Face à un génocide, nous sommes tous impliqués parce que c’est un crime contre l’humanité, pas contre un groupe”.

Although research methodology was aimed to be as rigorous as possible, it cannot be denied that personal affinities shape the research process and surely have an impact on the assessment of research data, or simply influence the sensibility towards certain issues and the “blindness” towards other. In that sense, it is probably not benign that I practice Yoga for a long time and have taken a class of Reiki healing by one of my interviewees. This general interest in alternative practices has surely heightened my alertness to the expression of this dimension in interviews.

I am aware of the fact that the way the researcher is perceived by the interviewees can have a non-negligible effect on how they represent themselves discursively. It should also be borne in mind that international funding schemes and prizes awarded²⁹ shape how a “model” Rwandan peace-maker (as opposed to the killing savage) should be in order to be acclaimed internationally. The way my interviewees wanted me to perceive them has surely been influenced by these international schemes of (self-)presentation (and might eventually tell us a lot about these schemes themselves).

Here, it should also be mentioned that through working for the *grapax*, which is funded by the Belgian government, I had in some cases been put in contact with some of the interviewees through the Belgian embassy in Kigali. My interviews and observations with them gave the impression that I was perceived as a sort of evaluator and potential source of funding (a reason for which I did not include them in the systematic analysis). That is the reason why we address the question of reflexivity, i.e. “the constant awareness, assessment, and reassessment by the researcher of the researcher’s own contribution/influence/shaping of intersubjective research and the consequent research findings” (Salzman, 2002, 806, quoting Scholte). During the *atlas.ti* analysis, I have systematically coded the references that the interviewees have made with regard to the researcher. Here are the main topics that emerged.

A question of belief

First, in nearly all interviews there is an inevitable moment when I am asked about my religious beliefs. For instance, during the first interview with Simon Gasibirege:

Pourquoi Dieu a-t-il permis le génocide ? J’ai compris que..

Vous êtes croyante vous ?

Pas vraiment.

Pas vraiment... J’ai compris que, ... voilà, si jamais vous avez la chance, vous pouvez lire la Bible, des évangiles, hein

²⁹Cf. chapter 2.

? Comme vous lisez toute autre chose. J'ai compris... voyez, Jésus, c'est un monsieur, qui se dit qu'il est fils de Dieu et ce Monsieur a été tué, il a été tué.

At issue is what impact this religious divergence has on the interviewee-interviewer relation? A similar situation came up during the interview with Rutayisire Antoine:

Est-ce que tu crois en Dieu ?

Je ne sais pas.

Tu crois en quoi ? En toi-même ?

Non.

En ton père ?

Non.

En la puissance de l'Allemagne ?

*(*rire*) Non.*

Alors, tu crois en quoi alors ?

Je ne sais pas en fait.

Tu ne sais pas ? Alors, en fin de compte, le manque de certitude dans ce en quoi on croit crée une grande incertitude dans la vie. Il faut croire en quelque chose. Si tu ne crois pas en dieu, crois en toi-même.

En moi-même ?

En toi-même, toi Jana. Crois en toi-même, si tu ne crois pas en Dieu, au moins trouve quelque chose en quoi tu peux mettre ta foi.

In many of the interviews, interviewees remarked that religious expertise constituted a point of reference that I did not share, such expressed in this sentence:

Je lisais un passage dans la bible, je sais pas si tu es familière avec la bible ? Donc là je parle un langage que tu comprends ou que tu ne comprends pas, je ne sais pas.

On the one hand, the fact that I am not very religious in the traditional sense may have had an impact on how the interviewees perceived me and the ways that they talked to me. On the other hand, these were rather challenging moments during which at the same time I did not want to create too much of an alienating feeling for them, neither lie and also started questioning my own position on religion and belief. It may as well be the result of conducting interviews with professional evangelists such as Rutayisire:

“J’ai pas parlé avec toi, je sais pas soit ton père ou ta mère, et tout, je ne connais même pas tes positions sur la société allemande et belge mais je suis sûr que partout où je vais-je vois des jeunes qui cherchent des réponses aux questions de la vie. Bon, tu vas trouver des réponses aux questions de la science à l’université mais comment te comporter avec tes amis. Est-ce que tu vas avoir des enfants ou pas, est-ce que Dieu existe ou il n’existe pas, est-ce que..., ça ce sont des questions que les gens se posent”

Gender and age

Second, the impact of gender and age are probably one of the most marking elements in interview relations. Interviewees in general thought that I was very young (much younger in any case than my 28 years when I started the research) which seemed to confuse them slightly, wondering what I was doing with my recording machine in Rwanda. Indeed as a youthful female researcher it can feel rather uncomfortable to be among the “young Ph.D. candidates from good American and European universities running around eagerly in this remote and traumatized country to advance their academic careers – interviewing, measuring, and theorising, while surrounded by some of the world’s most extreme poverty and gross human rights violations” (Uvin, 2001b, 76) and asking very personal questions.

Many references to this aspect of my appearance can be found in the interviews, often in a relational manner, such as when one remarks “*des jeunes gens comme toi, vieux comme moi*”. However, the interviews

leave the impression that especially when I was interviewing men, gender played a major role. One of the first questions that many asked me is whether I was married and why I was all on my own in Rwanda. Although, these are clearly isolated cases, some interviewees may have mistaken the availability to spend time, share a drink and listen intensely for the possibility of “spending a good time at home”, as one interviewee put it (the reason why I chose not to integrate his interviews in my sample since his totally inappropriate attitude made it impossible to continue working with him). All in all, this type of problem did not exist in any of the other interviews, but being a woman had an impact on how (especially male) interviewees referred to me. In many interviews, remarks such as “*des jeunes filles belles comme toi*” which combine a sort of compliment with an evaluation of my physical appearance, can be found, which creates a particular atmosphere during interviews. At this point, it seems crucial, nevertheless to highlight the fact that all the persons interviewed, men and women alike, have been more than charming with me, taking the time to answer my questions. As can be seen in the annex, they sacrificed quite a lot of their time, although they must have done this many times before with other researchers that are very present in Rwanda after the genocide (some even refer to a genocide “business”). Most of the time, they invited me for a drink or even a meal and also took care of me in numerous other ways (such as driving me home after the interview).

Inside/outside

Third, the dimension of age has probably also been important in combination with the fact, that I am an “outside” researcher. Reading through the interviews, one cannot help but wonder, whether some, at least at the beginning of the interview, did not think of me as rather naive or a bit stupid. Some clearly adopting a haughty attitude (which as will be laid out below, I could totally understand). Some even were rather hostile, such as one woman who began the interview by telling me that she would never allow her son to marry a *umuzungu kazi*, such as me. The atlas.ti coding also reveals such little remarks such as the following

one that one interviewee made when talking about the street kids he works with:

“Yeah, very poor, if you know what I’m talking about. You probably don’t understand this”.

It is for sure true that I have never lived poverty in my life, so that the remark draws a clear dividing line between him and me. The same interviewee also pushes the fact that I am visibly an outsider a bit further by noting that *“they think in terms of money, huge sums of money. When they see white skin, they think about money* in order to explain to me why kids have been following me on the road while walking to the place of the interview. Other little sentences, such as

“I was born in Idi Amin’s regime. I don’t know if you heard about this? One of the notorious dictators in this world”.

had made me feel that the persons I interviewed had the impression that I knew very little about the general context. Another telling example is the following remark:

“C’est un projet de gouvernement, parce que le gouvernement a une commission d’unité et réconciliation”.

It demonstrates that interviewees start off with the assumption that I was very little informed at all about the historical, political and geographical context. In any case, it is true that I did not know about the precise context at the beginning (and am still not sure to know as much as this complex subject would deserve to be known). The fact that I was perceived in this rather un-informed way has clearly helped to learn more, pushed people to express their thoughts in a very detailed manner and could have dissipated doubts about whether to trust me or not (a naïve person is probably less suspicious than a well informed or hostile one).

An *umudage kazi* in Rwanda

Finally, I put forward that possibly Rwanda is one of the only countries in the world where being German is perceived as positive. In kin-

rwanda Germans are referred to as “umudage”, which is can probably be linked to the frequent salutation “Guten Tag”; “kazi” is the female version of it. There are numerous references to my nationality to be found in the interviews. Some just refer to “*les gens comme vous, comme toi-même, en Europe là, vous, tu es très éduquée, tu vas à l’université*”. However, I took care to specify after showing my card, which is issued by the University of Louvain, that I am not Belgian but German. The implications of being Belgian in the Rwandan context and the reminiscences of the colonial link have been explained above. And let it suffice to say that more than one interviewee expressed anger when being thinking to be confronted with a Belgian. The reason why I took the habit of specifying my nationality in the beginning of the interview. Some go as far as portraying the colonisation by Germans as a positive thing (“they even planned on constructing a railway connection, not like the Belgians, who did not build anything lasting for us”). I suppose that compared to the bloody more recent history with many doubts about the Belgian government’s role during the genocide and the institution of identity cards that permitted the *génocidaires* to identify their victims, German colonial abuses (cf. Rumiya) are glossed over looking back with a touch of nostalgia. The most troubling reference to my origin has, however, been observed in the following extract of one interview:

Mais bon, si vous êtes Allemand, vous connaissez également la théorie de la race pure

Malheureusement, oui.

Pas malheureusement, heureusement, oui, vous la connaissez, vous la comprenez mieux que n’importe qui. Est-ce que ça a un fondement (.), je ne sais pas. Mais admettre qu’il y a probablement des races qui potentiellement sont plus douées que les autres, mais veuillez m’excuser, je le crois.

C’est vrai ?

Oui je crois. [...] Il y a des races qui sont potentiellement plus douées que les autres, mais alors, quand ils ajoutent la volonté d’arriver, quand ils ajoutent l’organisation [...] ils parviennent à faire les choses mieux que les autres. Quand

*vous étudiez l'histoire du Japon, par exemple. Il y a aucun pays européen ou américain qui est plus développé que le Japon. [...] Et comment cela se fait-il qu'ils sont toujours des alliés de l'Allemagne ? Même pendant la deuxième guerre [...]. Je ne suis pas raciste (*acquiescement*), mais pas du tout (*acquiescement*).*

These affirmations put me in an extremely uncomfortable position, since I wanted to stick to my approach of objectivity³⁰ during the interview, not taking position or judging what the interviewee says. However, his position is in stark contrast to my personal convictions, and I felt obliged to desolidarise from a stance that somehow included me through my nationality into his vision of classing people according to their “race”. All my efforts to show my disagreement with his idea only made him reply: “*Non, non, non, non*”. So that in the end, a veritable dialogue of the deaf was installed and left me deeply startled after an interview that lasted more than three hours.

Having delivered all these indications of clues about the way that I may have been perceived by interviewees, we are aware of the fact that “self-analysis does not necessarily lead to successful cultural analysis” and that “misleading is however, one of the main psychological and social purposes of declarations about the self” (Salzman, 2002, 809). In fact, this type of exercise hoists by its very nature a number of limitations since “misrepresenting oneself to others is perhaps the species’ most popular sport, self-deception is one of the most valued human skills”, quoting F. Barth which is why “there is reason to distrust our own description of ourselves” (Salzman, 2002, 809).

1.5.2 The “field” and I

The first part of this section presented elements that help to situate the research, especially collection of data, with regard to the role of my socialised or “objective” characteristics. Let us now turn to the relation

³⁰On the question of “neutrality” and “objectivity” of the researcher, cf. Beaud (1996).

that I entertained with the “field” and the role that more “subjective” elements, such as emotions, played in it.

The audible and inaudible

Although considerable efforts were made, it has to be admitted that I had difficulties in being open to and being capable to hear the opinion and expressions of emotions of all in an equal manner. When, for instance, my kinyarwanda teacher in Brussels made a joke about the meaning of the word *gukora* during the genocide, I did not feel able to continue classes with him. In fact, the word means “to work” and was used during the genocide as a circumscribed way to indicate the killing of Abatutsi. The same goes for a Belgian woman who started crying of sadness when telling a group about the condemnation of a personal friend, from the time she lived in Rwanda, by the ICTR.

It might be of importance at this point to mention as well that during the analysis of my interviews, I realised that my availability for the expression of strong emotions was not always easily maintained. The issue of the “indicable” and “inaudible” (Pollak, 1990; Heinich, 2011) of extreme experiences is salient at many moments during the interviews, for instance, when a woman tells me that she lost her little son when crossing the border to Congo during the genocide, and has never been able to find him again. However, I also propose an awkward reaction when one of the persons interviewed tells me about his tentative to commit suicide:

Parce que moi je voulais me suicider à plusieurs reprises.

En exil ?

En exil. Le fleuve, il y en a un fleuve, le Rhône, je voulais me jeter dedans, hein ?

Qu'est-ce qui vous a..

Non, je ne sais pas ce qui m'a retenu.

Claims to knowledge in a “post-conflict” situation

Many are the researchers in the domain of ethnography or anthropology to note that a fieldwork in a country that has experienced violence is full of “methodological and epistemological mines” (Albera, 2001, 5). These mines signify, on the one hand, the potential physical danger for researcher and informants. Nevertheless, it also has a more subtle dimension with regard to the mark that the experience of extreme violence³¹ leaves on a given society. Moreover, it affects the researcher in various ways. As Nordstrom and Robben remark: “Violence is formative, it shapes people’s perceptions of who they are and what they are fighting for [...] a continual dynamic that forges as well as affects identities. The complexity of violence extends to the field-workers and their theories as well” (4). This seems to be even truer in the face of genocide; perceptions and visions seem to be hardened and polarised. In the context of conflictual academic discourses on Rwanda, researchers new to the field are faced with outside pressure to take a position in a tense and often hostile research environment – where scientific objectivity sometimes gives way to political judgment.

The issue of African *gnosis*³², which we referred to above, seems pertinent in this context again. Indeed, the entire research process has been accompanied by an awkward feeling of lack of legitimacy. And the contact with Rwandan researchers convinced me that outsiders’ expertise is not really needed. These questions are nicely summed up by Naasson Munyanadamutsa (a psychiatrist who has been interviewed in the frame of this thesis) who states that in Rwanda

“la violence a plusieurs visages. [...] Violence de celui qui a tout et qui vient aider celui qui n’a plus rien. Violence aussi de la rencontre de celui qui sait, ou qui prétend savoir, et celui qui devrait savoir, mais qui n’a aucune occasion de

³¹Cf. Sémelin (2002) and Lefranc (2002).

³²We may also wonder in how far the remark by M. Awkward applies here “But if gender and race as we have traditionally perceived them are both by and large socially constructed, then whiteness as dominant position in the Western racial hierarchy is potentially as formidable an obstacle to interpretive competence vis-à-vis black (con)texts as maleness is to persuasive feminist exegesis” (Awkward, 1990, 582)

l'exprimer" (2002, 164).

It may make sense to mention that I arrived with a lot of idealistic and probably naïve ideals about humanitarian help and solidarity. This vision has directly been shaken during my initial stay in Rwandan in 2009 when a member of the UNDP declared he did not consider it worthwhile to do a good job in Rwanda since its inhabitants were not very civilised anyway (they do not even speak proper French) and would tear each other and the country apart soon. All he was looking for was a comfortable position at the UN HQ in New York, Rwanda was just one inconvenient but necessary step on his way up. Other contacts with the so-called expatriate community have not really improved my first impression.

Again, N. Munyandamutsa nicely resumes this impression by wondering whether

“La pratique humanitaire en serait-elle pas devenu un nouveau métier qui doit se consolider à tout prix et servir avant tout à ceux qui y sont engagés. Les destinataires de l'aide humanitaire doivent de toute façon accepter la charité ou la rejeter. On le sait, la misère humaine peut être terrible, et la charité se taille une place. Mais la charité et la dignité ne font jamais ménage ensemble” (Munyandamutsa, 2002, 165).

All these rather shocking impressions have been reinforced by seeing with my own eyes the effects of the abandonment of Rwanda by the international “community”. All in all, the awareness of these issues has resulted in the fact that the research process was accompanied by an underlying feeling of guilt. Guilt about advancing my career and knowledge with human suffering and realising the privileged position in terms of material possession at the expense of locals that could do the same job. Being exposed to psychologically challenging stories and the role of emotion – such as anger, fear, guilt and shock – are particularly difficult to handle in face-to-face interviewing, especially when coming from a social science background, i.e. not being equipped with the necessary tools to respond and neither to help.

Last, it should be mentioned that the research environment can at times be very harsh or even openly hostile due to the polarisation of the positions taken by many scholars and the imminent pressure to take position that is exercised on young researchers. The simple fact of going to Rwanda to conduct research and the unwillingness to join into the condemnation of contemporary Rwandan politics (for instance, instance after coming back from a trip after the 2010 elections) won me the remark that I had been “bought” by the Rwandan government.

*

Concluding chapter 1. By way of concluding the initial chapter of this thesis, let us resume the main points presented. Its beginning has been dedicated to a review of the literature on reconciliation in Rwanda. It has revealed that individual Rwandan militants that engage for reconciliation had up to now remained invisible for the academic literature. Additionally, the study of reconciliation so far has been limited to Rwandan national frontiers. It is for this reason that we refer to reconciliation in Rwanda as a black box since actors mobilising on a transnational scale have so far remained in the dark. Also, the stark polarisation that can be observed among scholars working on the subject also contributes to a partial understanding of this complex phenomenon.

This chapter proposes in its second part a way to open this black box by (re-)locating the perspective of its study in terms of actors and meanings. This has implications on several levels for the scope of its study. First, in geographical terms we need to consider the **extra-territorial dimension** of Rwanda reconciliation. Far from being confined to within Rwanda’s frontiers, reconciliation can be said to be situated between “here and there” through the importance of massive populations movements that have been initiated by the two-fold dynamic of exile and return that have marked recent history.

Second, the **theoretical tools** mobilised for the study of the black box allow for a brand new perspective on these leaders of reconciliation. In

order to understand and put into perspective their engagement, the sociology of mobilisation is most adequate. The critical use of framework analysis opens another take on the motivations underlying individual militancy in favour of reconciliation. By focusing on motivation and the meaning with which the aim of mobilisation is invested, the influences of personal interpretations of a trajectory are taken into account.

Third, in terms of methodology a shift is needed permitting to render visible the individual militants who engage for their conception of reconciliation. This can be done by using a qualitative and inductive approach sensible to the trajectory and its subjective interpretation of the actors under study. This is why we opted for the semi-directive biographic interviewing. The use of the biographic tool has allowed to account for the particularity of exile and return that directly or indirectly has shaped the biography of a large share of the Rwandan population. This methodological choice, furthermore, permits to adopt a micro sociological perspective that sheds light on the black box *from below*. Last but not least, a lot of space has been granted to the issue of the positionality of the researcher in the light of the salience of personal opinions and sociological characteristics in a polarised research environment.

Chapter 2

Militants of reconciliation

During the fieldwork in Rwanda and Brussels, an important number of Rwandan individuals have been identified that mobilise for what they conceive to be reconciliation. There are numerous initiatives conceived by local actors aiming at the “guérison des cœurs” (Kamanzi, 2004); be they Tai Chi teachers, agricultural cooperative coordinators or representatives of cultural associations. To take up the words of one of them: “the heart is at the heart of the matter”; they insist on the necessity to *reconcile*.

When turning to how the academic literature gives an account to these individual militants of reconciliation, one is faced with a blindspot. As demonstrated in the discussion of the polarisation of the academic debate above, the beliefs in a certain functioning of Rwandan society determine to a large extent the academic understandings of the actors under analysis here. The vast majority of authors attach great importance to the political structure. So that individual initiative is considered obsolete and local actors somewhat passive followers of national policy. As seen above (page 56) individual initiative is merely the result of government orders or a fulfillment of duty with regard to government policies. Indeed, if local actors are considered a relay of the government, there is no need to study or mention them independently of government actions. As a consequence, individual militants have so far largely remained invisible for academia.

The picture is different for the milieu of international peace-makers.

Here, quite, to the contrary, of academia, these Rwandans have attracted quite some attention. Many of the interviewees have at some point in their lives been awarded a price or other form of official appraisal of their work by a Western organisation. One could, for instance, mention the *prix de la paix de Pax Christi International*. This Christian organisation discerns a yearly price to honour the “hauts faits des héros de notre temps”. In 1998 it had been given to Laurien Ntezimana and Modeste Mungwarareba¹, both founders of the *Service d’Animation Théologique* (SAT) in 1990 in Butare², for having formed young “agents de réconciliation”.

Another example is the Prize of Geneva for Human Rights in Psychiatry that has been awarded to Dr. Naasson Munyandamutsa³ in 2011 in acknowledgement of his “considerable activity” and his “outstanding” trajectory. Indeed, Dr. Munyandamutsa is also a public person in Rwanda where he animates a widely known radio show and is one of the co-founders of the *Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix* (IRDP).

These are just some examples of a wide tendency that applies to all our interviewees. In fact, the adjectives used to describe them are striking. When isolating them from the rest of the text, following list

¹ “[N]ous n’oublions pas pour autant de souligner les hauts faits des héros de notre temps. Pax Christi décerne annuellement un prix à des personnalités contemporaines qui luttent contre la violence et l’injustice, le plus souvent sur les lieux de l’action. [...] 1998 Laurien Ntezimana et le Frère Modeste Mungwarareba (Rwanda): pour avoir formé des jeunes animateurs à être agents de réconciliation auprès de groupes ethniques opposés”. Pax Christi International website. Le Prix de la paix de Pax Christi International. 2012. Online available: www.paxchristi.net/international/fra/about_cont.php?wat=awards.

² They had worked in a trio together with Innocent Samusoni, who had been assassinated during the genocide. In 2000, after also Modeste Mungwarareba had died of the consequences to his health of the genocide, the *Association Modeste Innocent (AMI)* was founded in Butare; it will be presented in further detail in chapter 4.

³ “Dr Naasson Munyandamutsa, of Rwandese origin, was assigned as prizewinner 2011. Dr Munyandamutsa developed considerable activity in his country to help the victims of the genocide of 1994 to overcome its consequences in the mental health domain. [...] The jury was convinced by the commitment as well as the scale of the task carried out by the prizewinner on the field. His personal itinerary is considered to be “outstanding””. Geneva Prize Foundation for Human Rights in Psychiatry. 2012. A Rwandese psychiatrist awarded with the Prize of Geneva. Online available: www.geneva-prize.ch/en/laureate2011.html.

emerges: “hauts”, “outstanding”, “remarquables”, “exemplaires”⁴, “exceptionnelle”⁵. Other than that they are portrayed as “héros”, “guides” and “peaceworkers”⁶. Considering how these NGOs characterise Rwandan men and women who have created initiatives that aim to shape social interaction and relations between Rwandans, does not only reveal their vision on them also the way that they conceive of the functioning of Rwandan society and its underlying social logics. If engaging in this way – by going beyond “hatred and bitterness”, not losing hope and bringing together opposed groups, developing considerable activity to help victims – is seen to be outstanding and exceptional, then it is by definition neither regular nor common.

Other than indirectly projecting that a “normal” reaction to the confrontation with genocide and extreme violence would be hate, bitterness, passivity and enmity; it also delivers an evaluation of the morally superior posture to adopt after conflict. By being appreciative of these contemporary heroes (in a symbolic and material way, since some of the prizes are accompanied by a sum of money), these Western organisations project an image of exemplary, or a model type answer of peace-building and desired social change in an African country. They express normative visions of the working of Rwandan social logics. This makes a link to the previous chapter where I tried to put into perspective the academic descriptions of the studied population (cf. page 52). Above it was noted that other than referring to the existence of peace-workers, specific analysis of who they actually are and what they do is very rare. Either authors part from the idea of the omnipresence of the political structure — so that individual actors are seen as puppets executing government orders — or they are somehow glorified and are object of a level

⁴RCN Justice “& Démocratie. 2012. “Si c’est là, c’est ici” – Onze portraits radiophoniques et leur histoire à onze voix. Online available: www.rcn-ong.be/-Si-c-est-la-c-est-ici-?lang=fr

⁵Droits et Démocratie website. 2012. Prix Humphrey Lauréats. Online available: www.dd-rd.ca/site/humphrey_award/index.php?id=609&lang=fr&subsection=past_winners

⁶World Radio Switzerland website. 2011. “Peaceworker blasts UN for past inaction as Rwandans mark 1994 genocide”. Online available: worldradio.ch/wrs/news/switzerland/peaceworker-says-un-means-nothing-as-rwandans-mark.shtml?24060.

of sublimation; turning into heroes.

From the first case derives a position that does not see the need to analyse or understand them any further since they are just the manifestation of a political system that should be at the fore of analysis. While putting them in a position of being outstanding heroes, they are abstracted from the “normal” social logics. Given the fact that they are exceptional, ordinary scientific (sociological) tools are of no help to understand their actions and position within society.

Structure of the chapter In this chapter, I wish to go beyond these predominant perspectives of study. The aim is to understand and describe the object of study before evaluating it, furthermore, to submit it to ordinary scientific analysis. This will be done with the help of the sociology of individual engagement. I will problematise the very idea of engaging for reconciliation in Rwanda by considering the following questions in a new light. Why engage on a personal and individual level for a cause that is already massively promoted by national and international political and non-governmental frameworks? Why appropriate the translation into practice of prescriptions to reconcile outside existing structures dedicated to this objective? Why take up a cause that seems difficult to defend in a post-genocide context?

This second chapter critically explores the predispositions, reasons and motivations for individual engagement for reconciliation between Rwandans by Rwandans by trying to understand this form of individual militant engagement with the help of the sociology of engagement. I therefore underline the need to understand this engagement and also to study it with ordinary sociological tools. This chapter will situate their engagement for the reconstruction of social links as a social activity, or *militant* engagement. It has to be noted that the actors do rarely claim this label for themselves. Analysis of the empirical data has sought an articulation between the so-called objective and subjective dimensions of their biographies.

In order to do so the chapter proceeds in three steps. First, it focuses on the objective dimension of their trajectory in order to estab-

lish who they are, sociologically speaking. As a matter of fact, they are rather heterogeneous in terms of sociological attributes. They also invest different domains of what they conceive to be reconciliation activities. However, through the lenses of the biographical approach, thus combining an analysis of their trajectory and the way these actors make sense of it retrospectively, it is striking to note that the experience of exile and extraversion is an essential similarity between the interviewees (although this had not been a criteria for their selection). However, they have been in exile at very distinctive moments in history, of their lives and duration.

This is why in the second part of the chapter, I will further delve into this category of analysis that is exile and, which allows to situate the actors studied within their respective historical and social context. Indeed, the category of exile turns out to make it possible to better grasp the characteristics of the interviewees. Through the dates of departure from Rwanda and the countries of exile, it is possible to arrive at a more precise description of their position within Rwandan society.

Third, exile stands out as an experience that has crucially marked their external or geographical trajectory and is as well reflected in their subjective interpretations of it. While exile can be found as a biographical rupture, their interpretations all testify to the experience of an emotional turning point in their lives. What is remarkable in the present case is the fact that this rupture is mirrored in the narratives on engagement on a more symbolical or even spiritual level (which does not only resonate with Christian religion but is often linked to new age or Indian philosophy). While the rupture through exile is lived as causing suffering and feelings of hate, the second one tends to reverse this tendency. Most important it is that they ascribe their motivation for engagement as resulting from this experience (in order to share it with the rest of the population).

2.1 Militants of various walks of life

In this section, I will examine who these leaders of reconciliation sociologically speaking are. With the aim to situate their respective social worlds, I will present them according to “objective criteria” (cf. Dubar, 1998, 76). It has to be noted that according to these criteria display a big diversity. Given that they are all highly educated (although in different domains), one could therefore argue that they are in a certain sense representative of Rwanda’s educated “elite”. Below, I will present this diversity and will pay particular attention to the question of education, and religious beliefs and denomination.

In the face of these various walks of life, I propose a new category for reading their profiles that seems more comprehensive than those traditionally applied to Rwandan society. By taking into account the variable of exile, a more complete understanding of their profiles can be gained. If one reads their profiles through a biographical lens, it becomes apparent that they are more similar than the “objective” criteria could lead one to believe. As a matter of fact, (nearly) all the interviewees have at some point in his or her life experienced exile. This experience of a transnationalised trajectory combined with the element of extraversion that results from it, is what links all the studied actors.

2.1.1 Sociological Diversity

When it comes to criteria such as gender, age, “ethnicity”⁷, religious affiliation or region of origin no significant commonality could be established.

Regional origin. Geographical origin has played an important role throughout Rwandan socio-political history⁸. In more recent political

⁷The term is used with caution here; due to the problematic implications, it can carry and the question of its pertinence in the Rwandan context (Amselle and M’bokolo, 1985), cf. chapter 1.

⁸Royal history had been marked by regional divisions and tensions that occurred between, for instance, the central Nyiginya kingdom and smaller kingdoms in the North that refused or rebelled against central authority. Cf. The importance of the Nyabingi cult in this respect. Compare Vansina (2004).

history, tensions were largely exacerbated. Since J. Habyarimana was from Northern Rwanda, the aftermath of his military coup in 1973 meant the (physical) elimination of most of the former ruling elite. His predecessor, G. Kayibanda was from Gitarama, so that he and his entourage were closely associated with Southern Rwanda. T. Karabayinga and J. Kagabo explain that

“un conflit de régions s’était fait jour. Les Rwandais, originaires du Nduga (toutes les préfectures situées au sud de la rivière Nyabarongo), reprochaient à ceux du Rukiga (les deux préfectures du Nord) d’avoir exterminé leurs porte-flambeau et d’avoir confisqué tout l’appareil d’état” (Kagabo and Karabayinga, 1995, 74).

This is the reason why this denominator was taken into consideration with regard to the selection of the interviewees. However, no general tendency as to their regional origin could be revealed.

The “ethnic” question. In chapter 1, it has already been stated that “ethnicity” within the frame of this research is taken into account only as a criterion of self-identification (cf. page 72) given its problematic anthropological implications. However, at the beginning of research, this criterion had been taken into account for sampling since it had been considered a potential marker that might structure the perception of reconciliation. Once more, it can be noted that, therefore, the interviewees represent a wide variety of profiles in this regard.

2.1.2 Value of education and diplomas

All interviewees seem to attach great value to Western-style education. In these terms, they possess diplomas of high degrees. Nearly all of them have obtained the equivalent of a Master’s degree. Quite a big share of them also has completed a PhD. Furthermore, nearly all of them have spent at least one part of their education (or specialisation) abroad.

For one part, this is because they lived in exile for a long time and therefore absolved their education in their country of exile. For others,

they have had scholarships or other possibilities to attend universities abroad⁹.

There is one exception, though, which is Dieudonné Munyankiko who did not complete a university degree at the time of interviewing. Nevertheless, even though he refers to himself as “autodidact”, he attaches great value to this type of education and is currently enrolled in the *National University of Rwanda* in Butare in order to obtain a degree in social sciences¹⁰.

Different specialisations. So, even when considering the degree and type of education as a commonality, it still has to be borne in mind that it has been obtained in very differentiated domains. The following enumeration gives an idea of their diversity.

- Antoine Rutayisire studied English: “*j’étais professeur assistant à la faculté des Lettres, département d’Anglais*”;
- Jean-Paul Mugiraneza, law: “*je suis d’abord juriste*”;
- Gloriosa Bazigaga, economy: “*j’ai fait des études en économie avant [le génocide] et je les ai poursuivies après*”;
- Laurien Ntezimana, theology,
- Simon Gasibirege, psychology: “*moi je suis psychologue*”;
- Naasson Munyandamutsa medicine with a specialisation in psychiatry.

Seen in this way, they belong to rather divergent professional categories. However, not all of them have had the opportunity to work in their domain due to the ruptured history of their country. This has fragmented the professional careers of many (disconnections between their domain of learned expertise and their actual job).

⁹It is striking to note that “Western” universities are considered by the interviewees to detain more valuable knowledge on how Rwanda society should be “reconstructed” than Rwandan or even African ones.

¹⁰Which constitutes a considerable investment of time and energy besides a full-time job.

International support. Their proximity to international agencies and organisations through their work, has allowed for many of them to complement their degree with a post-graduate degree or trainings. The same has been observed by M.E. Pommerolle and J. Siméant who remark that this

“multiplication des formations s’insère dans une dynamique de professionnalisation du militantisme. Et, du fait du caractère de plus en plus professionnalisé du militantisme, au sein des ONG notamment, ce dernier tend à devenir un moyen de combiner engagement personnel et activité professionnelle, rémunératrice et conforme au niveau scolaire” (2008, 138).

Break with parents’ education. With regard to the level of education, another interesting point can be noted. In many cases, the actors studied have made a shift in terms of level and type of education with regard to their parents. To mention but one example, Dr. Mundayamutsa explains that when he was younger, he wanted to study theology and that

*“mon père était pasteur de campagne, donc qui n’a pas fait des études, [...] il en avait fait un petit peu (*rigole*). Et je voulais être comme mon père mais avec une formation autorisée dans le domaine.”*

Similarly to what has been observed by M.-E. Pommerolle and J. Siméant (2008), the socio-economic background of their parents is often “modest”. However, they are privileged vis-a-vis their environment (civil servants, pastors, etc.) and have been able to/accorded attention to sending their children to school. Even though the break with their parents’ education could be considered as a social ascension, this is not necessarily true in all cases given that in the Rwandan context social standing depends on many more criteria than Western-style education.

Excellence in intellectual domain. According to the accounts of the interviewees, most of them seem to have been very good at school

(*“moi j’étais très brillant à l’école”*) which has enabled them to continue education or receive scholarships. They also told about chance encounters with “benefactors” who helped them obtain scholarships, specialisations abroad or positions in their organisation.

Religious education. For many, their scholarly trajectory is marked by interruptions and changes. Often religious education has constituted an alternative that would permit to continue the school education anyways. Many refer to education in so-called *séminaires*, which is normally reserved for a religious career, even though not all of them followed this path to the end.

2.1.3 Religious belief and denomination

Concerning religious affiliation, a relative diversity can be noted as well. While some embraced a full-fledged religious career, others are very critical or distant towards religion. Antoine Rutayisire is an Anglican pastor (in Kigali) and Jérôme Masinzo a Catholic priest (in rural Southern Rwanda). Others are rather uninterested towards religious practice and/or belief.

Crisis of belief. Some report some form of crisis of belief in face of the genocide:

“J’étais dans une famille chrétienne, adventiste, où on avait une pratique. Tout cela m’avait marqué beaucoup dans le cours de ma jeunesse. Mais ça s’est [...] déstabilisé, par la violence, là, les années ’94. Parce que depuis j’ai difficile à avoir les relations avec les religions. Une relation avec Dieu. A cause des enfants, il m’arrive, très très rarement d’aller à l’église”

Simon also explains that:s

“En fait j’avais un grand procès avec Dieu. Pourquoi Dieu a-t-il permis le génocide ?”.

The confrontation with the genocide of 1994 (but also previous exposure to harassment and violence) has therefore shaken the personal belief of many of the interviewees.

Distance towards religious institutions. To this can be added that the church as an institution has lost credibility following its open complicity during the genocide¹¹ and its failure to publicly come to terms with this past. The following statement resumes the disappointment that one part of the interviewees felt with regard to religious institutions in Rwanda:

“Je reproche à l’institution chrétienne, catholique comme protestante et tout ça, ne pas de ne pas avoir empêché les gens de mourir; parce que ce n’était peut être pas leur responsabilité. Mais d’avoir eu un discours d’une institution de dire non au mal et de dire que c’est mal. Nul n’a ouvert la bouche, sauf les individus. L’institution n’a jamais pris la parole. Et c’est terrible, je crois que c’était la faillite de l’institution chrétienne ici.”

Disillusion during religious education. For many, the contact with religious educational structure have also been a moment that has distanced them from their religious beliefs. Representative of other accounts, Jérôme Masinzo reports to have realised a contradiction between his education and social reality when he left his parents’ house to attend the *séminaire*:

“Le problème de méfiance ethnique, je l’ai remarqué quand je me préparais à devenir prêtre au grand séminaire”.

Yet, he still became a priest. Others, such as Naasson or Jean-Paul, even though their education initially put them on the path of becoming

¹¹Plus the failure to pursue prominent members who have been accused to have actively participated in the genocide. Just to give an idea, Consolata Mukangango (Sister Gertrude) and Julienne Mukabutera (Sister Maria Kisito), two Benedictine nuns who have been convicted for genocide in the Belgian process against the “quatre de Butare” in the frame of Belgian universal competence in 2001, had been given refuge in the convent Maredret close to Namur until the charges against them became public.

religious priest/pastor, chose to change. Laurien, on the other hand has also had a moment of distancing from his Catholic belief, so that instead of defending his thesis in theology at the University of Leuven, he published it as a non-thesis under the title of “Libres paroles d’un théologien rwandais: joyeux propos de bonne puissance”. So deciding not to become a priest. However, his initiatives are very close to the Catholic church and corresponding organisations and NGOs (e.g. Misereor).

Religious conversions. All in all, the interviewees adhere to very divergent religious affiliations, some have not changed since their birth while others have converted or changed religion. Laurien and Jérôme are Catholic as well as Solange, who stresses the importance of religious values for her work. Antoine, on the other hand was born Catholic and converted to the Anglican belief. Joseph as well refers to his religious re-birth. Simon also changed to be a laic Franciscan in 2000.

2.1.4 Unity in diversity: the experience of exile

Having noted their relative diversity with regard to these sociological categories and attributes, I would like to draw attention to another way of reading their profiles. When analysing their profiles through the lens of their biography, it emerges that they are actually quite a homogeneous groups with regard to one element: the experience of a biographical rupture.

Biographical ruptures

The work of J. Siméant on humanitarian engagement highlights the weight of biographical ruptures for their subsequent engagement. These “biographical accidents”, as A.L. Strauss (2008*a*) refers to them, can take many different forms such as:

“deuils précoces et violents parmi les intimes, fait d’avoir risqué la mort, exclusions d’institutions (armées, partis...), actes de “trahison” de certains groupes d’appartenance, ex-

ils ou départs forcés du pays d'origine" (Siméant, 2001, 52)¹².

In the Rwandan context, it does not come as a surprise that the interviewees report the experience of ruptures, given the complete cultural and social uprooting following colonisation and different phases of extreme violence culminating in genocide. The interviewees report to have witnessed the assassination of family members in their early life, during the genocide or in refugee camps. What is of interest for this research is the fact, that all interviewees have witnessed and been marked by the violent death of very close family members. The list of moments of rupture in the face of long-standing violence is long: looting (*"Ils ont brûlé mes biens, ils ont tué les vaches de mon père"*), forced departure from home, generalised discrimination, exclusion from school and other institutions, betrayal of friends and family (*"on a été attaqué à maintes reprises, des attaques, souvent, euh, constituées par les membres de notre famille"*), abandonment during the genocide.

Just as J. Siméant has noted for the engagement of the founders of *Médecins Sans Frontières*, these experiences and the resulting shift of marks of reference, can contribute to a certain extent to the modalities of engagement (2001).

Extraversion

The second common feature, that appears through the perspective on their careers via the perspective of exile, is that they present a high degree of "extraversion". Except for Dieudonné, all have known exile. As a consequence, their trajectories have become "transnationalised". Here we this concept is used as proposed by (Basch, Schiller and Blanc, 1994, 342): "we understand "transnational" as an attribute that expresses a style of life of a particular population composed of those whose networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field". As a consequence, it has been argued that

¹²The mostly French-speaking sociological literature on the effect of "bifurcations" that can lastingly change the trajectory of a person are of interest here (e.g. Grossetti (2006); Bidart (2006); Voegtli (2004); Grossetti, Bessin and Bidart (2010)).

“large numbers of people now live in social worlds that are stretched between, or dually located in, physical places and communities in two or more nation-states” (Vertovec, 2001, p. 578). With this the trajectory of the interviewees has acquired a dimension of “extraversion”; through exile and/or through exposure and belonging to the international milieu in Rwanda which most of them have become part of or at least are very familiar with.

A tendency also observed by J. Siméant and M.E. Pommerolle who mention the “histoire longue d’extraversion militante en Afrique” (Pommerolle and Siméant, 2008, 132) (cf. Bayart (1999)). All the actors under study here have worked or are still working for either an international NGO, agency or organisation. In some cases their socialisation in this milieu also happened directly after the genocide. Either they were part of the few remaining people with a diploma that made them eligible for hiring in this milieu or they decided to come back to Rwanda from their exile in order to engage for social reconstruction and put their qualification at the service of a “homeland” that some of them had never seen before. As developed in chapter 3 this exposure has to a large extent shaped their conceptions but also practices of reconciliation.

An extraverted elite

After having given an idea of the sociological attributes of the interviewees, we can wonder how to situate them within Rwandan society? Conducting fieldwork more than a decade before the genocide, C. Vidal refers to the formation of a “quatrième ethnie”¹³ (Vidal, 1991, 28). She refers to a moment of social transition in the post-independence period. The way she analyses social hierarchy, she concludes that the “quatrième ethnie” can be seen in the continuation as a substitute for what has been referred to before as “évolués” (cf. also Semujanga (1998)). These individuals were during colonial times “those that had acquired a European instruction and know-how” (ibid, 28) so that they mastered a “specific cultural capital that gave them access to Westernised jobs and worlds”

¹³For the reasons laid out above, I do not agree as to the pertinence of the term “ethnie”. I, however, refer to Vidal’s analysis of social configurations since it represents a good starting point for this analysis.

(pp. 29). She concludes that after independence, this now unacceptable term and position was replaced by that of the “quatrième ethnique”. According to her, “their power resided and was re-produced in foreign spheres inaccessible to the rural masses” (pp. 30).

This status is not without recalling that of the interviewees and their very particular extraverted status. When referring to their Western-style education and their somehow privileged position in the milieu of international NGOs, of which they master the codes and ways-of-doing, it echoes what Vidal observed some decades earlier when noting the existence of a “system of differences between the holders of modern knowledge or qualification and the farming community that created a symbolic universe specific to the quatrième ethnique: a foreign universe” (pp. 30). Another observer, J. Kagabo, has transferred this category to the post-genocide period when he notes that

“les ministres, les directeurs éclairent leurs bureaux à la bougie, mais les Blancs circulent partout, la “quatrième ethnique” à leurs trousses” (Kagabo, 1995, 114).

In this analysis, we find again the idea of a rather strategic and opportunistic positioning with regard to well paid jobs deriving from outside development and peace-building initiatives. When considering that this particular position has been observed in the immediate post-genocide period, the frustration triggered by it is not too surprising. The massive influx of aid workers after inaction during the genocide, must have been extremely revolting. Another point, that is as much pertinent today as in 1994, is the huge amount of money that is invested in initiatives of which any effect is doubtful, as well as the luxurious lifestyle (marked difference of salary, the possession of status symbols such as jeeps, swimming pools and houses) of outsiders and Rwandans involved in them - a lifestyle that can be in stark contrast with populations that are supposed to benefit from them.

2.2 Transnational(ised) trajectories

The only variable that allows to comprehensively class the actors studied is exile. It is this experience that establishes some form of commonality among otherwise very diverse actors. Below I will try to situate them sociologically through the lens of exile. A closer analysis of the form of exile they experienced, allows to situate these actors not only within their respective social worlds but also within the socio-political and historical context and logics they evolve(d) in. Through the different moments of exile and return, a categorisation of different types of exile can be suggested which in turn permit to situate the actors. Let me begin by presenting some of the references that the former exiles actually made with regard to their exile in order to situate them within their respective social logics. Then I will turn to the historical background of their different moments of exile. This will allow to gain a deeper insight into their position within Rwandan society.

2.2.1 A typology of exile

The “new” Rwanda

Collin Sekajugo who defines himself as an “*artist for a purpose*” has set up a centre for arts called IVUKA Arts located in Kacyiru, a quarter of Kigali in 2007. In a brochure produced by himself and entitled “Art for Social Change” he explains that “I am born from men and women whose blood is rooted from along the upper reaches of the Nile, and also the region of Ancient Ethiopia, mixed with the forests of Cameroon”.

Given that he is of Rwandan origin this geographical “location” of his origins would be a case worth considering, not at least with regard to reminiscence of certain colonial classifications of the Rwandan population (Hamitic hypothesis). Collin explains that he grew up in Kenya, and that “*I come from a difficult background [...] I lost my parents when I was young*”. He is today mostly a painter. IVUKA Arts is also meant to bring other Rwandan artists together, given that after the genocide, the major art school L’Ecole d’Art de Nyundo had been destroyed along with many pieces of art. In an interview published in a special issue

on Rwanda of Peace Review, he explains that he sees his centre as “the beginning of new art and culture in Rwanda, but also a new era for Rwanda. All the artists in the studio are mixed, of different ethnicities and different backgrounds: some, like me, are Rwandans from Uganda or Kenya; some were here during the genocide” (Hron, 2009b, 355)¹⁴. He also created a children’s’ dance troop called RwaMakondera, which brings together street kids and besides from teaching traditional dance and music is also supposed to teach them about reconciliation. These artistic ambitions are summed up when he explains that “*that is the mission I came back with to Rwanda, to use art to change lives*”. When asked for the meaning of “ivuka” he explains the reasons for choosing this name.

“It’s like Rwanda never existed before 94 to many people. Yeah it’s like it never existed. [...] So people don’t consider Rwanda before 94. So many people, especially the people, the new Rwanda, people who have just come. So it’s like a rebirth. Being born again. That’s why I used that word, ivuka.”

This quote is of particular interest considering that it puts into words the rather complete reconfiguration of the social and political make-up after the end of the genocide (“rebirth”). It further brings to expression the experience of spending long years outside the country of origin without being able to go there and being highly critical of the way it functions (“it never existed”). Finally, it makes allusion as well to the political slogan concerning a “new Rwanda” which is shaped to an important extent by the dynamics resulting from the massive return of former exiles and an insistence on the marked discontinuity with pre-genocide politics.

A “typical” Rwandan

Just as if he was responding to this conception of the “new Rwanda”, Antoine Rutayisire, author of the book “Faith under Fire - Testimonies

¹⁴Just as Hope Azeda who grew up in Uganda and has founded a dance troupe Mashirika Arts: “I was a Rwandese in exile”.

of Christian Bravery” defines himself as a “*moi, je suis un Rwandais typique*” Let us briefly take a look at who Antoine actually is.

Box 2 (Antoine Rutayisire).

He was born in 1958 in Eastern Rwanda. Early on in his life he loses his father during the massacres that characterised Rwanda in the 1960's. He studied modern literature with a major in English at the National University of Rwanda and obtains his degree in 1982. Although he first obtains a post as assistant professor in the department, he soon becomes a victim of the “quota policy” of the time — that limits the access of Abatutsi to public functions — and is transferred to a rural school. This is an important source of disappointment for him. In 1990, the former Catholic converts to Anglicanism and starts to work as an Evangelist. Surviving the genocide, he starts working for *African Evangelist Enterprise* after it. Besides being a well-known and respected Anglican pastor, Antoine Rutayisire has also held an important position with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. He was its Commissioner from 1999 to 2002 and its Vice-chairman from 2002 to 2011.

During his second interview, this time in his office in the Anglican church of Remera, he explains that a typical Rwandan was

“comme moi. Euhm, un Rwandais, né ici, qui a grandi ici, qui vit ici et qui mourra ici. Ça c’est un Rwandais typique, qui a connu le Rwanda depuis sa naissance”

The importance that he attaches to this self-qualification becomes visible when noting that at another point in the interview, he uses nearly the same words to describe himself:

“Bon, euh, étant Rwandais, euh, né au Rwanda, qui a grandi au Rwanda, qui a étudié et travaillé au Rwanda, moi je suis un Rwandais typique.”

When put side by side with the conception presented by Collin a possible tension between the groups that these two individuals are somehow representative of, namely returnees (from English-speaking countries) and survivors, appears. Both carry their baggage of painful experience, and both read Rwandan history by putting a highlight on the period that for them carries most importance. While Collin suggests that for people of his walk of life, Rwanda never existed before the end of the genocide and that today's Rwanda is a "new Rwanda", Antoine considers that only Rwandans who were born and have grown up in Rwanda are "typical Rwandans". This somehow excludes exiles, and especially those like Collin that were born outside the country, from the status of typical Rwandans. This is not to suggest that they are openly attacking themselves, nor that they do intend to say this consciously. However, it may be an important cue for reading Rwandan social relations beyond a simplified binary conception bearing in mind multiplicity of experience of *returnees* and *abasopecya*. In this light another statement made by Antoine in 2011 seems of interest:

"Il y a beaucoup de Rwandais qui sont nés à l'extérieur et qui croyaient que le Rwanda était un petit paradis quelque part dans le monde. Qui sont revenus pour trouver que c'était juste un petit pays avec mille problèmes. Donc tu les rencontreras dans la ville, ici, dans le pays."

Here he clearly makes reference to returnees and their assumed idealised conceptions of their "homeland" (or the myth of return as mentioned in the introduction) which is often referred to as the country of a thousand hills due to his very particular hilly geography. He seems to suggest the illusory character of the vision that exiles had of Rwanda. Once inside the country they would, nevertheless, come to terms with the painful experiences which "typical" Rwandans have made in their absence.

At the risk of extrapolating a simple statement from his side, it might be noteworthy that he speaks of the city, Kigali. Many observers have pointed to the fact that especially well-to-do returnees have settled in the capital. Many do simply not feel safe in the countryside, where they

may have experienced the assassination of their family members, and they may feel that their personal security is not as protected as in the city.

Since in this part of the section, the basic aim is to represent as richly as possible the ways in which the interviewees have related their personal experiences of exile, I may also refer to a particular expression of exile which Antoine mentions. Whereas he has spent nearly all of his life inside Rwanda, except for a year of studies in England and some time in a refugee camp during the period of the genocide, he still refers to an exile of an emotional sort when he states the following:

“En fin de compte, les années qu’on a vécu ici jusqu’en quatre-vingt quatorze, c’était des années qui tout le temps vous rappelaient que vous êtes chez vous mais comme si vous étiez à l’étranger.”

Indeed, the idea of exile without leaving one’s country might be controversial. However, the type of experience expressed resonates very strongly with the very idea of exile and estrangement.

The “old” diaspora

The next type of exile which I would like to present, concerns Dr. Naason Munyandamutsa. However, before turning to this, I will quickly present some elements of his biography.

Box 3 (Dr. Naasson Munyandamutsa).

is referred to by some as the “doctor of the nation” so much is his psychiatric advice in the Rwandan media, especially on the radio, valued and wide-known. He has played a pioneer role as first psychiatrist to return to Rwanda and in re-building the only psychiatric hospital, the Ndera Neuropsychiatric Hospital. However, he has also taken up a leading role within civil society as one of the three founders of the *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix* (IRDP), together with Prof. Pierre Rwanyindo Ruzirabwoba and Jean-Paul Mugiraneza. He left Rwanda in the late 1980s, and came back in 1992 in order to see his mother who was very sick. In our interview he explains that he had “*échappé difficilement à la mort*” and that this had been the last time he saw his parents, sisters and brothers (only one of them survived). After obtaining the degree of Medical Doctor from the National University in Butare, he followed a specialisation in psychiatry in Switzerland. He took up studies of medicine after being refused at a séminaire due to the politics of “*équilibre ethnique*”. It is a meeting with a Belgian Benedictine monk from Maredsous and a stay with the patients at the hospital of Ndera that he takes an interest in working in psychiatry. He lives the genocide abroad. Referring to this period of his life, he explains that “*après le génocide, ou pendant, j’ai compris que peut être on ne se soigne pas tout seul [...] et je crois que les gens qui viennent me voir me soignent. Peut être bien que je les soigne un peu, mais je crois qu’ils me soignent beaucoup plus*”.

When recalling his experience of exile, he remembers having the following feelings:

“*Je ne retournerais jamais dans se foutu pays. Parce que j’ai la chance d’être à l’extérieur. Et j’étais vaincu, c’était en 94, que je ne retournerais jamais dans ce foutu pays. Parce*

que un pays où n'habite pas ma mère, mes soeurs, mes frères, n'est pas un pays. Et, je ne sais pas ce qui s'est passé, je suis venu, je suis venu, quand même. Et je suis beaucoup venu jusqu'à ce que je sois venu m'installer. Et je crois que ça c'est un bout de réconciliation avec moi-même"

Naasson was born in Rwanda, done the largest part of his studies and his first work experience in Rwanda. As he states, he has left Rwanda and escaped closely from being killed. His fate is therefore different from the rest of his family (except for one brother who left Rwanda for Burundi) due to the fact that he had been in exile. His way of referring to losing face might be a subtle indication as to feelings of guilt towards this differentiation from his beloved ones and the inability to protect them while being physically safe himself. This psychological burdensome aspect of exile in the Rwandan context cannot be underlined enough.

On the one hand, as probably many other displaced persons, the interviewed former exiles refer to a heightened sense of emotional suffering resulting from displacement, exposure and isolation that this experience brings with it. Some refer to the desire of suicide (and many cases have effectively been recorded) and all of them seem to have lived through periods of material misery and isolation. Simon states that "*mon père était un homme riche. Moi je me suis retrouvé un homme pauvre, mendiant, en Belgique, en France*".

These expression about exile are not without recalling E. Said's *Reflections on Exile*:

"Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind for ever." (Said, 2001, 137).

While Dr. Naasson has spent his years of exile in Europe, others have lived in countries neighbouring on Rwanda. Solange, for instance, whose family had left to Congo from their previous city, Gisenyi in the North of Rwanda in the early 1960's "*pendant les événements*", explains that:

"Le fait d'avoir quitté le pays justement parfois je me posais la question, pourquoi ? Pourquoi j'ai quitté le pays ? Qu'est-ce que j'ai fait ? Moi, je me disais, je n'ai rien fait. Je disais à ma maman qu'est-ce que tu as fait ? Qu'est-ce que la famille a fait ?"

Solange has later on continued her studies in Belgium (*école technique de filles, sœurs Ursulines, Mons*). In the meantime, her family was forced to move to Burundi, where she joined them later on with her husband. She was to spend 26 years there.

Exile during the genocide

Another type of experience has been related by Immaculée, who left Rwanda during the genocide:

*"J'ai vécu au Rwanda, mais en quatre-vingt-quatorze, en fait j'étais au Sud du pays. J'étais à Cyangugu, tout près de la frontière et (.) j'ai passé la frontière. J'ai des amis en Belgique qui m'ont aidé à aller jusqu'en Belgique. Je suis restée là, six mois, euh, je suis allée là au mois de, de mai et je suis revenue en septembre, avec le deuxième vol [*rigole*] après le génocide. [...] Je crois, je me sentais très vulnérable psychologiquement et je voulais connaître l'histoire de mes amis, de ma famille. Il y a beaucoup d'amis qui m'ont dit est-ce que tu peux pas demander à ta famille de venir te rejoindre ici? Ils m'ont d'ailleurs encouragée à demander refuge en Belgique, mais j'ai refusé. J'ai refusé, je tenais à revenir. [...] Et puis quand même je suis, je suis arrivée. Notre mari avait des difficultés à retrouver notre maison. Et j'ai perdu un fils aussi entretemps, oui, en quatre-vingt-quatorze,*

j'avais trois enfants, j'avais deux filles et un garçon, et le garçon, euh, il est porté, il est porté disparu (.)."

This extract from an interview conducted with Immaculée in 2011 in her office.

Just as Antoine, she has lived the genocide from inside the country but after being able to leave the country had a network of people who helped her go to Belgium. However, being herself in safety, physically, she feels vulnerable on a psychological level and uses her first chance to return to Rwanda. The extract also points to the very important question of land disputes and contesting claims to land that have characterised the period of massive post-genocide return.

Post-genocide refugee camps and exile

This account takes us to the end of the genocide, a moment in time when many Rwandans have taken the road of exile while at the same time former exiles felt safe to return home. Josphe Nyamutera, for instance, has left Rwanda in 1994 for the refugee camps of Goma. He refers to this period by stating that

"moi aussi j'ai vécu en exil pendant deux ans" and that "mon père est mort dans le camps, juste quand on est arrivé parce qu'il y avait la choléra et il était déjà vieux donc il pouvait pas tenir"

so that he recalls this period in the following way: *"ce qu'on a vécu dans les camps, tout le monde qu'on a perdu et tout ça qu'on a souffert"*.

As was already mentioned above, the aim is not to demonstrate a judgement of value by putting very different trajectories of exile side by side nor to suggest relativity of suffering. In this subsection, it could be worth mentioning that it is after the genocide that trajectories of exile can be classed under two categories: those that have returned, often in 1996, and those who have remained outside, thereby forming a "new" Rwandan diaspora.

2.2.2 A historical background to exile

All these extracts taken from the interviews, conducted within the frame of this thesis, reflect their accounts of an experience that all the interviewees have in common. Their experience is indeed representative of and reflects the diversity of types of exile Rwandans have experienced since the 1950s. In fact, the accounts collected through the interviews allow to trace the lines of *types* of exile in Rwanda. Indeed, each period in history that is mentioned by the interviewees above corresponds to a given pattern, which can be used to create typologies of exile. It appears that this element added a brand-new dimension within the realm of identification to the interviewees life-story narratives.

Radical social transformation in the 1950's

As a reminder; the 1950's witnessed a radical transformation of social configurations in Rwanda. At the time the Belgian tutelage changed its strategy of rule by shifting its preference for a system of rule by aristocracy, assimilated with the Abatutsi, to a system of rule by popular democracy, assimilated with the Abahutu. Looking back at this period it seems that with the arrival of J.-P. Harroy as governor of the then Ruanda-Urundi and a change in the "air de temps" of Belgium to rule its colonies, political functioning in Rwanda was bound to be transformed. J. Semujanga gives an impression of the caricaturist interpretation to which inside and outside observers simplified the political situation at the time: "Deux camps sont dressés face à face: les "traditionalistes" et "féodaux" Tutsi et les "révolutionnaires" et "serfs" Hutu" (Semujanga, 1998, 162).

UN pressure. In order to understand this shift in support, one needs to take a closer look at the social transformations that had happened at this moment. First of all, it is important to note the outside dynamics that influenced internal political developments. When Ruanda-Urundi¹⁵

¹⁵Ruanda-Urundi, that had been part of German East Africa, came under Belgian military occupation during World War II after military victory over the German troops. From 1924 onwards it had been a League of Nations mandate.

turned from a League of Nations mandate into a United Nations trust territory in 1946 it fell under the supervision of the Trusteeship system. The ultimate aim of this system was “to promote the advancement of the inhabitants of Trust Territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence”¹⁶. Several United Nations missions visited therefore Rwanda, and produced a range of reports (in 1948, 1951, 1954 and 1957) that were highly critical of the Belgian style of governing the trusteeship (especially with regard to abusive physical punishment of the population and heavy dues) and pushed the Belgian government to implement measures that would lead the country to independence quickly (Viret, 2010).

The spectre of Communism. At the same time, the spectre of Communism seemed to haunt Belgian policy-makers in Brussels who feared a loss of control in Rwanda as the one that had happened with Patrice Lumumba (that ended in his killing). Together with these external pressures other social transformations happened also inside Rwanda. The traditional elite had mainly been educated at the *Groupe Scolaire Officiel Astrida* (now Butare). This school founded in 1929¹⁷ was meant to dispense a Western-style education to young members of the traditional elite in order to be prepared to serve in the colonial administration.

A new counter-elite

The 1950’s witnessed the emergence of a new “counter-elite” who can be described as “university-educated Hutu” (Viret, 2010, 13) and as having received Catholic education at the Nyakibanda *séminaire*¹⁸. Two outstanding figures of this new elite, that had its social basis in Gitarama, are Mbonyumutwa Dominique (to become Rwanda’s first (provisional)

¹⁶Source: United Nations Trusteeship Council website (www.un.org/en/mainbodies/trusteeship).

¹⁷By a convention between the colonial government and the catholic church (thereby delegating state education to the church), Frères de la Charité

¹⁸Note the importance of the Nyakibanda and Kabgayi *séminaires* for the education and influence of this elite and the creation of networks within the Catholic church. It is probably very significant for the later development of events that Grégoire Kayibanda has attended both of these seminaries and that he had been personal secretary of Monsignor Perraudin.

president in January 1961) and Kayibanda Grégoire (prime minister in 1961 and president after elections in October 1961).

Most experts and observers concur as to the diagnosis that members of this elite were increasingly frustrated with regard to the perceived mismatch between their level of education and their social status and positions they could obtain¹⁹. The newspaper *kinyamateka* (with Kayibanda as chief editor) came to be the mouthpiece of the formulation of these frustration and the demands for change of social organisation and hierarchy; thereby challenging the legitimacy of traditional authorities.

Catholic allies. The catholic church endorsed, supported and influenced their conceptions and demands strongly, as attested by the “Lettre Pastorale de Monseigneur Perraudin”, vicar apostolic of Kabgayi in lent 1959. Several scholars working on Rwanda concur that this letter assures the “church’s support for Hutu demands” (cf. Viret who quotes Reyn-tjens and Chrétien). The catholic church therefore becomes a powerful ally of this newborn movement challenges the monarchical system. This alliance does not come as a surprise considering that since the arrival of the first missionaries (pères blancs) the relations between the royal court and the church had been tense, due to a sceptical attitude of the court vis-à-vis the catholic religion²⁰.

Kingship and Christianity

A brief overview on the succession of kings at this period illustrates the evolution of these relations. Mwami Yuhi V Musinga came to power in 1896 through the coup de palais of Rucunshu²¹ (Des Forges, 2011). While the neutral position of the Germans towards religious practice had caused little trouble in this domain (and the traditional cult to the ancestors had continued), the arrival of the Belgian changed the picture.

¹⁹This is probably not true for Mbonyumutwa since he was a sous-chef.

²⁰C. Vidal (1974) offers very rich observations on these tensions, the social evolution and gradual implantation of Christian religion in Rwanda and resistances to the pressure of conversion.

²¹This coup initiated an unorthodox and forced succession of monarchs which was the culmination of a violent rivalry between ruling clans.

Musinga's opposition to conversion. Musinga is reported to have been extremely opposed to the Christian religion and refused to convert to it²². Vidal cites one of her interviewees who lived at that period and explains that under the rule of Musinga there were very little Rwandan Christians to be found and that they had been looked down upon (often the Christian mission were a refuge for those that had an outsider status within traditional society), so that they were called “ibisome” or “ceux qui ont bu le poison des Blancs” (Vidal, 1974, 67).

Many agree that it was due to Musinga's staunch opposition to convert that the Belgian authorities decide to overthrow him, so that he is deposed in November 1931 (forced to hand down the royal insignia and drum) and sent into exile. He was replaced through Belgian intervention (and not the traditional advisors, abiru) by his son who took up the reign as mwami Mutara III Rudahigwa three days later.

Rudahigwa's conversion. Contrary to his father, he chose collaboration with the colonial rulers. Although, he gave in to demands of conversion many observers agree that this was more of a strategy than submission and that he was opposed to the principle of colonial rule. Rusagara (2009), for instance notes that “though Rudahigwa had let Rwanda down “giving” it to the Christian king²³ by surrendering Kalinga [the royal drum] and converting to the alien religion, it was tactful of him to choose “submission” by converting to Christianity [...] instead of engaging in an antagonistic “confrontation” with the colonialists [...] a confrontation that had led to the deposition of his father, Musinga” (128). Contrary to his father, he had received Western-style education and also attached great importance to the installation of schools, particularly challenging the catholic monopoly on education (favouring laic education and building a Muslim school).

²²Different sources mention that he cursed his daughter in reason of her conversion.

²³October 1946 he consecrated Rwanda to Christ.

Elite opposition transposed to politics

So is it that, just as J. Semujanga has described it, the internal evolution within these two elites and the resulting impact on social dynamics resulted in a (perceived) opposition between two groups: those that are seen to be traditionalists and the other revolutionaries. Two positions that are epitomised by two elites. The “old” elite is seen as dangerous for the influence of the church suspected to foster Communist ideas, opposed to colonial rule and putting forward a non-ethnicised vision of Rwandan society. The “new” elite on the contrary is presented to be revolutionary and the church could count on their allegiance²⁴.

Political relays. Both have had political relay, the first with the foundation of *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (UNAR) and the second with the foundation on October 9, 1959 of the *Parti de l’Emancipation du Peuple Hutu* (PARMEHUTU) under leadership of Kayibanda. A final break seems to appear between the formerly favoured elite and the colonial administration with the foundation of the political party UNAR by François Rukeba et Prosper Bwanakweli²⁵ on September 3, 1959 which tries to regroup support around the personality of the king and asks for immediate independence (Semujanga, 1998, 163).

As a result the country witnesses ideological and social transformation that are expressed in a constellation where colonial rulers together with the catholic church team up with the new elite and are in opposition with the old one. While the former made the obtention conditional on the obtaining of a number of demands and made independence conditional on it, it was demanded by UNAR immediately. It is around this time also that the “ethnic question” comes to the fore of public and political debate²⁶. Subsequently, the struggle between elites comes to

²⁴Vidal notes that catholic religious practice became part and parcel of the Hutu movement.

²⁵The UNAR general secretary, Michel Rwagasana, is executed in January 1964 together with P. Bwanakweli in Rwanda under G. Kayibanda’s presidency. The fact that Michel Rwagasana is today one of Rwanda’s “national heroes” that are celebrated every February 1st, the National Heroes Day, can probably give indications as to a certain ideological proximity.

²⁶Manifeste de Bahutu (Semujanga et al., 2010) (March 24, 1957): which calls for

be read in racial/ethnic terms, a reading which is so that transferred to rest of population. Political rallies are characterised by violence (and reprisal of the group that is associated with the political movement).

The death of a king

The year 1959 is charged with (violent) changes in the country's political and social make-up. Or as F. Rusagara puts it, this year "would see the face and fabric of Rwandan society completely change". First of all, the death of mwami Mutara Rudahigwa on July 25, 1959 in Bujumbura has to be mentioned. He died indeed under very strange circumstances; being on his way to New York (supposedly to present the case of Rwanda's independence before the UN) he died while visiting a Belgian doctor for a medical check-up.

Rumours on his poisoning (especially since he had not been reported to be sick before) on behalf of the colonial authorities spread directly. Since no autopsy has been conducted, they have not been diverted until today (Viret, Rusagara). His funeral took place on the 27th of July and the abiru at the same occasion proclaimed his step-brother (since Mutara had left no children), Kigeli V, to be his successor, to the disgruntlement of the Belgians. F. Rusagara speaks of the then 21 year old's "youthful ineptitude" (134) that did not allow him to play a decisive diplomatic role in the events to come.

The "revolution" of 1959

These rapid transformation culminate in what some refer to as a "social revolution" and others a "révolution assistée"²⁷, as J.-P. Harroy describes it in his book (1989). As a consequence, Rwanda turns from a monarchy into a republic before its official independence in 1962. These social transformations have been accompanied by massive massacres of the population and resulted in "vagues successives" in 1959-60; 63,66; 73 (Kagabo and Karabayinga, 1995, 66) of Abatutsi refugees that were tar-

ethnic mention on identity card to be kept; *Détail historique de règne des Banyiginya au Rwanda* (May 17, 1958) (Kagabo, 125; Rusagara, 131)

²⁷For a good overview, consult: Byanafashe (2004b) and Byanafashe (2004a).

geted systematically. To mention but one marking date in this chronology of departure, the so-called *Toussaint rwandaise* of 1959 resulted in the death of several hundred people, the burning and destruction of numerous houses and several thousands of refugees outside the country (cf. Vidal, 26; Viret, 17). No exact numbers do exist but estimates situate the number of refugees to be around several hundred thousands²⁸.

Political space extending beyond borders. In this light it is interesting to note two socio-political developments that resulted from the massive exodus. On the one hand, the UNAR set up a government in exile outside the country and the period also witnessed the raids of the so-called *inyenzi*²⁹ (1963; 65-66) who attempted an unsuccessful return in arms (Kagabo, Semujanga).

The king Kigeli in exile. The king Kigeli left Rwanda 1961³⁰, to lobby with UN SG for Rwanda's independence in Kin) and prevented by Belgians to come back. Since then he had been in exile in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and has received political asylum in the USA in 1992, where he lives up to today. The fate of the king also inscribes itself in the tendency of the political space to grow beyond Rwanda's borders and represents as well the fact that large fraction have been outside the country since the 1950's. However, to the difference of the returnees of '94, he has not returned since³¹.

²⁸J. Kagabo speaks of a "bataille de chiffres" raging between the different observers, and refers to a report by A. Guichaoua that treat this issue; "Le problème des réfugiés et des populations banyarwanda dans la région des Grands Lacs Africains", UNCHR. The book "Exilés, réfugiés, déplacés en Afrique centrale et orientale" edited by the same author (2004), although presenting a positioned interpretation of events, also offers an interesting collection of primary sources dating from this period.

²⁹Rusagara reports that they effectively had received military training in Communist China.

³⁰A website dedicated to H.M. King Kigeli V, subtitled "Every Noble Activity makes room for Itself" (www.kingkigeli.org). He rallies behind him a royalist movement favouring his return to Rwanda. The royalists that have been encountered during fieldwork in Brussels put forward the unifying capacity of the royal institution; supposed to be above the Abahutu/Abatutsi divide.

³¹It seems that the question of his return is dependent on the status that he would accept. While the royalist position favours a return of the king as a return of the monarchy, the official position seems to make his return conditional on accepting his status as a Rwandan citizen.

To conclude, for the analysis that will follow this historical overview is important to retain since it delivers the clues to the contextualisation of interviewees narrative and their identification. Figuratively speaking, one can say that the time a person left Rwanda can tell who he or she is, thus pointing out at the striking role of historical context to the topic of consideration here.

2.2.3 Cycles of exile

When looked at from a long-term historical perspective, it stands out that a cyclical (forced) movement of exile and return has been a characteristic shaping social logics of Rwandan society since at least the 1950's. From the time of demands for independence by the elite formerly favoured by the Belgian coloniser, an important share of the Rwandan population found itself outside the country. Reading Rwandan history in this light, it appears that dates of departure/return and countries of exile are one of the major keys to grasping the social logics that have shaped the course of events since at least the 1950's. It has to be born in mind that the question of who left the country when and for which destination is a very sensitive one; given that it may reveal a lot of information on the person concerned. Furthermore, just as (m)any other questions on Rwanda it is dealt with in a rather polemic manner by the scholarly community.

Linking outside-inside. To give but one example, some authors tend to link up the fate of the Rwandans inside Rwanda with the actions of those outside. Some go as far as declaring that the actions of those outside justifies the death of those inside. Especially with regard to the *inyenzi* return movement and the attack of the RPF in 1990, some consider that "Rwanda's 1994 genocide was a retaliation by the state's Hutu regime to a violent challenge from the Tutsi rebels who invaded from Uganda in 1990" (Kuperman, 2004, 61); so that it was "provoking genocide". In a less explicit, but nevertheless rather ambiguous way, D. Newbury explains that "for many people these refugees [of the time of decolonisation] became victims of their own making". Convinced that it

was “local-level resentment³² of the monarchical state [that] led eventually to the overthrow of the dynastic line” (261). So that the “privileged class [...] became the target of retribution” (271), which is confusing given that thousands were killed or found themselves outside the country³³. Further on, he notes that “the second stage [of the “revolution” on 59] occurred [...] in 1963-1964 [...]. It was initiated from the refugee community itself, as youthful members of the exiled families launched several attacks on the country from outside [...]. The response to these attacks formed the second stage of this struggle [...] in which a wide range of Tutsi were targeted” (272). Although it is maybe not exactly what the author wants to suggest, it seems very ambiguous to state that the result of “mortality estimates range from 10,000 to 14,000, while the estimates of refugees ranged to over one hundred thousand” have been “initiated from the refugee community itself” and were a “response” to the attacks from outside (272). With this information at the back of the mind, I will present a brief overview of the historical events that may help to grasp the cues to understanding of contemporary social logics below.

Prior to independence

The 1950's constituted an important moment, however it has not been the first and only moment in history during which Rwandans have left the territory of Rwanda. D. Newbury mentions “four historical movements clusters” (Newbury, 2005, 260), two of them being situated prior to the 1950's. First he mentions, the “earliest ‘cluster’ of people of Rwandan culture outside the current boundaries of the Rwandan state [which] predates the concept of ‘Rwanda’ as a territorial state” (261) and who according to him “fled the precolonial expansion in the area” (260)

³²The question on whether monarchy was abolished due to local “resentment” or colonial interference is hotly debated. Some, that would contradict Newbury's thesis, put forward that the people involved in the killings and burnings of houses that took place at the period of decolonisation had thought to have received the orders to do so by the king himself.

³³Which is contradicting his observation that “not all Tutsi were of the administrative class - in fact probably no more than 10 percent held administrative positions” (272).

about “2,000 to 3,000 years ago” (262). This departure from Rwanda is not of primary interest for the study here, given that “mobility was not associated with exile; ‘home’ was associated with a set of social networks [...] rather than with any particular locale” (262).

Even though it seems difficult to judge the perception of departure from Rwanda by the people of that time, I am not so much interested in their reasons of departure but will rather consider the social importance of an important group³⁴ of kinyarwanda-speakers in the region. D. Newbury mentions that “because of the arbitrary vagaries of defining colonial boundaries, in recent times many Kinyarwanda speakers have been located in what is today Uganda and Congo as well as Burundi and Tanzania” (263). For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to bear in mind that “the extent of Rwandan culture (at least as defined by language patterns) differ[s] from the colonially constructed boundaries” (ibid) since this has had important consequences for social dynamics resulting from return to Rwanda post-1994.

Colonial economic migrants. Second, Newbury makes reference to “colonial economic migrants” (261). Even if the expression that they were “recruited” appears as under-statement given the conditions of colonisation, Rwandans who left Rwanda to work elsewhere in the Belgian colony Congo (to work on farms or in mines, 267). J. Rumiya, for instance, mentions the heavy impact of forced labour and transportation on Rwandan society. He proposes that “le portage”, which was imposed and mostly unpaid mainly put into practice under the Belgian regime, indicated “les temps forts de l’emprise coloniale sur la société rwandaise” (Rumiya, 1992, 63). Not only had its burdensome nature killed an important number of Rwandans, but it also placed many outside the country.

This type of departure does not seem extremely pertinent for the purpose of the present argument. However, it might be of interest to note that J. Nyamutera explained that he had spend parts of his youth

³⁴It is generally acknowledged that this group is rather big in numbers given that “Kinyarwanda and Kirundi speakers form the largest Bantu language group outside of Kiswahili” (263).

in the Katanga region of Congo, since his parents were working in the mines there. This information probably reveals insight into on the one hand the social position of his family and it also might indicate that they must have had a particular position in Rwandan society when coming back with decolonisation.

The “old” diaspora

The third “cluster” Newbury refers to are “refugees at the time of decolonisation”. This group is made up of “Rwandans who fled Rwanda during and subsequent to the struggle of decolonisation (1959-1964)” (261).

The fourth and final cluster “of extraterritorials was formed of the millions of refugees who fled Rwanda in the wake of the genocide of 1994” (261). These two categories serve as basis for analysis but would merit to be complexified.

Exchange of diasporas. Indeed, the observation of an “échange des diasporas” in country of settlement and origin that I have alluded to in the introduction can give the impression of two blocs of population whose movements in and out the country are diametrically opposed. Even though, they surely represent a certain aspect of conflictual social relations in Rwanda, the picture of migration and exile cannot be limited to it only as we shall see below.

When taking a closer look at the different emblematic dates of departure that have characterised Rwandan history of the last six decades, I earn further insight into the positions and belongings of our interviewees. The first period of this chronology could be the period of the late 50’s and 60’s. There are years and dates that mark particularly important moment of departure (and massacre), such as 1959-60, 1963 and 1966. The Rwandans who left Rwanda at this times are often referred to as “ancienne diaspora” (a denomination which also includes those that left Rwanda in later years but prior to 94).

The former elite Here, it is significant to note that an important part of those that left at this time belonged to the former educated (and noble) elite of Rwanda who left mainly for Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zaïre and Kenya (and also Europe and the US). Kagabo explains that

“l’élite rwandaise exilée présentait la double caractéristique de compter en son sein des cadres relativement bien formés (assistants médicaux ou vétérinaires; techniciens agronomes; enseignants, surtout) et d’avoir combattu le colonialisme. C’est ce qui permit aux premiers réfugiés de parvenir à une relative insertion sociale dans les pays d’asile (le cas du Zaïre [...] est le plus frappant)” (1995, 68).

Newbury also notes that Rwandans exiles of that time “held influential professional administrative and commercial positions” (273). And points to Barthélémy Bisengimana who had been Mobutu’s *chef de cabinet*. It could also be noted that these Rwandans markedly contributed to the intellectual and cultural life of especially Kinshasa, where many of Rwanda’s scholars have taught and worked before.

With regard to this research, it is interesting to focus on this educated elite segment since it represents the experience of some interviewees. With regard to this group, Kagabo mentions the “ ‘stratégies d’intégration’ (scolarisation systématique, adoption de la nationalité du pays d’accueil)”.

Collège Saint-Albert The story of the *Collège Saint-Albert* seems of particular interest here, since it permits to have a closer look at the different forms of organisation that the Rwandan exiles set up. This college had been founded in 1963 in Zaïre but had to move to Burundi in 1964. With the help of the organisation *Association des Parents et Amis du Collège Saint-Albert* (APACA) and the support of Burundi, the college mainly functioned on the principle of solidarity that stipulates that former students after having finished their university studies would volunteer as teachers for at least one year (without salary, accommodated by community). This college obtained the status to deliver diplomas equivalent to the state diplomas and has formed a large share

of Rwandans in exile at that moment. What is interesting about this particular phenomenon is that it represents

“un des lieux où l’on apprend à réfléchir sur l’histoire du Rwanda à travers celle de l’exil” (Kagabo and Karabayinga, 1995, 69).

I argue that this does not only apply to this Collège Saint-Albert, but is a generalised feature of Rwandan history. This is true in more than one respect. It does not only demonstrate the strong presence of Rwandans abroad and the forging of their careers outside Rwanda, but also is a very good (and little documented) illustration of the networks of solidarity and mobilisation of Rwandans across borders. Solange, for instance, explains that in Brussels Rwandan dance troops were set up that performed in order to collect money for the Collège Saint-Albert (and later also the RPF).

“Et là on a commencé la troupe culturelle pour aller danser, on allait danser en Belgique, on allait danser en Hollande, un peu partout. Pour avoir l’argent d’aider le collège St. Albert. Et pour résoudre le problème de professeurs qualifiés, nous avons fait un engagement que quand on termine nos études, au moins une année ou deux il fallait travailler bénévolement au collège St. Albert pour aider les enfants réfugiés rwandais”.

However, this exile population was not only made up of the elite. Other Rwandans had also settled in the above-mentioned neighbouring countries, often in refugee camps. As described by Newbury referring to Western Uganda and R. van der Meeren (1996) referring to Tanzania, although the policies of each country towards these refugees varied and the refugees themselves of course also adopted different strategies, they encountered more difficulties to establish themselves and remained rather vulnerable in their environment. This has also been the case for the elite, most of which had to leave in Kinshasa hastily in the mid-90’s at the height of anti-Rwandan violence.

Continued departures Other dates are important to mention, such as the 1973 coup d'Etat by J. Habyarimana that was once more followed by massive massacres of the Abatutsi population but also of the former ruling elite from the South (Gitarama) who had regrouped around president Kayibanda. As was shown through the extract taken from the interview with Immaculée and Antoine, the genocide also constituted a moment of departure (for those that managed to escape). The account from Naasson also indicates that the years preceding the genocide have also caused important departure.

The “new” diaspora

The next date, that is of interest, is July 1994 when an estimated two million Abahutu left the country and settled in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, while others moved to Europe and North America. Belgium has a particular status due to the fact that it is host to a considerable community of Rwandans and due to strong historical (colonial) ties.

Belgium as host country. This presence is not only attributed to colonial ties but also ties of friendship and profession. Today, much of the former Rwandan pre-genocide elite and high-ranking officials are today living in Belgium. So that many members of the pre-genocide elite find themselves there; among them also genocide suspects (Omaar, 2008, pp. 182).

With regard to this type of situation, S. Dufoix suggests that the choice of the host country is rarely matter of chance but often dependent on the tolerance of the country towards political opposition activity (2005, 11). The return of an important part of this population happened and is still happening in two stages.

The post-1994 refugee camps. The first was the forced and military dismantling of the refugee camps in neighbouring countries (polemics around this have been addressed in the introduction). An event that has been lived by Joseph as described above. Especially since he noted

that his status as a “returnee” (a term that interestingly is used interchangeably for those that returned in 1994 and 1996) did earn him a lot of mistrust within Rwandan society. He explains he had been refused a job in these grounds and that “the church was not a refuge for the returnees at all, as some Tutsi Pastors, (fortunately not all), suspected every Hutu to be a killer. Maybe they were right in that attitude, how should they know who killed and who did not?”³⁵. The second stage consists more of the incitement to return of this group (cf. chapter 4).

2.2.4 Social worlds and dates of departure

As much as the dates of departure tell one aspect of a person’s history and its belonging to social worlds so do the countries of exile. Let us turn back to the 1950’s and the historical moment when claims for independence became more and more pressing. When examined more closely, the dates and countries of exile from this moment onwards can tell us the story of the socio-political context. So that the oral accounts that I have collected reveal a chapter of Rwandan history.

The different moments and interactions between particular social groups, the logics structuring them and recompositions in social hierarchy from the years preceding independence can be told through the different moments of exile. But not only do these indicators open the doors to a more complex vision on Rwandan history, they also allow us to situate the actors studied within the lines of types of exiles. The establishment of types of trajectories through a historical approach can help to better situate the individual trajectories studied here so as to evaluate their social significance. Even though, there are of course exceptions to the rule, the dates and countries of exile are an interesting indicator as to the social status or the belonging to particular social worlds of a person.

This is true in the sense that on the one hand certain profiles have been persecuted and felt constrained to leave (in order to save their life)

³⁵Cf. page 6 of a document entitled “Joseph NYAMUTERA’s story” which can be found on the website of Le Rucher Ministries Great Lakes which he is currently working for as director of the reconciliation ministry: www.lerucher.org/Content/Reconciliation/Joseph_Bio.html

at particular moments in time (e.g. *toussaint rwandais*) and certain types of profiles have left for certain types of countries. Fieldwork suggests that often a parallel can be drawn between the social status and the country of exile.

It seems that destinations in Europe and North America are considered as rather privileged places of exile (considering also the barriers to entry put into place by these countries), whereas neighbouring countries to Rwanda are seen in a different light by many. In the same sense, the question concerning the fine line dividing those that left and those that chose or were constrained to stay. In some cases, subtle tensions can be perceived between these groups, i.e. returnees and survivors.

In the end, this should not lead to the too simple conclusion that social standing can be directly derived from the country of exile. One also has to bear in mind that many preferred to live in a country of Africa and that racial discrimination in Europe and Northern America does not always make them as desirable a country of refuge as some policy-makers like to believe.

Fieldwork conducted in Belgium suggests that many Rwandans voluntarily moved to African countries. Although the fact that a Rwandan has found himself doing a part of his studies at a particular university in Switzerland, for example, may tell which social circles he is part of and which networks he may have constituted back in Rwanda, it may also be a concordance of circumstances or chance encounters. It may also be of importance to consider how policies are defined criteria that make different types of profiles of Rwandans eligible to be considered as political refugees³⁶. On the other hand, even without considering the social determinants for a particular country of exile, this factor still bears crucial importance. As explained below, the country of exile is essential for mutual categorisation. In that sense, it is not uncommon to refer to a group of Rwandans that have spent exile in Burundi as “*les Burundais*”, in Congo as “*les Congolais*” or in Uganda as “*les Ougandais*”

³⁶The UNHCR estimates that since the mid-90's about 3.4 million refugees have returned to Rwanda. “But 60,000-65,000 Rwandans still live in asylum countries, including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Uganda” (www.unhcr.org/4addd7fd9.html). The Rwandan government calls for the cessation of status of refugee for Rwandans.

so expressing the conception that their country of exile has left a mark (cf. chapter 3). Another question is the official language besides that has recently been switched from French to English. This switch can be regarded as a consequence of the fact that Rwandans have lived in countries of residence with other official languages than French (that had been imported under colonial rule) and kinyarwanda (many of the returnees speak better kiswahili than kinyarwanda) and the possible resulting tensions between these groups.

To conclude the first sub-section of this chapter, the chronology of departure that as been linked up with the trajectories of the interviewees allow to situate them with regard to the “objective” dimension of their trajectory. When placing their personal experience of exile in the respective socio-political context, one can better understand their situation within Rwandan society. Most interesting, for this research question is the fact that the interviewees represent the diversity of types of exile (and emblematic dates of departure) that Rwandans have experienced. For instance, leaving Rwanda in 1959 during the above-mentioned *tous-saint rwandais* represents a very different experience than those that left Rwanda in July 1994 and settled in refugee camps close to the border. Simon left Rwanda in the 1960’s (taught among others in the university in Kinshasa) and returned shortly after the genocide while Joseph left in July 94, lived in a refugee camp in Goma until being forced to return to Rwanda in 1996. These two types of exile are generally considered as expressing the belonging to “opposed” groups within Rwandan society. Indeed, both recall attaching particular negative feelings towards Rwandans that have lived the other’s type of exile. Interestingly, both live their personal turning point with regard to the exposure to the experience of exile of a significant other. Indeed, as mentioned below it structures their internal turning point.

2.3 Engagement as “vocation”

After having illuminated the “objective” dimension of the trajectories of the interviewees and the sociological and historical background to it, let us turn to the subjective dimension. As was demonstrated above, the actors interviewed are of a striking disparity when it comes to sociological characteristics and attributes.

Therefore, it is particularly intriguing to remark the very similarity with which they all relate the reasons for their engagement for reconciliation. The following two vignettes³⁷ render a representative impression of how my interviewees responded to the question on the underlying motivations for the work they do.

Kigali (July 14th, 2010) The interview with Jean-Paul Mugiraneza is scheduled in the newly-built conference room of the *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix* (IRDP) situated in Gisozi close to the *Université Libre de Kigali*. He is one of its three co-founders. He explains that “*je suis né dans la diaspora [...] au Congo*”. This had left him with a “*frustration en moi de ne pas avoir de pays*”. Which he felt as a “*interpellation permanente qu’on est apatride*”. Once he had arrived in Rwanda, he felt that “*une fois qu’on a un pays, il faut qu’on le maintienne, il faut que ça soit stable*”. His wish to create the IRDP, was born from the reflection that “*si on ne contribue pas à diminuer la méfiance et la tension, quoi qu’on fasse ça va se reproduire*”. Asked why he chose to leave a well-paid job with the United Nations Development Programme, he answers in the following way: “*Je sais pas. Je sais pas. C’est peut être une vocation. Je sais pas*”. He comes back to this idea further on in the interview where he describes his work like this: “*Ce travail*

³⁷One last remark on the presentation of the empirical findings. The research design was oriented to an inductive exploration of the topic. The analysis of the data focused on the question of how they make sense of their trajectory and how they did explain the motivation for engaging. The interpretation presented here emerged from the data and has been linked to theory later on. However, for the sake of making it more easy for the reader to follow the train of thought, I have chosen to present first the theoretical background and then the results of data collection with illustrations taken from the interviews.

est épuisant mentalement et physiquement. C'est plus une vocation que vraiment un travail.”

This vignette demonstrates a peculiarity that has been noted through the systematic atlas.ti analysis of the interviews. Although, and as seen above, a share of the interviewees declare to be either not religious or have a rather critical stance towards religious practice, nearly all of them make use of a very religiously inspired vocabulary by referring to their engagement and work as “vocation”. The same goes for the way that Dieudonné Munyankiko describes the reasons for his engagement as the following vignette will show.

Butare (June 29th, 2010) I meet Dieudonné Munyankiko early in the morning at the Association Modeste et Innocent (AMI) located on the main road in the centre of Butare. The 34 year-old is one of the founding members of AMI and is today its assistant coordinator. The end of the genocide found the then 18 year-old without job, and the urgent need to find work since he was “*seul, bon, à pouvoir aider la famille*”. He explains that “*on venait de vivre l'enfer*”. He remembers that when in October 1994 he hears a radio communication proposing jobs in a movement initiated by Laurien Ntezimana and Modeste Mungwarareba that “*je ne savais même pas ce que ça voulait dire mais comme j'étais là en train de ne rien faire*”. He describes that he and the others who responded to the call were “*des jeunes paysans sans aucune, bon, à des connaissances très limitées*”. Munyankiko explains that “*je suis tombé là dedans. Et depuis lors, je suis resté, voilà*”. Asked why he stayed for this very considerable time (1994-2010) he answers as follows: “*je vois qu'il y avait peut être une certaine vocation, si je peux utiliser le langage religieux. Donc il y avait peut être cette vocation*”.

2.3.1 Cognitive dimension of individual engagement

Let us briefly recall the theoretical backdrop of this analysis (cf. section 1.3.3, page 61). The aim is to articulate the “subjective” and the “ob-

jective” dimension of the trajectories of the individuals under study. In the first part of this chapter I laid out the “objective” elements of their biography. I will now turn to the question of how they make sense of their biography. And, more precisely, how they relate the motivations for engaging. So what I have been looking for throughout the data analysis, are the “motifs” for their engagement. O. Fillieule defines them as a

“verbalisation permettant en situation de produire des justifications du comportement”

and adds that they

“dépendent d’une culture donnée et la justification des conduites individuelles s’exprime dans les catégories générales du langage” (Fillieule, 2001, 204).

This perspective indicates that even though a certain discourse might be imposed on the actors under study, it cannot be denied that this discourse in itself has to be analysed within the historical and cultural context that it is situated in. When defining a “motif” as a

“un acte de langage qui s’inscrit dans un vocabulaire disponible pour les acteurs sociaux et leur permet d’interpréter une conduite”

Issac Joseph underlines the importance of the availability of a certain frame for discursively explaining engagement (quoted in Fillieule, 2001, 204). Far from being only strategic the choice of engagement is also determined by subjective perceptions and choices of the individual. In the beginning of this chapter, it was already pointed out that at each stage of a career the new choices are determined by the ones taken in the past.

Accordingly, their lived experiences influence on the one hand the way in which they discursively tell their engagement but also why they made the choice to engage to begin with. Consequently, their engagement is shaped by their trajectory but also by the sense they give to it. Here, I do not wish to distinguish or classify in which ways their words express a certain “truth” or not. But I am interested in their personal interpretations of their life history.

2.3.2 Engagement and conversion narratives

At issue is how these actors relate the motifs of their engagement during the interviews? Despite the disparity of their profiles, backgrounds and events of their lives, when it comes to talking about the reasons for engaging in the domain of reconciliation all of them adopt a strikingly similar narrative. In fact, through systematic analysis with atlas.ti a common narrative framework could be distilled. In fact, I argue that their discourses on engagement can be considered to be narratives of conversion.

As a reaction to the question about why they do the work they do, all state that in order to understand this very engagement one needs to know their personal history. A common reaction is the one by A. Rutayisire, who takes up my question on the origin of his work like this: *“Puisque tu m’as demandé mon histoire, je te raconte mon histoire”*.

So what are the stories they told me? Of course, every story has been different, however, each one of them is structured around certain elements that are recurring. At the risk of simplifying otherwise very complex life histories and of giving the impression of a certain coherence, causality or linearity that do probably not exist as such, focusing on these essential dimensions of their narratives gives helpful clues as to the personal interpretation and representation of their trajectory.

When boiling down these oral life histories to the recurring elements, their engagement is presented as resulting from the succession of three major cornerstones in their life.

The narrative structure

Everything is presented to begin with a **quest** for meaning and understanding of their existence. This quest is felt as a constant questioning or suffering that finds an answer or solution at an important **turning point**. A symbolical and/or spiritual rupture that drastically changes their way of positioning themselves in life and also their (self-) perception. From this point onwards, they describe a passage towards another possibility of being. All of them report to have been transformed. In retrospect, they describe a veritable **conversion** that touches their being,

thinking and working. It is after this rupture and the personal changes and adjustments that they start to take a new and active position within Rwandan society.

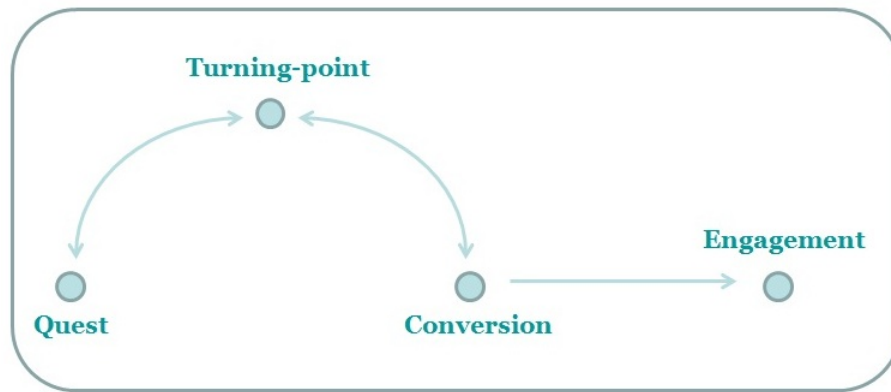


Figure 2.1: The common narrative structure.

Non-linearity. Figure 3.1 visualises the basic common features of the narratives. Although, it might convey the impression of linearity, the different points quest, turning point and conversion should rather be seen as stages of a process that is reversible and flexible. It is for this reason that they are linked through two-way arrows. It simply introduces new options to act upon one's biography and gives the possibility to become another person than the victim, the one full of hatred, exiled or marginalised. It could be seen as a way of re-appropriating the course of a life that has been thrown off balance by the experience of extreme violence and displacement.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that this constitutes a position among many that an individual can adopt within society by adapting to context and the social worlds it evolves in.

The choice of engagement. Things change with the choice for active engagement (represented in figure 3.1 with a one-way arrow); which leaves a trace and is not reversible contrary to the previous stages. They start to willingly voice and expose their internal experience on the public

space. This is very interesting since they adopt a stance as social engineers with the aim of modelling and pacifying social relations between Rwandans. This form of visual engagement exposes them to and obliges them to take position towards outside critique or at least evaluation. In fact, the importance of their gesture can only be fully understood when comparing it to other forms of (non-) engagement. I will come back to this question later on in this chapter.

2.4 Two-fold turning-points

Let us now turn to explore the larger significance of this narrative framework with regard to the research objective. Here I argue, that their verbal accounts demonstrate that their life is marked by two very different turning points. While exile can be found as a biographical rupture, their interpretations all testify to an emotional turning point. The first objective version of their biography is marked by rupture (exile) and the second, subjective one, centres on the concept of healing from it. It is remarkable that the biographical rupture is mirrored in the narratives on the reasons for engagement. All live and describe the experience of a two-fold turning point; while the first external one is presented as causing a wound, the second internal one is lived as a moment of healing from the consequences of the first. Furthermore, and this is very important for my objective of research, they ascribe their motivation to engage for reconciliation as resulting from this experience.

2.4.1 The second turning point

In many ways, the turning point can be described as the climax of their account. Three different descriptions of this personal “*changement radical*”, as Dieudonné puts it, were chosen in order to illustrate how the interviewees related it. The passages chosen are rather long since it seems important to give an account as integral as possible of the ways that the turning points are described.

A. Rutayisire's turning point

The first one concerns Antoine Rutayisire who is a very public figure of “national unity and reconciliation” in contemporary Rwanda. Our first interview in 2010 takes place in the Cathédrale St-Etienne in the centre of Kigali, where he worked as sub-dean at the time.

During our interview, Antoine explains that “*il y a un jour qui a changé tout, je lisais un passage dans la bible*”. According to him, this day can be situated between 1986 and 1987, when he was working in a secondary school as a teacher. This day he says that

“Donc je lisais cette histoire là où on va crucifier Jésus. [...] C’est un personnage très sympathique et je me disais, ces gens-ci, ils n’avaient aucune raison de le haïr. Et d’une façon, je ne sais pas comment ça a un peu, euh (.) régurgité la peur et la haine que j’avais gardé là en bas. J’ai commencé à dire mais ces Juifs et les Hutu d’ici sont semblables, ils prennent un individu innocent qui ne leur a fait aucun mal, ils le haïssent, le trahissent et puis ils l’attrapent et puis le crucifient. Mais ce qui a changé ma vie c’était au moment où il pendait sur la croix. Il fait une courte prière d’une phrase, il dit “Père pardonne-leur” (.). Je me suis dit comment est-ce que tu peux prier une telle prière (.) pour des gens qui te crucifient ? Je me dis Chrétien, et celui que j’appelle seigneur, lui il prie même pour les gens qui le crucifient. Qui suis-je pour rester sur ma haine, ma rancœur, et mon amertume ? C’est là où j’ai décidé tout simplement de dire bon, de toutes les façons, s’il l’a fait quand il souffrait tellement sur la croix, moi aussi je peux le faire. Et c’est ça qui a changé ma vie”.

He insists that this change has happened on a personal level and that “*il n’y a personne qui est venu me prêcher*”. He says to have been surprised himself to see how this insight gained through reading a particular bible passage “*petit à petit ça a commencé à changer la vie*”. He remembers the day when “*j’ai pris la décision de pardonner à toutes les personnes*

que je haïssais. J'ai fait une longue liste de personnes que je haïssais avec raison", like for instance the people who had killed his father.

During our second interview in 2011, Rutayisire Antoine uses very similar words to refer to his turning point. He once more insists that "*la lecture de la bible, c'est ce qui a changé ma vie*" and that "*quand vous décidez de vivre d'après le commandement de Dieu [...] quelque chose doit changer en vous, parce que la réconciliation est au centre du message de la bible*".

S. Gasibirege's turning point

The second vignette is an extract from an interview conducted with S. Gasibirege in 2010, who tells me about his turning point that he dates between the end of 1996 and beginning of 1997. Just as Antoine, he tells me his story with very similar words in 2010 and in 2011. Recalling, the many painful events of his life, he mentions that anger and hate can feel like a "*prison*". That is why I asked him how he had managed to free himself from this prison, and he replies as such:

"Moi ? C'est très simple, c'est très facile. Fin, c'est très facile.. (.) Un jour je venais de Butare en '97, j'allais à l'est du pays. C'est à ce moment que les réfugiés rwandais de '94 sont rentrés. J'ai rencontré une file d'être humain. Baluchon, malheureux, les pieds gonflés depuis là-bas [Congo]. Sur 100 km à peu près j'ai vu des gens comme ça. Moi, quand je suis rentré d'exil je suis venu en avion, mon billet a été payé. Je me suis même permis de loger à l'Hôtel des Mille Collines³⁸. Moi, j'étais en exil de luxe. Ça n'avait rien à voir avec ces gens. Je me suis dit mais il faut que j'aide ces gens. J'ai oublié mon malheur. Pendant longtemps j'étais rongé par la vengeance. Tout ça est passé chez moi, j'ai vu des êtres humains comme moi. C'est tout. J'ai dit c'est tout mais ce n'est pas le plus facile. C'est le plus difficile

³⁸An upper-end hotel in Kigali that has become famous through the movie "Hotel Rwanda".

peut être. C'est de pouvoir retrouver dans l'autre l'image de moi-même".

He qualifies the importance of this marking moment by saying that "*C'est pas théorique, on ne lit pas ça dans les livres, hein? On découvre ça tout d'un coup dans son cœur. Le pardon, ça se fait d'abord dans son cœur*". Retrospectivement, he defines this point as "*c'est là où j'ai pardonné, oui*".

S. Gasibirege clearly pinpoints his turning point in time and also, just as Antoine indicates that his perception of himself and that of others has changed permanently after this point.

J. Nyamutera's turning point

Joseph also talks about a state of bitterness and hatred. He recalls having been "*très aigri*" when coming back to Rwanda in 1996 having spent two years in the refugee camps of Goma. However, he attended a healing seminar organised by Rhiannon Lloyd for *African Evangelist Enterprise*; a day he describes as a moment that he was "born for the third time, after my physical birth and my second birth in Christ!"³⁹:

"Je me suis retrouvé d'abord avec une femme du pays des Galles [Rhiannon Lloyd] et celui qui interprétait c'était un Tutsi très élané qui venait de l'Ouganda. Je me suis dit mais ça c'est un jeu. Mais comment ils peuvent nous amener à guérir et à nous réconcilier alors que pour nous – ceux qui étaient aux camps – un Anglais, un British, c'était un Tutsi, donc c'était pro. Alors avec un Tutsi de l'Ouganda c'était encore pire. Mais ce qui m'a touché beaucoup, c'est que c'était la première fois que quelqu'un – surtout un Tutsi – a écouté nos difficultés. Quand il s'est tenu devant nous pour demander pardon à cause de la guerre, à cause de tout ce que nous avons souffert... un Tutsi – c'était comme un

³⁹Cf. page 6 of a document entitled "Joseph NYAMUTERA's story" which can be found on the website of Le Rucher Ministries Great Lakes which he is currently working for as director of the reconciliation ministry: www.lerucher.org/Content/Reconciliation/Joseph_Bio.html.

rideau. Ce qu'on appelle la confession dans la brèche, ça m'a libéré".

According to him, this moment made him realise that “*c’était plutôt positif d’accepter, alors c’est ça qui m’a réconcilié avec moi-même, avec mon identité, alors je me suis accepté d’abord moi-même et je pouvais maintenant marcher tête haute*”. To come back to the written testimony that can be found on the internet, Joseph insists on the importance of that moment by declaring that “I left the place with my whole world challenged. I have not been the same since then” (p. 7).

Indeed, these three vignettes are a rather representative depiction of how what I refer to as turning point in figure 3.1 is described by the interviewees. These three individuals have lived very different experiences: Simon left Rwanda in the 1950’s and came back after the genocide, Antoine has always stayed in Rwanda and Joseph has been among those that left Rwanda after the genocide to live in a refugee camp in Congo for two years. Despite this diversity, all describe a similar internal experience.

2.4.2 Accounts of conversion

All of the interviewees describe with remarkable openness their negative feelings of hate, despair and anger that held them in their grip during a given period of their life. It is worth noting that the explicitness of statements such as

- “*dans le temps je haïssais les Hutu* ”
- “*tout ce qu’on racontait avant pour dire [...] que les Tutsi étaient la classe dirigeante et qu’ils ont été poussés vers l’extérieur du pays; pour moi ça me faisait de la joie*”

qualifies them as rather extraordinary since this type of discourse, (at least according to most (non-)Rwandan scholars), cannot be voiced publicly. In all cases, the biographical rupture (exile) and the experience of violence in their close environment has caused a considerable emotional wound. An external force hits the course of their life and leaves

its marks. All of the interviewees refer to the fact that the resulting emotional suffering takes an important role in their life subsequent to this moment.

Descriptions of hatred

“La colère c’est d’abord moi que ça détruit. La vengeance c’est moi. Je veux pas donner du pouvoir aux gens pour me détruire encore. Ils m’ont suffisamment détruit, ils ont tué ma famille [...] L’autre est en train de bavarder, de se promener, de mener sa vie. Et moi je suis un train de ronger toujours la tête”.

This quote takes up the words of one of the interviewees. Similarly, N. Munyandamusta makes reference to the feeling of being “*détruit de l’intérieur*”. However, the omnipresence of these feelings in their lives is not necessarily apprehended or registered by them. According to their reports, it is only at this particular turning point in their life that they are placed face to face with the suffering that has been caused by their biographical turning point. In the way they describe it, it is at this moment that they realise to what point they are eaten up by a constant rumination of their hate and anger. When analysing their story, it appears that it is through the comparison of their suffering to the suffering of another that they live a moment of extra-ordinary revelation (Claverie, 2003).

Reframing

Not only does this alter significantly the perception of themselves and their life experience but it also profoundly marks the perception of others, especially those that had previously been considered as enemies or at the origin of suffering. This recalls what in cognitive therapy⁴⁰ is called “cognitive reframing”. In this either spontaneous or therapeutically stimulated process, a person acquires a completely new perspective on a given event and thereby replacing negative feelings for more

⁴⁰Compare with Beck, A (1997). The past and the future of cognitive therapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, no. 6, pp. 276-284.

positive ones. In the cases that we have observed, this reframing and re-evaluation of their biography is however also described as having a spiritual dimension. A re-evaluation that leads to a revelation of a rather spiritual nature and that pushes them to let go of anger and hate. It seems, through the descriptions, that at this moment their common schemes of reaction and evaluation are suspended in order to give way to a new way of doing. Critical distance is put aside so that a passage towards a new mode of functioning is possible.

The sociology of conversion

Due to the nature of change described, these narratives can leave you wondering as to their resemblance of what has been studied in the sociology of conversion. The now classical model set up by Lofland and Stark in the 1960s on the prerequisites of religious conversion, mirrors important aspects of the interviewees accounts: the fact that the person experiences “enduring, acutely felt tensions”, situate him/herself in a “religious problem solving perspective”⁴¹, starts to see him/herself as a “religious seeker” and that s/he encounters the “cult at a turning point in his life” (Lofland and Stark, 1965, 874).

In *The Sociology of Conversion* Snow and Machalek uphold that “conversion concerns not only a change in values, beliefs, and identities, but more fundamentally and significantly, it entails the displacement of one universe of discourse by another or the ascendance of a formerly peripheral universe of discourse to the status of a primary authority” (1984, 170). They argue that the convert’s biography is “reconstructed in accordance with the new or ascendant universe of discourse and its attendant grammar and vocabulary of motives” (ibid, 173). I propose that indeed the narratives of the interviewees do constitute narratives of conversion.

I agree with Snow and Machalek as to the importance of rhetorical or grammatical elements of these narratives. However, I would rather argue that the narrative of conversion is but one of the narratives or discourses available to the ‘converts’ and that helps them to interpret

⁴¹The pertinence of the adjective religious can be discussed in our case

their biography. As this thesis will show it is the predominant one, but this does not exclude the existence of other narratives and modes of explanation or justification (Claverie, 2003) that can be mobilised in different contexts and social worlds. It is important to retain that the fact of representing their life in the form of a narrative of conversion does by no means constitute a simple opportunistic adaptation to the ‘air de temps’ but reflects an important part of their personal interpretation of their life.

Forgiveness as sacrifice

The moment of conversion offers an opening to actors that passes through hate and its outweighing. This passage from hate to what they refer to as forgiveness and “reconciliation with oneself”, is represented as a sacrifice. Antoine explains that

“en fin de compte ça demande beaucoup de, (.), euhm, beaucoup de quoi ? Je crois que ça demande beaucoup d’abnégation. Je ne trouve pas le terme exact mais, beaucoup d’optimisme. Mais c’est possible c’est faisable. Le problème c’est que c’est pénible mais c’est possible”.

Coming back to this question later on in the interview, he clarifies that

“pour la réconciliation c’est comme ça. Parce que le pardon ça demande beaucoup d’énergie, parce que c’est une sorte de négation de soi, on accepte de laisser partir une partie de soi même”.

He elaborates on the same question in the following way:

“Quand on a été blessé, on sent une sorte de droit de haïr la personne qui vous a offensée. Donc accepter de laisser partir c’est comme si une partie de vous-même partait. Donc vous perdez quelque chose.”.

Just as J.-P. Mugiraneza, he refers to this process as “pénible”. However, he also stresses that *“quand vous changez, vous trouvez une autre raison de vivre. Vous trouvez des valeurs plus positives, des valeurs plus constructives.”.*

The human being is above his acts

In the same way Gasibirege poses the question

“Qu’est-ce que ça veut dire pardonner à des gens qui ont décimé des familles entières ?”.

And he replies to his own question by stating that

“C’est compliqué, hein ? c’est pas facile, on a envie de les fusiller mais ça n’aide à rien du tout, au contraire ça complique plus les choses.”.

Later he comes back to this interrogation: *“Donc fondamentalement c’est quoi l’être humain ? L’être humain est capable de dépasser, l’homme n’est pas réductible à ses actes, il est au-delà de ça. Il peut produire autre chose. Alors le pardon c’est dire non je veux pas aller dans la destruction, je vais dans la construction. Je vais dans la reconnaissance de l’être humain”.*

An internal change. Having made this sacrifice offers the possibility in a certain sense to become another person. The parameters of judgement is changed and adjusted. This does not mean that these individuals are blocked or can be limited to their new role of ‘convert’ or a ‘reconciled’ person. But it does mean that they realise that what previously appeared to be irreversible and permanent can in fact be reversed by a personal internal change. Even though a certain biographical trajectory seemed to determine their way of being to an important degree, an internal adjustment guides a way to escape from this determined course. By describing how they let go of hate and found what they call “forgiveness” and “reconciliation”, the interviewees seem to suggest that they stop being ‘prisoners’ of their personal history.

Although a certain social or economic position can have put them in a place that may have seemed unchangeable and passively undergone, this change of heart gives a way of actively embracing so as to turn a disadvantage into an advantage.

Accepting one's identity. Joseph describing that his turning point made him accept his own identity and that through this acceptance he could finally “*marcher tête haute*”. He even states that in his work, when he organises ‘healing seminars’ all over the country, the meaning he has given to his identity sometimes facilitates his job: “*pour moi c’est plus facile parce que je suis Hutu, je suis du Nord, je suis de Gisenyi, alors ils comprennent un peu plus*”.

Others speak of suicide that constant suffering in exile had made very tempting to them. I will come back to the conceptions of self-acceptance, healing and reconciliation in the next chapter.

Let it suffice to say at this point that even though the biographical rupture can of course not be reversed, the interviewees seem to find an option of internal re-positioning vis-a-vis the rupture and its effects. This realisation and the opening on not only mental but also social dimensions leaves all of them mesmerised (Claverie, 2003) that can clearly be situated on an equal level with religious conversion.

The temporalities of conversion

Not without importance does Joseph speak of a “third birth”, the one following his religious one. Conversion is reflected in a change of narrative. Looking back on their life, they read it according to two distinct modes or times: the one before and the one after the turning point. Joseph expresses this division in the following terms:

*“J’essayais de me distancier avec mon identité, avec qui je suis. Je suis Hutu du Nord, je le suis, je ne suis rien d’autre, je suis qui je suis (*rigole*). Alors j’ai accepté pour la première fois. Avant je parlais français, swahili, et tout ça pour essayer de tromper tout le monde. Et puis j’ai commencé à parler kinyarwanda encore”.*

The awareness of a dividing line in their life resonates strongly with the idea of a spiritual turning point; which is interestingly not limited to those that have an evangelist approach. Simon, for instance, does have a psychological approach in his work, and right after laying out his turning point in the interview, he declares that:

“Avant je ne pouvais pas accueillir dans mes consultations des Hutu, hein? C’était impossible”.

When asked whom he could receive in his psychological consultations before he answers

“des rescapés uniquement [...] Tout de suite après j’ai commencé à recevoir les gens. Maintenant, je reçois tout le monde. Quel qu’il soit. Qu’il soit tueur, rescapé ou pas. C’est un être humain d’abord que je vois, qui est en souffrance. C’est tout.”

2.4.3 The social consequences of conversion

The dynamic resulting from the turning point leads also to a re-positioning inside society. Experiencing an internal revelation brings with it the realisation of holding a special position within society. All interviewees seem to consider that they hold a particular position and status in Rwandan society that designates and somehow obliges them to engage for reconciliation. Simon asserts that

“c’est pas n’importe qui peut s’aventurer dans ça. Il faut être audacieux comme moi pour pouvoir le faire”.

Coming back to the beginning of this section, they interpret their special status as an extraordinary call to share their personal experience of conversion with the rest of the population. That is why they speak of their work as a vocation, just as demonstrated with the case of Jean-Paul and Dieudonné. Joseph refers to the aftermath of this personal turning point by stating that:

“A ce moment, Dieu m’a donné une vocation, c’était un appel, une grande contribution à donner et je me suis retrouvé en train d’aimer ce pays, et d’aimer tous les Rwandais”.

Joseph also discovered that *“je pouvais offrir quelque chose que les autres ne pouvaient pas”*. Didacienne Mukahabeshimana, without pronouncing the word vocation, makes a statement that goes very much in the same direction:

“Je suis une femme ordinaire, mais devant Dieu je suis extraordinaire parce que j’ai survécu. Pour cela je dois maximiser ma vie. Pourquoi j’ai survécu ? Je ne sais pas. Mais si dieu a voulu m’utiliser, OK, je suis là”.

To add another testimony of Marie-Goretti Mukakalisa, being about to set up a centre that is supposed to develop *ubuntu* in her home village, interestingly also uses a religious/missionary vocabulary:

“Pour ma mère c’était une vocation d’éduquer les gens du village [...] elle voyait partout du potentiel non-exploité. [...] mon héroïne c’est ma mère”.

It is when they realise that this way of being is a sort of vocation for them, that they feel an obligation to actively engage in what they conceive of as reconciliation.

Engaging for reconciliation

This vocation is translated into active engagement for social reconstruction and change in Rwanda. Antoine explains that

“depuis ce jour là, je me suis dit, si je peux changer de l’état de rancœur et de haine où j’étais auparavant, tout le monde peut changer. Donc j’ai commencé à prêcher le pardon et la réconciliation”.

Simon when referring to those that are sceptical of his work characterises his work as *“je prêche le pardon et la réconciliation”*.

The strong identification with their “vocation” which links up engagement and a certain style of life is quite nicely expressed in Dieudonné’s sentence *“je ne pouvais pas aller faire autre chose”*. Reading this sentence through the lenses of the social meaning of engagement it acquires a two-fold meaning. Not only does it designate the impacts that a symbolical turning point has left on their life but also does it indicate how far engagement marks their social position.

By moving beyond a former status, they break with previously accepted norms and expose their internal experience to external critique.

The way they take position in public space and render their conviction public (Cardon, Heurtin and Lemieux, 1995) has as a consequence that they are socially labelled. Even though engaging for reconciliation might be beneficial from the point of view of remuneration and jobs in the international milieu, it might also cast them aside inside Rwandan society.

2.4.4 Encountering critique

In fact, they take distance vis-a-vis their old identity and role in society and try to create a new one. It seems that this behaviour is mostly seen with suspicion and encounters critique. In a certain sense; one can wonder whether a “deviation” from the categorisation that their trajectory had created and that others adopt to see them, does not bring to the fore this critique.

Awareness of critics. What is interesting here is the fact that the interviewees are all very aware of the possible critique that their taking stance resuscitates. The depiction of the turning point is accompanied by the mentioning of the critique of their new found conviction. All seem aware of the fact that by adopting a new point of view, living according to it and expressing it in the public sphere, they have a price to pay. Finding the courage to be different seems like an ordeal they have to pass through in order to fully become what their vocation destined them to be and to do the work they do.

“Je veux pas être d’accord avec eux”

Simon Gasibirege, for instance, experiences a mental shift with regard to his perception of the refugees returning on foot from Congo to Rwanda. He recalls that the others on the bus are muttering and talking negatively about this enormous group of people returning to Rwanda after two years in refugee camps:

“C’est des mauvais, ils sont méchants ils ont..”. Mais moi je dis non, moi je ne veux pas être d’accord avec eux. [...]

Moi, je ne suis pas tueur, moi j'ai été victime mais tous ceux ne sont pas tueurs. C'est des êtres humains comme moi qui ont besoin de vivre".

When asked whether his work is sometimes criticised he replies in the following way:

"Si jamais vous parlez de Simon on va dire, ah !, mais c'est le monsieur là qui fait des choses comme ça, qui est.. Dans la ligne. Mais moi je ne suis pas dans la ligne."

So, not only does he very clearly make a link between the internal changes that happened to him on that day in the end of 1996 and the distance that resulted from it vis-a-vis the people that surrounded him. But he does also refer to those that criticise him or at least see his engagement with a critical eye, and seems very aware of the nature of their critique: be *"dans la ligne"*. This might mean that he is considered to blindly and opportunistically follow national reconciliation policy. This is confirmed at another stage of the interview where he explains that

"ils trouvent que ce que j'aurais pu faire c'était de me venger au lieu de m'occuper des prisonniers, de pas m'occuper des Hutu parce que moi je suis.. C'est ça. Que je prêche le pardon et la réconciliation, des choses impossibles. [...] Beaucoup de gens pensent que ce sont des choses impossibles. [...] Au Rwanda il y avait des familles entières, qui peuplaient toute une colline, 200, 300, 400 personnes, et vous restez à deux ou trois. Vous pouvez rester tout seul. Est-ce que vous pouvez imaginez.. Moi je comprends !".

"Il ne faut pas dire ces choses"

The same is true for Antoine Rutayisire who remembers that the first time he had

*"prêché sur la réconciliation et le pardon, tout le monde était un peu ahuri et avait peur, disait [*whispers*] "mais il faut pas dire ça, il faut pas dire que tu haïssais les Hutu parce*

les Hutu sont puissants. Ce sont eux qui gouvernent le pays maintenant, il ne faut pas dire ces choses. Bon, je me suis dit peut être que le message n'est pas acceptable en ce moment, j'ai pas continué à le faire".

Unfavourable circumstances for the reception of his message have stopped him before the genocide to “preach” about his experience. He recalls that people replied with a strict “*non, non, non, non*” and that “*le témoignage de ce jeune homme, à cet époque là j'étais jeune, n'a pas plu aux gens, il faut pas qu'il continue. Bon, je suis parti. Puis est venu le génocide*”. After the genocide, he thinks that “*si ce pays va guérir il faut que maintenant nous osions prêcher ce message*”. However, at this moment

“le message ici c'était le message de justice. On disait il faut combattre l'impunité, il faut punir ceux qui ont fait ça. Bon, le message de réconciliation et pardon, c'était pas très populaire. En fin de compte, j'ai eu vraiment des temps un peu difficiles aussi (.) avec les Tutsi. Parce que les gens disaient mais comment est-ce que toi – un rescapé du génocide – comment est-ce que tu oses dire qu'il faut pardonner, qu'il faut aimer nos ennemies? C'est une trahison. Combien d'argent on t'as donné pour que tu prêches ce message ? Et des choses comme ça. Il y avait des amis qui me disaient, tu sais le FPR, on va te mettre en prison et des choses comme ça”.

When in 1999, he is recruited for the NURC “*les gens commençaient à dire mais tu sais, bon, c'est le FPR qui l'avait envoyé pour prêcher ça parce que, parce que, parce que...*”. He explains that he then realised once more that

“la réconciliation, principalement le pardon (.) c'est pas un message très populaire. Donc si vous voulez que les gens vous aiment et vous acclament, c'est pas tellement le message qu'il faut prêcher dans certaines circonstances de toutes les façons.”

These quotes nicely trace the chronological evolution of the accusations that he had to face (Claverie, 2003). He also explains why according to him, his work and attitude are met with scepticism: “*c’est gênant.*”. He actually refers to the fact that certain (negative) emotions, even if they date from the past and have been overcome, are inaudible in the Rwandan post-genocide context. Knowing about the intimacy with which perpetrator and victims have to live together, Antoine perceives that it is very difficult to hear about experiences that recall former hate. He also seems to indicate that now that open conflict is over, people do not like to remember that once they have had the same negative feelings that he talks about now. Accommodating with today’s living together does not seem to fit in with examining the feelings one has held in the past.

“Les Hutu qui vivent au Rwanda sont corrompus”

Another interviewee who described himself as “Hutu”, on the other hand, speaks about his interactions with Rwandans abroad, especially in Belgium. While Antoine and Simon had to face critique by their immediate surroundings - survivors and returnees - this interviewee is mostly criticised by political exiles in Belgium. According to him two things explain why they receive him with hostility. First of all, “*la plupart d’entre eux ils sont des familles aisées donc ceux qui étaient, au pouvoir dans l’ancien régime, des enfants des dignitaires, donc ils ont beaucoup bénéficié de l’autre régime, alors c’est pas facile de lâcher*”. And secondly, “*tout est vraiment politisé de l’autre côté c’est pas la recherche de la guérison, recherche de l’unité nationale [...] C’est plutôt qu’est-ce qui va me justifier ma position ? Des fois c’est pas seulement pour convaincre la communauté internationale mais c’est plutôt aussi pour eux, pour se convaincre qu’ils ont choisi vrai d’aller vers l’autre extrême*”. Most interestingly, he explains that

“il y a des fois quand j’étais avec les pasteurs, ils me le disent aussi que tous les Hutus qui vivent ici [au Rwanda] sont corrompus, sont bêtes, ils sont achetés et tout ça”.

However, he underlines to benefit from his stays abroad in order to give his testimony and explains that *“moi aussi j’ai vécu en exile pendant deux ans. C’était aussi ma conviction”*.

Standing out. These examples that again are representative of others found in the interviews, show that these three actors are constantly faced with comments by people around them who try to remind them of how they see them and what their behaviour according to this status should be:

- *“de pas m’occuper des Hutu parce que moi je suis..”*
- *“toi un rescapé du génocide, comment est-ce que tu oses”*
- *“tu es Hutu du Nord”*.

Interestingly these three seem very aware of this and have found an attitude that counters these comments. It gives a good indication of the effect of engagement on their social status. While it may be perceived to be opportunistic with regard to international initiatives and/or governmental politics, openly voicing and enacting their engagement, can bring with it a form of social exclusion. Which makes this stage of the schema somehow irreversible.

2.4.5 Between imposition and appropriation

To sum up this subsection, let us come back to the contexts in which I can understand their verbal explanation of the motifs of their engagement.

Talking to a “stranger”

First, a note on the positionality of the researcher. On collecting these accounts, the researcher is faced with the challenge to adopt a suitable position vis-à-vis questions concerning the “truth” of their stories, the newness and awkwardness to have exposed a very intimate inner life of a “stranger” (Weiss). As underlined in chapter 1, it is most definitely essential to account for the fact that the ways in which I was perceived

by my interviewees can significantly shape their use of language and the episodes of their life they chose to mention. The ways they told me the story of their engagement are here considered as verbal indicators that may help understand how they make sense of their trajectory.

National political context

First of all, their way of framing themselves and their work is most certainly constrained and shaped by the national political context. One interviewee speaks of a “ligne” that his association follows in his daily work:

“Nous suivons la ligne. Bon, en quelque sorte nous suivons la ligne national de la réconciliation. On utilise le langage même s’il y a justement des approches spécifiques que chaque organisation adopte. Mais on ne peut pas se permettre d’aller en dehors de façon vraiment, tu vois, délibérée, en dehors vraiment, très loin de cette ligne”⁴².

This statement on the constraint of the national context is notable in the sense that the interviewee points out that they “use the language”. This of course indicates that all organisations and actors in this field adopt a discursive self-presentation that fits into how they perceive the “national line of reconciliation” to be.

International funding schemes

Secondly, given the massive influx of international funding schemes aimed at “peace-building” in Rwanda, any analysis of the resulting dynamics only focusing on the national context can only be reductionist. Buckley-Zistel underlines the unprecedented monetary effort of the “international community” to “undo its mistakes of ‘aiding violence’ and to contribute to ‘aiding peace’” and points out a “dramatic increase in donors’ willingness to intervene in those fashionable areas of social and political

⁴²We follow the line. Well, somehow we follow the national line of reconciliation. We use the language even though there are specific approaches that each organisation adopts. But we cannot allow ourselves to go outside in a way, you see, deliberately, outside really, very far from this line

engineering” (Buckley-Zistel, 2008, 28/29). As a consequence, international funding schemes and criteria that are set up for the eligibility of civil society initiatives for international funding, are an important source of framing. Massive financial influx supporting peace-building has also created new career opportunities and a desirable social status for educated Rwandans.

And most important of all, the fieldwork has revealed that the actors studied have all been *socialised* in the international peace-maker milieu at some point in their life. Accordingly, they have effectively gained autonomy from the national level and learned the rules of the international game in order to fashion the understanding of themselves and legitimate their action in a way that makes them appealing to “Western” conceptions (this is a non negligible element when bearing in mind that they delivered their discourse to a “Western” researcher).

All these elements indicate that to a certain extent their narratives are inscribed in a frame that shapes their form. However, here I argue that their narrative are rather situated between imposition and appropriation. Although, they clearly integrate elements from outside factors in their narrative they also lend a distinctive touch to idea of engagement which is clearly shaped by individual trajectories and their personal interpretation of it. Even when accepting that they act in a highly strategic fashion, the studied actors still are most likely to be touched by their life and especially the experience of conversion. In fact, their engagement is conditioned by their trajectory but also by the sense they give to their trajectory. As laid out above, they frame their engagement as an answer to a quest for meaning in their life. When analysing the motivations for engagement in this way their position within Rwandan society seems much more complex than previously assumed. Their discourses on engagement seem to be situated in a space between imposition and appropriation. These actors co-create discourses mixing new and historical schemes in order to situate themselves in the new order of reconciliation in Rwanda. So they not only create new categories of reference but also inscribe themselves in available discursive models, all the while being influenced by their experience of “conversion”. It is nec-

essary to explore all these discursive models in order to grasp the exact position of their discourse. That is why a delicate analysis on the articulation between the international and local spheres in a post-conflict setting that is exposed to massive influx of foreign aid for peace-making is needed.



Concluding chapter 2. To conclude, the chapter has tried to articulate the “objective” and “subjective” dimensions of the careers of the Rwandans interviewed in order to produce more sociologically complex accounts of their engagement for what they conceive to be reconciliation. This has been done on three dimensions. First, their sociological attributes have been examined. This exploration has revealed a relative diversity among interviewees. However, when considering the biographical dimension it stands out that all interviewees have experienced biographical ruptures, and mostly in the form of exile. Based on this finding, the different forms of exile of our interviewees have been presented. The variation lies in the moment of their departure from Rwanda and the countries that they spend exile in.

Second, and on the basis of these criteria we have linked the biographical accounts to the political and historical context. A given date of departure is always dependent on the events of the time; i.e. physical persecution of a certain group of the population that feels constraint to leave the country. As a consequence, the date of departure allows to situate the individuals studied with regard to Rwandan society and with regard to each other.

Third, this chapter has turned to the subjective dimension of their biographical narratives. Through this analysis it was established that their biographical rupture is mirrored in their subjective interpretations of their life in the form of a spiritual turning point. In narratives that all closely resemble each other, the interviewees tend to depict an internal turning point that has changed their perspectives on life and consequently is seen as the trigger of and motivation for engaging for

reconciliation. In order to grasp more fully the individual engagement for reconciliation on a local level in Rwanda, the next chapter will examine in more detail the aim that it is dedicated to. At issue is how do these actors invest reconciliation with (new) meanings?

Chapter 3

Meanings of reconciliation

*“Est-ce que les gens se sont réconciliés avec eux-mêmes ?
Est-ce que tout le monde est prêt à faire ce voyage intérieur?”*

Today, Rwanda’s society is characterised by an entanglement of survivors, perpetrators, (international and Rwandan) bystanders, (formerly armed and non-armed) returnees, international peace-makers and development workers. Given this complexity of a society, which resembled a mosaic, it seems crucial to investigate how living together of all these different components of society is imagined. Reconciliation has become a buzzword that is used in various sectors and by a great variety of actors, be they political leaders, international donors or Rwandan students participating in university clubs for unity and reconciliation. Yet, in this chapter I argue that the understandings and usages of the concept is invested are as multiple as the actors that use it.

In this chapter, a particular set of these meanings will be explored. At issue is how individual militants that engage in reconciliation work, invest it with (new) meaning. Actually, all of them, be they Tai Chi teachers, agricultural cooperative coordinators or representatives of cultural associations insist on the possibility of an interior reconciliation that according to them is the only guarantee for stable peace. Or, to take up the words of one of them: “the heart is at the heart of the matter”. In this chapter, I wish to contribute to the existing literature on reconciliation in Rwanda by focusing on emic meanings of the term.

Structure of the chapter The structure of this chapter falls into two sections. The first section will analyse the interpretations of reconciliation suggested by the local actors studied. In fact, the unanimous definition proposed, regardless of their diverse profiles, is a “reconciliation with oneself”. The meanings given to reconciliation are therefore, strongly internalised and individualised. This internalised interpretation stands in contrast to the dispersion of their trajectories, a biography that is marked by the disruption of places and experiences through exile.

This is why the second section of this chapter is dedicated to the examination of the links between the conception of reconciliation and their biographies. I will try to unfold how far the fact of encountering extreme violence, being exposed to and interacting with different worlds in exile may have shaped their internalised understanding of reconciliation. I will furthermore try to inscribe the empirically obtained definitions of reconciliation in the existing literature on reconciliation. This actually adds a new dimension to the conceptualisation of the term since contrary to the individualised expressions found in the interviews, academic and practitioners’ literature has so far above all been concerned with the relational aspect of this concept.

3.1 Reconciliation with oneself

The research was designed around the use of an “emic” definition of reconciliation with the underlying idea to produce a conceptualisation of the term that would be meaningful for the actors studied. It is for this reason that data analysis has been oriented towards the discovery of the meaning that interviewees attached to the idea of reconciliation. This first section is dedicated to the exploration of these meaning as expressed in the interviews. Particular stress is put on the internal and healing dimension that has been ascribed to reconciliation by the interviewees. Based on these findings, ways to (re)define its conceptualisation are proposed at the end of the section.

3.1.1 Reflexive reconciliation

In order to grasp the meaning(s) that is/are attributed to reconciliation, I need to come back to the common narrative framework that visualises the structure of their narrative on engagement presented in chapter 2. Whereas above, the main focus was laid on the climax of this schema, or what I referred to as *turning point*, and their account of engagement, I will here focus on how the interviewees described their *quest* and subsequent *conversion*.

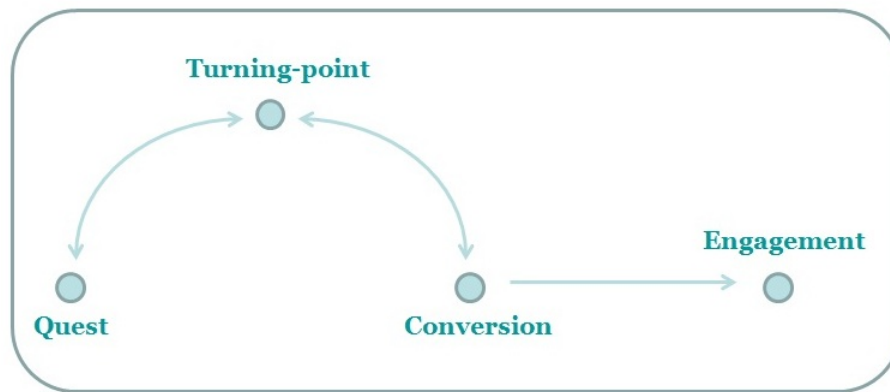


Figure 3.1: The common narrative framework

As has been pointed out in chapter 2, the narratives on engagement can be divided into two temporal dimensions: one before and one after the turning point. With regard to the accounts of the period before, all interviews are marked with descriptions of questioning and suffering that I have labelled **quest**. In order to present the reasons for their individual engagement today; the interviewees refer to a period back in time that they designate to be a driving force for their later personal development and the stance they would take within Rwandan society.

Descriptions of a quest

All put forward that their early life has been characterised by emotions and/or events that pose a problem to them. Interestingly, they do not necessarily insist on the negative feelings caused by these experiences,

but insist instead on how they have sought to overcome them. All explain to have been looking for something; although it remained diffuse in their imagination back then.

1. A feeling of estrangement

One share of the interviewees refers to a feeling of estrangement due to a lived tension between an education at home that is said to have been based on the values of tolerance and mutual acceptance and the observation of a society that is experienced to be violent and discriminating (the period they refer to here is mostly the pre-genocide and genocide itself). Jérôme Masinzo, a Catholic priest, explains that “*sur notre colline, on était les seuls Tutsi au milieu de familles Hutu*” and that “*j’ai survécu grâce à des amis Hutu*”. He affirms that “*dans ma famille le problème ethnique n’a jamais existé*”. Representative of other accounts, he reports to have realised a contradiction between his education and social reality when he left his parents’ house to attend the séminaire: “*le problème de méfiance ethnique, je l’ai remarqué quand je me préparais à devenir prêtre au grand séminaire*”.

Many of the accounts put forward that they did not know about the tensions that surrounded them, nor did they understand the implications it had for them. Solange, for instance, refers to a moment when a girl in boarding school asked her whether she was “Hutu” or “Tutsi”:

“Bon, je dois dire qu’au début je ne comprenais pas pourquoi. [...] Tu vois, toutes ces histoires de Hutu-Tutsi, nous on ne connaissait pas. C’est dans l’internat où une fille me demandait, est-ce que je suis Hutu ou je suis Tutsi ? Moi aussi je ne savais pas. Alors nous avons appris à connaître. Et le fait d’avoir quitté le pays justement, parfois je me posais la question, pourquoi ? Pourquoi j’ai quitté le pays ? Qu’est-ce que j’ai fait ? Moi, je me disais, je n’ai rien fait. Je disais à ma maman qu’est-ce que tu as fait ? Qu’est-ce que la famille a fait ? Alors, nous avons appris à connaître l’histoire des Rwandais.”

Parents' heritage of openness She insists on the importance of her education at home by pointing out the mark that her mother's attitude of openness, inclusiveness and care for the poor has left on her (*"c'est l'héritage que j'ai reçu de ma mère"*) so that *"ça m'a permis de ne pas fermer le cercle autour de moi, de partager, de reconnaître la diversité. Ma porte est toujours ouverte aux gens"*.

In the same sense, Immaculée also explains that *"je suis de nature tolérante. Donc, j'accepte les différences facilement et je peux aussi accepter les autres"* and attributes this to her parents' attitudes and education of her:

"Les attitudes et les comportements que je voyais chez mes parents. Euh, d'ailleurs chez mes voisins, je ne connaissais même pas leur ethnie, je ne la connaissais pas avant. Je l'ai connue après. Après le génocide. Oui, je l'ai connue, parce que, hein, celui-là, lui il était parmi les gens qui, qui venaient tuer. Donc j'ai connu les ethnies après. Mais avant, je n'y attachais pas beaucoup d'importance. Et c'est à cause des mes parents parce que chez moi, ils étaient amis à (.) toutes les ethnies. Donc je crois que c'est à partir de là."

She also mentions that *"je suis Tutsi et je suis mariée à un Hutu. Donc je suis entre les [*rit*] entre deux familles. Euh, (.) je suis parmi les gens qui ne demandent pas qu'on leur demande pardon nécessairement pour pardonner"* and that

*"c'est cette nature tolérante justement qui a joué un rôle, je crois. Donc je n'avais pas, je n'avais pas d'à priori, sur, euh, le profile [*rit*] de la personne à qui je vais me marier. D'ailleurs, d'ailleurs j'ai beaucoup influencé aussi ma sœur. Parce que ma sœur aussi est mariée à un Hutu. Et au début elle a été réticente, parce qu'elle avait des amis, il y avait des jeunes filles amies à elle qui disaient, ah, il faut pas, hein, [*rit*] je dis, oui, écoute ton cœur ! ces gens, c'est pas eux que tu vas marier [*rit fort*]. Alors, elle a accepté après."*

Didacienne, who is very discrete about her background, but slips that her mother “*était de l’éthnie qui était pourchassé*” in 1972, explains a similar experience:

“J’ai grandi dans une famille qui est vraiment équilibrée. Chez moi je n’ai jamais entendu parler de Hutu et de Tutsi. Je n’ai jamais entendu mes parents me dire que tu ne dois pas parler avec tel, tu ne dois pas épouser tel [...] tout le monde était le bienvenu chez moi [...] j’ai compris les histoires des ethnies vraiment après.”

Here, we can once more refer to the experience of Jean-Paul Mugiraneza who grew up in exile in Zaïre with the frustration not to have a country and with the feeling to be an “*enfant d’une famille qui a quitté son pays, qui n’a pas d’assises là où ils sont*”. What troubled him most is the paradox that “*on n’a pas de pays, et c’est à cause du conflit – dans lequel on n’a pas participé*”.

Immaculée, in a similar vein, talks about “*ce pourquoi là*” which expresses her incomprehension of the turn that her life has taken at the genocide, during which she lost her son and was forced to leave the country. In the case of this felt estrangement, the interviewees report to have been looking for a way to develop a vision on how to overcome the contradiction between their world view and the way the world actually turned out to be.

2. Emotional suffering

Another share of the interviewees refer to a quest that has been motivated by emotional suffering and a feeling of hate. Mostly this suffering finds its origin in the loss of (a) family member(s) and the resulting despair, lack of understanding and hate. Antoine, for instance, whose father was assassinated when he was five, describes how he felt at the time in the following words: “*ça avait développé une sorte de révolte, une sorte de haine, une sorte de questionnement et une sorte de rejet de tout ce système*”. Dieudonné, who witnessed members of his family killing other members of his family, speaks of a “*déception profonde*”

basée sur ce qui s'était passé pendant le génocide". Joseph, admits that when coming back to Rwanda in 1996 "je pensais que j'étais tombé dans un nid complètement Tutsi" and that he was "très aigri quand j'étais au Congo, pour moi-même quand quelqu'un donnait de l'argent à ce pays [Rwanda] je me fâchais, je voulais qu'ils aboutissent au néant".

Note that when explaining their quest the interviewees deliver details on the social worlds that they originate from since they describe many details and their social consequences of their youth. For example, it appeared that Jérôme lived in the country side and that his family was the Abatutsi one. The others also tell their country of exile, the moment they have left Rwanda and under which circumstances (e.g. to Zaïre in the 60's or to Congo in the mid-90's). Also do they give more precise information about the type of education they received (e.g. catholic seminary).

Quest for new answers Moreover, they all insist on the idea that they had been looking for a way to overcome either suffering or hate. Once more, referring to Antoine, it is interesting to note that, to him, emotional suffering also had "*un effet positif*".

"Parce que ça m'a poussé à rechercher des valeurs plus positives. Parce que moi, dans la vie j'ai toujours haït le négativisme. Donc être aigri, vivre avec l'amertume, avec la rancœur; ça cadre pas avec mon caractère. Bon, j'ai commencé à rechercher, bon, à lire des livres. Il y avait aussi un autre côté qui n'était pas tellement lié à la situation ethnique au Rwanda. Je cherchais quelque chose de, une sorte de vie équilibrée, une sorte de vie harmonieuse. Mais le plus je grandissais et le plus j'étudiais, il y avait un vide qui s'installait. [...] Et ce questionnement me poussait tellement à chercher une autre façon de vivre."

Antoine's explanation nicely takes up elements that could be identified in all the other interviews as well. After explaining to have been filled with feelings commonly labelled as negative, they lay out that even though

their environment felt the same way, they did not want to stay in this situation.

Spiritual sources of inspiration for change

Even if these quests are described as having taken very different forms, all the persons that have been interviewed underline that they had been looking for a way to overcome the malaise they felt. The preferred option is described as a work on oneself with the aim of personal (internal) transformation. They describe that this search has led to a personal approach in order to find a sense to their experience of suffering or estrangement. So that all of them chose the path of a religious and/or spiritual discovery.

The Bible Just as the extract from the interview with Antoine shows, the bible is considered an important source of inspiration by some; however their search is not at all limited to this book. The Anglican pastor, Antoine, and the laic Franciscan psychologist, Simon, both refer to the bible passage of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Simon, after realising that my bible knowledge is probably limited, explains that

“Jésus, c’est un monsieur, qui se dit qu’il est fils de Dieu. Et ce monsieur a été tué. Il a été trahi par tous les siens. Avant de mourir il a dit “pardonne-leur par ce qu’ils ne savent pas ce qu’ils font”. Et moi, j’ai compris un jour que au fond Jésus était comme moi: Il a été tué 1000 fois ici, 1 million de fois. Parce que c’était son calvaire aussi. J’ai senti que en réalité, Dieu n’est pas en dehors de ça. Moi je crois pas que Dieu; c’est pas un monsieur qui habite au ciel, c’est un monsieur qui habite avec nous et qui partage notre vie. Et donc moi, je me suis converti en 2000, quand j’ai compris que Jésus était, a été tué dans tous les resc., tous les Tutsis qui ont été génocidés. Ça c’était une révélation pour moi. Je me suis dit non, non, ce monsieur dit vrai.”

Antoine refers to the same passage when in our first interview, he states:

“Ce qui a changé ma vie, c’était au moment où il pendant sur la croix. Il fait une courte prière d’une phrase, il dit “Père pardonne-leur”.”

Joseph, refers to a passage that seems to be used by *African Evangelist Enterprise* (AEE). In fact he refers to “*Isaïe dans la bible, il y a un chapitre 52, il y a ce verset qui dit Jésus a accepté de s’identifier avec les coupables. Donc lui il a pris cette initiative de s’identifier avec les coupables*”. He explains that this bible passage that was used in a “reconciliation atelier” by AEE “*ça m’a aussi donné cette révélation pour moi de quoi faire maintenant avec cette culpabilité collective*” so that “*j’ai accepté de prendre cette culpabilité collective et de m’identifier avec ça*”.

Alternative sources Other types of inspirations have become more visible during observation and private conversations during fieldwork. For instance, during my visits to AMI in Butare I have taken part in the weekly training by their “coach” Laurien Ntezimana for the “animateurs” that consists of an hour of open-air Tai Chi and reading (or listening to audio-books) of different texts such as “Le pouvoir du moment présent” by Eckart Tolle, “Conversation avec Dieu” by Neale Donald Walsch, “Lettres christiques”, the “Lettres Christiques” or “La solution intérieure” by the Belgian Thierry Janssen. In the same manner, the retreat in the Belgian Ardennes by the group “Ensemble, Vivre” started the day with one hour of Qi Kong on a field looking at the rising sun. Furthermore, many have referred to the Indian philosopher Krishnamurti.

All in all, these inspirations seem to have come to the interviewees mostly through (chance) encounters that they have made in Rwanda or abroad (like for instance a Tai Chi in Leuven or Reiki teacher in France) and different workshops that they have attended for work (non-violent communication) or privately. I will come back to the question of the importance of personal healing techniques below.

3.1.2 A moment of internal healing

As has been described in chapter 2 this quest finds an end, or answer, at a symbolical turning. The interviewees relate a point in their life where they were transformed. All explain that a major change in their way of perceiving the world had come about. With regard to his personal turning point that he describes to have taken place while reading the bible, Antoine that *“c’est ce qui a changé ma vie”*.

As a reminder Simon characterises his turning point with reference to a day in 1997, when, while driving in his car from Butare to Kigali and that he saw a big group of refugees returning from Congo. When he realised that his return from exile compared to theirs was quite luxurious, he explains that: *“J’ai oublié mon malheur”*. He states that the important part of this turning point for him was to *“pouvoir retrouver dans l’autre l’image de moi-même”*.

As previously explained, Joseph refers to a seminar organised by African Evangelist Enterprise after his return to Rwanda (in 1996) under the auspices of Rihannon Lloyd to describe his moment of change.

Immaculée tells me about a training that she received when starting to work for an international organisation that has changed her:

“Bon, avant..., moi aussi j’ai changé. J’ai changé peut être à cause des formations que j’ai reçues en Afrique du Sud. J’ai eu des témoignages de gens de l’Afrique du Sud. [...] Quand j’ai commencé le travail, j’ai reçu une formation qui m’a aussi transformée. Au début aussi j’étais furieuse. Et je ne voulais même pas, quand j’allais chez mes parents, euh, je ne voulais même pas saluer, euh, les gens qui étaient autour d’eux, parce que je me disais d’une façon ou d’une autre, ils ont été complices, euh, mais aussi moi aussi j’ai progressé, je n’ai plus de ressentiment.”

Getting out of one’s shell She insists that *“c’est justement cette formation là, cette formation m’a transformée”*. The change is internal since it helped her to realise that *“je me suis dit, je dois continuer la route. Et je ne dois pas continuer dans cet état de victimisation”*. She

also refers to this change as permitting “*de sortir de sa coquille*”. As the words used by Immaculée quite illustratively show, from these turning points onwards, the interviewees report to have been “transformed”.

Chapter 2 already demonstrated that they present their life as being structured around a “before” and “after” this transformation. Once it has happened “*c’est pas comme avant*” (Immaculée). This point in their narrative can be described as *conversion* in the sense that their way of being, thinking and working is conceived, at least retrospectively, as being transformed. Here it is noteworthy to reflect on the fact that Antoine talks about a tangible religious (which coincides with his turning point) and Simon (he dates his turning point to late 1996, and his conversion in 2000) as well talks about an actual religious conversion (becoming Anglican and Franciscan), but this is not true for all the interviewees. Joseph explains that he has become “new-born” in 1990, i.e. quite some time before some turning point. And Immaculée makes no mention of this religious change at all which also is the case of a large share of the rest of the interviewees as well.

The spiritual dimension of change According to their narratives, their quest finds at this moment an answer on a spiritual level. This moment is therefore pictured as a therapeutic passage experienced as an internal healing and/or forgiveness. As Simon puts it: “*On découvre ça tout d’un coup dans son cœur*”. Only through transforming their internal stance with regard to their emotions, do they relate to have been able to change the quality of relations with others. Consequently, the conversion is described as changing first of all their way of seeing relations with themselves. This results then in a new perspective regarding the people they felt hate for before (in most cases a significant other that has often been on their mind). In this part of the description of their subjective trajectory, the notions of “*pardon*” and “*guérison*” hold a prominent position. All of them refer to a more or less sudden realisation of their emotional state that causes them pain.

Working on oneself

In most accounts emerges the idea that from this point onwards they conceive of hatred to be more negative for them than for those they hated and resented. The way they chose to take to move away from hatred is referred to as work on oneself.

Simon Gasibirege explains that in his personal development it is one thing that has helped him to change: *“Je travaille sur moi, je travaille sur mes colères, sur mes ressentiments”*. He describes this step to be of utmost importance in his psychological work (as well as for private consulting as his “ateliers de réconciliation”). Above, we have already referred to how much our interviewees consider hate as a destructive emotions for those that hate. This is why Simon defines the work on himself as a way to *“ôter du pouvoir des gens sur moi et de me donner du pouvoir sur moi et sur les autres. Un pouvoir de construction. Et donc c’est ça que j’essaie de faire avec les gens, en travaillant les sentiments, les émotions, le pardon et la réconciliation”*.

Naasson Munyandamutsa, being confronted with the loss of his entire family except one brother, realised that *“j’avais besoin, je crois, d’être soigné”*. This psychiatrist states that *“les gens qui viennent me voir, me soignent. Peut être bien que je les soigne un peu mais je crois qu’ils me soignent beaucoup”*. Other refer to personal psychological work: *“j’ai fait six ans de psychothérapie”*. These are more “classical” examples of the type of help that was sought. However it is not at all limited to it.

A whole plethora of so-called alternative healing techniques have been made use of by many of the interviewees. It is difficult to verbally account for this type of experience in one’s life and even more difficult to capture the sense and essence of it through qualitative interviewing. I have nevertheless had the opportunity to get a glimpse of what the work on oneself might mean in some cases through participant observation. In fact, I have had the chance to participate in a session of “family constellation” with one of the interviewees. This technique was developed in its current form by the German Bert Hellinger who is described on his website as “former priest and a missionary to the Zulu in South Africa for 16 years, as well as an educator, a psychoanalyst,

body therapist, group dynamic therapist, and a family therapist”¹. The interesting thing is that this method is often used to work on one’s past and personal history and is also meant as a means to help correct or put into place events and people in one’s life and has a marked spiritual dimension.

Predisposition It is interesting to note that describing this moment, most refer back to their quest and a certain “predisposition” to adopt this movement away from emotional suffering. Immaculée explains that: *“Mais aussi je suis disposée à ça. Je crois que je suis disposée à ça... à la réconciliation [*rit fort*]. [...] Donc c’est (.) bon, euh, c’est tombé dans un terrain qui est favorable [*rit fort*]”*. Just as Antoine underlines that he has always hated negativism and bitterness since *“ça cadre pas avec mon caractère”*. Having passed through these stages, they especially put the accent on the fact that although this passage was perceived as painful they judge it to be preferable to state they had been in before.

A light heart or letting go of hatred Through this work on themselves their position to what they have lived through changes and they let go of hatred: *“Je peux laisser partir ma haine”*. Having passed through this stage, they mention a relief and well-being.

Naasson, for instance, refers to the idea that before he had thought a lot about those that killed his family. However, nowadays *“quand je dors, je dors, je suis pas en train de voir les tueurs. Je n’y pense pas dans mon travail.”* Immaculée explains that *“ça libère, ça libère la personne qui donne pardon. Le cœur est léger”*.

It might be worth underlining that this transformation is happening independently of those that inflicted suffering in the first place. Which is what Immaculée implicates when she states that:

“Je suis parmi les gens qui ne demandent pas qu’on leur demande pardon nécessairement pour pardonner. En fait, je n’ai pas de ressentiment (.) pour les gens qui ont tué (.) euh, ma famille par exemple. Bon, l’un s’est repenti, il a

¹Source: www2.hellinger.com/en/home/bert-hellinger/bert-hellinger.

*demandé pardon, bon, il n'est pas venu à notre famille pour demander pardon, il a demandé pardon dans gacaca. Et je crois, c'est, même s'il ne vient pas vers moi, c'est important qu'il reconnait, qu'il reconnaisse qu'il a commis un crime. (.) Donc je n'insiste pas tellement,. Bon, je me dis, euh, en fait, c'est comme si j'ai mis un cap [*rigole*] au passé et je me dis on peut continuer et j'ai pas de ressentiment en tant que tel."*

Relations with others This quote is interesting with regard to her position of declared independence of forgiving from the attitude of those that she is forgiving. Moreover, it touches on an aspect that we have pointed out in chapter 2. She adds with regard to her own position that

"il y a d'autres qui continuent à se considérer comme des victimes et qui ne dépassent pas (.) cet état de victime et qui veulent absolument que tous les autres, le voient, ou la voient comme victime. Et ce sont ces personnes là euh, à qui il faut vraiment s'adresser pour qu'ils puissent aussi progresser".

It is once more striking to note that the actors studied consider to hold a particular position in society which sets them apart. Through their changed attitude they consider to have "progressed" with regard to others. As a consequence their engagement consists in helping others to do the same.

Furthermore, it also demonstrates how far this stance derives from within, independently of the environment that might be hostile to their position (critique described above). Next to that they also highlight the importance of an internal transformation for social relations. Their preceding state is categorically judged as having a negative bearing for the society they evolve in:

"Quand on reste dans cette situation de blessure on blesse aussi les autres, on blesse ses enfants, on blesse ses frères et sœurs. On blesse tout le monde autour, et on ne peut pas progresser".

A. Rutayisire also considers that

“en pardonnant je construis un pays meilleur donc vous avez une autre raison de vivre. Moi je suis énergisé par ce sentiment de construire un pays meilleur, alors que l’autre est énergisé par ce sentiment de haine et de vengeance contre l’ennemi qui lui a fait mal”.

“Se réconcilier avec soi-même”

It is important to understand this explanation delivered by the interviewees, since it sets the background for the meaning they invest reconciliation with. In fact, from this experience of inner healing follows a very particular description of what they conceive to be reconciliation. At the introduction of this chapter, I have quoted one of our interviewees who refers to reconciliation as an “internal voyage”. Indeed, the nearly unanimous answer to what the term meant to them was “*c’est d’abord la réconciliation avec soi*”.

Suzanne Ruboneka, for instance, is quoted in the “Rapport sur le génocide au Rwanda de l’Organisation de l’Unité Africaine” saying that “chacune d’entre nous a d’abord la responsabilité de se réconcilier avec elle-même” (p. 155)². In fact, the similarity with which the interviewees replied to the question of the meaning of reconciliation is stunning. Dr. Naasson states that “*la réconciliation n’est pas possible tant que je n’ai pas fait ma réconciliation avec moi-même*” and that “*se réconcilier avec soi même, c’est essayer de parvenir à être en paix avec soi*”. In the same vein Simon declares that “*chez moi c’est toujours commencer par soi-même. On ne donne pas ce qu’on n’a pas. Il faut commencer par se réconcilier avec soi-même pour être en mesure de pouvoir pardonner, se réconcilier avec les autres*”.

The heart is at the heart of the matter Therefore, in the interviews the idea of a reflexive reconciliation that takes its author as object is put forward. Antoine, for instance, explains that

²Organisation de l’Unité Africaine. (2000). Rapport sur le génocide au Rwanda. Online available : <http://www.africaunion.org>.

“si on veut construire la réconciliation véritable il faut aller en profondeur parce que les cœurs des gens c’est là où se trouve le problème. C’est comme le, je crois que c’est Graham Green, l’écrivain anglais, il disait: “The heart is at the hear of the matter”. Donc c’est un problème de cœur. La réconciliation c’est un problème de cœur. Si on se réconcilie à l’extérieur, qu’on va ensemble au marché, on va ensemble à l’école, on va ensemble à l’église mais on n’est pas réconcilié à l’intérieur, c’est superficiel”.

Acceptance These statements are combined with the idea of acceptance of oneself. Immaculée makes the link between her personal period of questioning and her transformation when she explains that *“en fait s’accepter c’est (.) trouver une réponse à ce pourquoi là”*. Joseph on the other hand describes that

“j’ai découvert que c’était plutôt positif d’accepter. Alors c’est ça qui m’a réconcilié avec moi-même, avec mon identité, alors je me suis accepté d’abord moi-même et je pouvais maintenant marcher tête haute. [...] je suis Hutu du Nord, je le suis, je ne suis rien d’autre, je suis qui je suis”.

Different variations Even if all start their answer with nearly the same words, all propose different variations of the theme. Naasson, for instance, mentions his return to Rwanda as a piece of reconciliation with himself. Msgr. Kolini, on the other hand, proposes a version that at first glance appears as rather original by dividing reconciliation in four dimensions. Note that he considers the first level to be that of reconciliation with god and the second *“c’est la réconciliation avec toi-même”*. It is only after these two that reconciliation with another becomes important. And it is the fourth dimension that is very interesting to consider:

“Il y a une autre étape c’est l’environnement. Si vous versez du lait et du sang sur le sol, ça ne pénètre pas dans le sol, ça reste toujours au dessus. Alors pour les Rwandais, pour

eux c'était un tabou. Ça causait des malédictions. Si on demandait aux chiens qui étaient ici pendant le génocide, qui ramassaient des cadavres un peu partout. Mais c'est contre leur nature, à manger la chaire humaine. Si on leur demandait ils vont dire, vous avez fait du mal, vous nous avez nourris à nos amis, peut être à nos propres maîtres. Et vous avez le lac Victoria là, où les poissons mangent encore..hein. Donc ça ne s'arrête pas là, mais aussi il faut se réconcilier avec notre terre avec nos rivières, avec nos oiseaux. Il suffit de dire je demande pardon [...] Parce que psychologiquement vous savez que vous avez accepté le mal que tu as fait à cette rivière, parce qu'elle est là pour vous donner la vie. C'est pas recevoir les morts, hein ? C'est s'humilier jusqu'à s'humilier même devant l'eau."

The idea to reconcile with the rivers, birds and dogs of Rwanda appears at first sight as somewhat unusual. However, a similar idea is found in the speech held by the Anglican colleague of Kolini. Rutayisire states in a speech entitled "Rediscovering The Gospel Of Reconciliation" held at the Lausanne Global Conversation in 2010³ that "when sin entered the world, it brought 4 levels of alienation: 1. alienation from God: spiritual problem; 2. alienation from self: psychological problems; 3. alienation from the other: social problems; 4. alienation from nature: ecological problems". I will come back to the circulation of these notions of reconciliation below.

Healing mechanisms

Internal transformation is first and foremost conceived of as a healing process: "*J'ai été guéri*". Other speak of acquiring "*les mécanismes de guérison*" and of the fact that "*on y recourt sans avoir à rester longtemps dans la haine*". As a consequence, they explain that any new emotional shock can be met with these mechanisms. Antoine, for instance, explains

³Cape Town, quote taken from a so-called advance paper that can be found on: <http://conversation.lausanne.org>, plenary session on "Building the Peace of Christ in our Divided and Broken World".

that following the genocide “*j’avais perdu mes membres de famille mais je ne voulais pas perdre ma paix, ma tranquillité*” and that through the healing mechanisms that he has acquired previously “*psychologiquement et spirituellement ça ne m’affecte pas. Donc ça m’affecte à l’extérieur mais pas à l’intérieur*”.

All in all, these extracts show in how far the interviewees insist on the necessity to engage in a process of personal healing - i.e. with oneself - before being able to engage in healthy relationships with an other. They describe a reflexive reconciliation that takes its authors as object in a first time. The next step includes one’s family, one’s group, and only then is the relationship with a “former enemy” taken into consideration.

Here all insist that lines of division are much less marked or blurred than usually assumed by the literature. Moreover, the interviewees underline the pervasiveness of internal tensions. In a certain sense, their answer to the question on the meaning of reconciliation contains two levels. On the one hand, the spontaneous and direct answer touches upon the idea of individual interiorised reconciliation. They insist on a process that is initiated from the inside (reflection, reading, having a vision) and that results from work on oneself. However, all feel the need to complement their answer with their vision of how their idea should be put into practice with regard to society at large. Here, and as will be explained below, they propose a process of collective healing that is initiated from the outside by a guide that has already healed.

Wounded healer Quite literally, pastor Rutayisire proposes this image in the speech mentioned above. In fact, he is referring to the book “The Wounded Healer” by Henri Nouwen. Rutayisire quotes a passage from this book: “Since it is his task to make visible the first vestiges of liberation for others, he must bind his own wounds carefully in anticipation of the moment when he will be needed. He is called to be the wounded healer, the one who must look after his own wounds but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others. He is both the wounded minister and the healing minister”. He goes on to put forward that “this is an accurate description of the ministry of recon-

ciliation in the church” and that “in every nation where reconciliation is needed, the “healing ministers” are part of the population and they too are wounded. And it is only when they are healed that they can minister healing to others through sharing with them the experience of a healed life”.

Medical imagery

Another striking element in their descriptions of the meanings of reconciliation is the recurrent use of medical imagery. Not only is their personal experience presented as that of a personal healing, but the idea of disease and needed healing is also transposed to Rwandan society. The country or its society is pictured as being “*malade*” and the need to “*guérir*” is underlined. The expression of a “*tissue social déchiré*” can be found in nearly all of the interviews. This may also be due to the meaning of the Rwandan term *ubwiyunge*. Antoine Rutayisire explains its meaning in the following way:

“C’est comme l’os qui est cassé et puis ça se remet ensemble. Donc ça se soude, ça a ce sens là de revenir ensemble et d’être soudé ensemble, et d’être un. Donc la réconciliation c’est ça. C’est ce processus de retour à la cohésion primitive qu’on avait avant nos conflits. [...] Souvent on emploie l’image d’un os cassé, si tu te casses le tibia on te met dans le plâtre. Bon, le rôle du plâtre ça n’a aucune, ce n’est aucun médicament en soi. Le rôle du plâtre c’est de stabiliser la jambe. Donc l’os se rapproche de l’autre, c’est toujours brisé mais puisque ça s’est rapproché et puis ça ne peut pas bouger. Donc s’il y a une cohabitation pacifique, ça se soude petit à petit ça se soude. Ça s’inter marie, ça se parle. Ça se communique et puis ça se soude”.

Immaculée also refers to the idea of disease and healing. In her interview in 2011, she exclaims:

“On veut guérir ! Il faut guérir, pour guérir il faut des conditions favorables, c’est pour ça que quand quelqu’un est grave-

ment malade il faut être à l'hôpital, pas à la maison. Ou il y a trop de bruit, trop de visiteurs de comportements. Quand on est très malade il faut être à l'hôpital, il y a des conditions de guérison, c'est pas seulement pour consommer des médicaments. Nous sommes toujours à l'hôpital."

Naasson also employs the image of a broken bone:

"Il y a eu fracture; fracture sociétale. Et cette fracture là appelle pour des gens responsables à ce qu'on concilie les morceaux, qu'on puisse les mettre ensemble. Et en les mettant ensemble, la réconciliation devient tout l'effort qui fait cette mise ensemble. Je prends par exemple, comme je suis médecin, la métaphore de la fracture osseuse. Quand il y a fracture osseuse, c'est important de s'organiser qu'on mette face à face les deux morceaux. Il faut créer les conditions pour que se forme ce qu'on pourrait appeler en termes techniques le cartilage. Et ce cartilage doit être suffisamment solide pour que les deux morceaux soient ensemble. Pour moi, donc, la réconciliation c'est cela, c'est la conciliation, c'est la mise ensemble (.) des éléments de fracture."

Interestingly it is linked with this medical image that many insist on the importance of the political environment to function like a "cast". Naasson, for instance, continues his medicalised comparison by laying out that political conditions are necessary to allow

"que le cartilage devienne solide. [...] pour que la réconciliation puisse, euh, prendre forme, c'est important que les conditions environnementales le permettent et le favorisent. Parce que, pour revenir à cette métaphore de la fracture osseuse, si on laisse trop ouverte le tissu qui protège l'os et qu'on appelle l'os à se consolider, ça sera difficile. Il faut d'abord après avoir fait cette conciliation, bien fermer la peau et la fermer de façon assez aseptique, sans infection, pour que les conditions soient, euh, efficaces. Et il faut pas qu'on puisse faire

marcher vite cette jambe là, ou ce bras là le faire travailler. Il faut attendre, il faut d'abord l'immobiliser, lui donner le temps, pour qu'il puisse avoir le temps naturel de pouvoir effectivement établir ce caleseux, ce n'est pas différent avec la vie sociétale".

Just like Naasson many others insist on the necessity of (political or military) stability for this healing process to take place. Antoine asserts that *"on ne va pas jouer au football avec un pied cassé donc on le met dans un plâtre et puis on le stabilise et puis quand c'est guéri on va jouer au football"* and that *"dans un pays comme le Rwanda qui vient, qui sort du génocide, le type de système de gouvernement dont on a besoin, c'est un gouvernement comme celui-ci"*. He mentions those that criticise that *"au Rwanda, il y a un gouvernement très contrôleur"* by adding *"moi j'aime ça. Parce que en fait c'est ce type de gouvernement dont on a besoin pour le processus de réconciliation. Vous pouvez pas reprocher au plâtre d'être trop solide, parce que le plâtre ça va guérir l'os cassé. Ça a besoin d'être solide. C'est ce qui a fait que le Rwanda soit solide"*.

The therapeutic metaphor This way of approaching reconciliation in a medical or therapeutic way, with a focus on healing, is extremely striking. It transmits a very particular interpretation of what social reconstruction may be. In fact, as developed in chapter 4, this understanding is particularly influenced by alternative spiritual models. Furthermore, the therapeutic interpretation of reconciliation has implications for the proposition of therapeutical mechanisms with the aim of putting into practice their idea of reconciliation with regard to the society as a whole.

Furthermore, this conception not only mirrors the circulation of alternative spiritual approaches to personal reconstruction but can also be found in the literature on reconciliation and in other contexts.

E. Daly and J. Sarkin in "Reconciliation in Divided Societies" remark that "the medical metaphor of healing is pervasive throughout the reconciliation literature" (Daly and Sarkin, 2007, 60). In the South African

case, A. Stibbe and A. Ross also remarked through a discourse analysis that the Truth Commission is often surrounded by a “psychotherapeutic discourse” (Stibbe and Ross, 1997, 21) in which “the whole country of South Africa is personified as a sick patient” (22). Others also remark that in South Africa “a therapeutic moral order has become one of the most powerful frameworks of understanding within which an increasing number of new states have attempted to deal with the legacy of violent conflict” (Moon, 2009). These are most interesting openings that could give way to a comparison of these two cases with regard to the medical imaginary.

3.1.3 (Re)defining reconciliation

The preceding part of the chapter has shown a number of elements that characterise interviewees’ conception of reconciliation. It was shown that reconciliation is first and foremost described as a reflexive and internalised process. So that the definitions put forward refer to a reconciliation with oneself. They all describe a moment of passage in their life. A passage that they frame as a way to overcome emotional suffering and feelings of hate. Interestingly, all explain to have actively engaged in a quest for new answers to old suffering. As a consequence the idea of internal work on oneself and internal healing are in the foreground of this way of understanding reconciliation.

Although they use the same word as any other practitioner or scholar cited in the introduction of this section, the actors under study attach a very new meaning to it. In many ways meanings they give to the concept of reconciliation is not in line with the predominant academic conceptions of it. The elements observed during our interviews and described above can help to complexify the very idea of reconciliation on several levels. In order to do so, it is crucial to contextualise these emic ways of approaching reconciliation with regard to the predominant conceptions in academia. A review of the literature has been presented in chapter 1 (cf. page 46). Here some of the major elements of the academic conceptualisations are further discussed.

In order to do so, let us come back to the classification of approaches

proposed by V. Rosoux (2008) in face of the bewildering complexity of the uses of reconciliation in the literature is helpful. This classification is reproduced in figure 3.2.

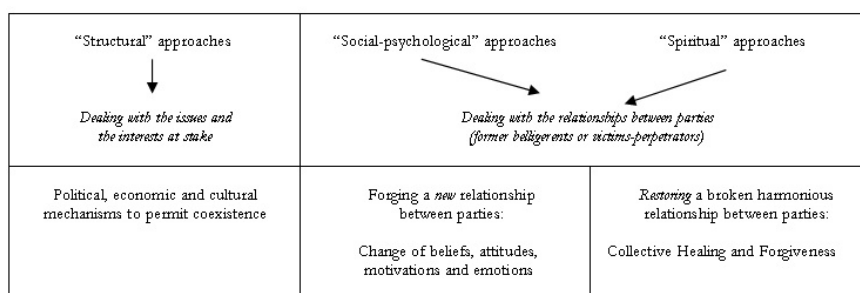


Figure 3.2: A classification of three approaches to reconciliation according to Rosoux (2008).

All these three approaches, be they “structural”, “social-psychological” or “spiritual”, have in common that they are interested in the way that relations and/or coexistence can be re-established between antagonistic groups after violent conflict. This is why this dissertation argues that reconciliation has been so far foremost conceptualised as a relation; between two antagonistic groups. It is in this way that interviewees’ conceptions add an new layer to the conceptions presented in the graph.

Reconciliation as a relation with oneself

This relational conception is often based on the works of P. Lederach and other pioneers, so that many authors in the Rwandan context tend to associate reconciliation with the “rebuilding of relationships” (Melvin, 2010, 935).

It is interesting to note that the meanings put forward by the interviewees does not give that much importance to the relational aspect of reconciliation. Their description of an internalised process of personal change and healing give much more importance to the building of a relationship with oneself than with a significant other. They insist that reconciliation means a reconciliation with oneself, one’s past and personal trajectory (and all the elements it brought with it). This

conception also recalls H. Arendt's (1973) conception of a reconciliation with the past such as it has taken place⁴

Last but not least, I would like to draw attention to the idea — widespread in literature — that fixed roles are attributed to the two parties to reconciliation: while the survivors should learn to forgive and heal, the perpetrators should feel remorse and ask for forgiveness. In this vision each of the two parties has clearly attributed and opposed roles. Interviewees' explanations once more challenge these categories of thought. Each one of them, independently of their position in society and their experience, insists on the importance to accept one's past and to engage in work on oneself. Especially the last point merits to be examined in further detail. The idea of "work on oneself" is particularly intriguing while difficult to capture in a scientific work. What can be established here is the fact that most of the interviewees value the idea of personal healing, as described above, and have at different points in their life sought external help to get closer to this aim.

Secondary relations with another

For the interviewees the "relation" to an external significant other (a (former) enemy) becomes clearly secondary. In fact, they insist on the personal and internal aspect of reconciliation. At the same time they underline that, if a relation to another has to be established, the lines of cleavage are not as binary and clear-cut as the academic literature tends to present it. And this brings the reflection to the next two points.

Secondly, keeping this in mind (i.e. this conception founded on a relation with an 'other'), it is pertinent to question who the parties of this relation actually are. J. Melvin speaks of an "encounter" between "perpetrators and survivors" (p. 935). This resonates with what has been pointed out above about the question of who is to reconcile with whom, which created the impression of a society made up of two rather monolithic groups. This is why I argue that the conceptions of the interviewees add a new dimension or layer to the definition of reconciliation. By considering this aspect of the concept, the black box of reconciliation

⁴Cf. also (Steward, 2008).

is opened in the way of indicating a process that has so far stayed invisible. Through the emic approach, I have shown that it is interesting to also study other aspects of reconciliation besides its relational aspect.

Complexity of cleavages

Furthermore, the interviewees also shed new light on the composition of Rwanda society. They put into question not only the idea that the population is solely made up of “victims/survivors” and “perpetrators” but also an ethnicised vision on reconciliation that presupposes antagonism between “Hutu” and “Tutsi”. Consequently, not only do they show that the parties that should according to them be involved in reconciliation are not only “victim” and “perpetrator” but also between self and “god”, “nature”, one’s family, one’s group, etc. Furthermore, they all insist that what they consider to be reconciliation should happen at the scale of the society at large.

This also means that they show the porosity of these notions. The way the interviewees introduced themselves to me during the interviews make clear that these notions are a more or less significant part of self-presentation (cf. chapter 1, page 72). If they talk about this part of their social identity they do as much or even more speak about their profession (“I am a lawyer”) or socio-economic background (“my father was a rich man”). All the interviewees add and insist that these categories do indeed carry an important meaning but not in the mutually exclusive sense often given to it in the literature. They insist indeed on internal lines of cleavage (*“Est-ce que les Tutsi dans les camps de réfugiés, ils s’aimaient ? Est-ce que les Hutu qui sont restés seuls se sont aimés ?”*).

Exile as category of analysis

Beyond these binary relations, we also need to reconsider who society is actually made up of and the lines that might or might not divide them. First of all, the possible tension between those that stayed and those that returned is worth reminding (chapter 2). One actress and head of a cultural association who was born and raised in Brussels, for instance, refers to her return as a “rupture”.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the country of exile is of great importance for mutual categorisation. As a consequence certain characteristics that are associated with these countries are attributed to the individual that have been in exile there. During fieldwork it has been noted more than once that Rwandans who have either been exiled in Congo or are Banyamulenge are just like Congolese and not “real” Rwandans since they are considered to talk easily and loudly. These are of course stereotypical shorthands that should not be mistaken as “truth”, however I believe that this type of consideration bears importance for understanding mutual categorisation. This perspective helps to understand that through the experience of exile new lines of cleavage but also of solidarity are created and shaped.

This way of approaching reconciliation potentially adds a new dimension to its conceptualisation. Also when read related to their trajectory, they can be better understood. This can be done on two levels: first, the meanings can be linked to their personal experience of violence. In fact, the marked degree of internalisation in this dissertation can be linked up with their trajectory that in most cases has been marked by

“la condition d’exilée dans l’expérience du ‘hors-lieu’ radical et celle des transferts culturels et puis dans l’épreuve d’une déterritorialisation de nature catastrophique” (Hovanessian, 1992, vi).

And second, and as discussed in the next chapter, it has to be borne in mind that the interviewees frequent and circulate in social worlds where the practice of working on oneself is highly appreciated and valued.

3.2 Internalisation and fragmentation

Having said all this, the question arises how to understand these rather unusual meanings with which reconciliation is invested by the actors analysed. At issue is how to read (auto)biographical narratives or testimonies. In this section, I wish to relate interpretations of reconciliation by the studied population to their trajectory. On the one hand, I

will demonstrate that the above-described meanings are linked to a biographical trajectory that has confronted them with violence and rupture through exile. Unveiling the subjective sense that is made of this experience can shed further light on the meanings. On the other, the next chapter will show that the way the interviewees talk about reconciliation is also linked to the fact that their trajectory has led them to integrate certain types of social circles and accordingly resort to certain types of discourses and practices. All in all, the mode of internalisation by which our local actors' meanings of reconciliation are characterised, needs to be read against the backdrop of the fragmentation and rupture of places and experiences that have marked their biographical trajectory.

It is important to bear in mind that the present approach is that of political sociology. The overall aim is to contribute to the literature on Rwandan reconciliation by finely observing and describing microsociological logics that have so far mostly remained invisible when using traditional political science instruments of research. Here, I will try to follow the advice of Jansen and Löfving⁵ and consider reconciliation “as empirical issue [...] to be investigated rather than as element [...] of programmatic statements” (2007, 5). Furthermore, in this section I will make use of instruments and reflections that have been forged in different domains of anthropology and psychology, but touch upon very situations that have been marked by violence, genocide, proximity of victim and perpetrator and massive exile and return.

In this section psychological explanations that deliver clues as to the interpretation of the verbal account of past experience or contact with extreme violence (surviving or witnessing the extermination of one's group) are used. To transfer categories from the discipline of psychology to political sciences certainly has to be done with great care and caution. It has been noted elsewhere that

“trop souvent encore les mémoires individuelles de l'expérience de guerre sont rangés par certains contributeurs sous la vocabulaire de ‘traumatisme’, sans que ne soit prise pour objet

⁵They refer to “territorialisation” and “deterritorialisation”, but I take the liberty to extend their reflection to this domain of study.

la diffusion sociale de cette catégorie d'interprétation des conséquences des conflits" (Jouhanneau, 2010, 98)⁶.

This is why it is of utmost importance to contextualise and socially situate the individual experiences described. The insights gained in this domain can help to guide the reflection but nevertheless, need to be contextualised in order to avoid approaching the question through the lenses of determinism.

3.2.1 Suffering at a distance

As remarked in the first chapter of the thesis, the experience of genocide and its reverberations are omnipresent in Rwanda today. Especially with regard to the empirical fieldwork it cannot be underlined enough that even though none of the questions or primary interests of investigation had been directly linked to the experience of genocide, it shows through the forms of expression when talking about engagement.

As M. Hovanessian quite rightly remarks

“la mort par génocide constitue une castration radicale, dont les retombées sur les générations ultérieures ne sont pas sans effets pathologiques”.(280)

I push this statement a bit further by stating that the same is true not only for the succeeding generations but also for those that witness genocide of their “group” from a distance, i.e. in exile⁷.

The old diaspora In this section of the thesis I particularly focus on the experience of those Rwandans who have been in exile prior to and during 1994; thereby emphasising on the experiences of the “ancienne diaspora”. This being said, although quite difficult and personally

⁶She refers to Fassin D. et Rechtman R., *L'Empire du traumatisme. Enquête sur la condition de victime*, Paris, Flammarion, 2007 and Assoun P.-L., Lavabre M.-C., Maitre J., Vernier B., Memmi D. et Pudal B., “Transferts disciplinaires. Psychanalyse et sciences sociales. Table-ronde introduite par D. Memmi et B. Pudal”, *Politix*, vol. 8, n°29, 1995, pp. 186-221.

⁷And to combine these two preoccupations it might be worth considering the effect on those young Rwandans who are born to parents who have witnessed the genocide from their respective countries of exile.

challenging, fieldwork clearly indicates that sociological inquiry on the visions on and practices of reconciliation of those Rwandans that have left Rwanda in the wake of the genocide⁸ should be very interesting. However, this is beyond the scope of the study.

In the previous section we have described that considering the narratives of engagement that were analysed in chapter 2, we could access another understanding of the meaning of reconciliation. Indeed, they put forward the idea of to “reconcile with oneself”. The means to achieve this goal are quite unanimously considered to be personal engagement with inner healing techniques.

Narrative identity Here, it is essential to address the question of how to read testimonies, or biographical narratives, of this type. The work of P. Ricoeur (1985) on “narrative identity” can help situate the narratives that were collected through biographical interviewing. In “Temps et récits”, he explains that:

“L’identité narrative, constitutive de l’ipséité, peut inclure le changement, la mutabilité, dans la cohésion d’une vie. Le sujet apparaît alors constitué à la fois comme lecteur et comme scripteur de sa propre vie selon le vœu de Proust. Comme l’analyse littéraire de l’autobiographie le vérifie, l’histoire d’une vie ne cesse d’être refigurée par toutes les histoires véridiques ou fictives qu’un sujet se raconte sur lui-même. Cette refiguration fait de la vie elle-même un tissu d’histoires racontées. [...] L’identité narrative n’est pas une identité stable et sans faille ; de même qu’il est possible de composer plusieurs intrigues au sujet des mêmes incidents [...] de même il est toujours possible de tramer sur sa propre vie des intrigues différentes, voire opposées. [...] En ce sens,

⁸Fieldwork in one grouping in Brussels, “Vivre ensemble”: Interestingly, reconciliation is often presented as the possibility of return. Although this is not the object of the present study it seems interesting to set up an empirical framework that would permit an examination of the question that could go beyond either collective stigmatisation or deploration of an “assassinat de la mémoire hutu” (Lemarchand, 2006, 21). Once more, the generation born to parents that left in wake of genocide is of particular interest (in Belgium for instance, the participants of the journal “jambonews”).

l'identité narrative ne cesse de se faire et de se défaire."

An important body of literature exists with regard to the testimonies of survivors (especially survivors of the Shoah). However, little investigation has so far been conducted on those that although being targeted could escape extermination by physical absence from their country but had to witness the destruction of their group (from abroad). Although many authors have pinpointed that genocidal extermination does not have a physical but also psychological dimension by affecting collectively all members of a putative group, little consideration has been given to those that are included in this group but are not physically present in the country where the extermination takes place. Others have worked on the generational effect and the transmission of this experience but have not necessarily taken into consideration those that witness the extermination from afar.

In this section, I will therefore propose a complementary reflection to these works by focusing on a particular sub-group of the interviewees, namely those that have lived in exile prior to the genocide and have had to witness the genocide in 1994 from abroad. Literature has already treated the dubious media coverage of the genocide, such as the sublimation of the killing (Karegeye and Lemaire, 2009), the biased and ethnicised media coverage (Blanchard, Ferro and Veyrat-Masson, 2008) or the simple absence of coverage and the marked silences and mis-understandings⁹.

Witnessing genocide at a distance Nevertheless, the stories to be told by those Rwandans that were confronted with these media images in their respective host country have not attracted much attention. Fieldwork revealed the dilemma to be able to follow destruction of loved ones via media or communication technology while being confined to the role of passive onlooker and being confronted with the impossibility to raise attention/awareness. The idea of "la souffrance à distance"¹⁰ developed by L. Boltanski (2007) could here attire a new significance.

⁹Cf. dossier in "Les Temps modernes", no. 583.

¹⁰Cf. also "Regarding the Pain of Others" by S. Sontag (2004).

Again, links can be drawn to the striking aspect of victorious return of the former exiled, considering that many of the RPF fighters had exactly been recruited among these Rwandans. It would be most interesting to study in more detail the range of mobilisations such as fund raising through dance troops, money sending, the role of music as a vehicle of support — e.g. the songs by C. Kayirebwa — or the decision to personally join the troops.

With regard to this sub-group of interviewees, I will try to relate the conception of a reflexive reconciliation to their past confrontation of genocidal violence at distance. In order to do this, I will equally make use of studies that anthropologically examined the experience of exile, migration and (forced) movement (Hovanessian, 1992; Jansen and Löfving, 2007) and those that investigated the confrontation with genocidal violence (Heinich, 2011; Pollak, 1990; Waintrater, 2011). At a first glance it stands out that the idea to reconcile with oneself implicitly indicates that the interviewees are faced with a multiple self, or a double self.

The double self Naasson Munyandamutsa explains that it feels as if “*on a été détruit de l’intérieur*”. Therefore, according to him it is important that

“tu puisses te réconcilier avec ton passé pour que le mal qui est venu en toi puisse être dégagé. Et que tu puisses le regarder, le déprécier, le regretter, pour se dégager petit à petit. C’est la conciliation avec soi-même de cette façon que tu puisses rentrer dans la dynamique de la réconciliation”.

He also insists that this reconciliation with one’s past means to re-create a continuity between the different stages of one’s life. This conception implicitly means that one’s past is seen as fractured so that the different pieces need to be brought together (again). Considering that the self is seen as consisting of different pieces that need to be re-conciled, the meaning of reconciliation “avec soi” seems to suggest that they see a need not only to bring external enemies together but also internal one(s). We draw on the work of R. Weintrater who has worked a lot on the notion

of testimony from a psychological point of view (mostly with Shoah survivors but also with Rwandan survivors). Some of the observations with regard to the testimonies that she has studied are of some relevance for this question. She in fact explains that

“pour ‘survivre à son passé’ il faut pouvoir assumer ses choix”
(118).

Furthermore, she refers to the need to “elaborate an acceptable version of their life” (116) and speaks of

“souvenirs entachés de douleur, mais aussi de culpabilité et surtout de honte... face à un image de lui-même humilié et amoindrie, cette “zone grise” de la compromission à laquelle il a été contraint pour survivre” (117).

Also referring to the “système concentrationnaire” N. Heinich (2011) mentions

“un certain brouillage des positions relatives de la victime et du boureau, en obligeant la première à des compromissions nécessaires à sa survie: ce que Primo Levi nommait la ‘zone grise’” (19).

S. Heinich refers to survivors of the Holocaust, but Weintrauer also includes testimonies of Rwandan survivors. Although, many precautions have of course to be taken and it seems impossible to transfer the insights gained in one case to another, it is interesting to note that the category of those that have been in exile prior to the genocide, refer to a certain feeling of ambiguity due to the fact that they survived abroad while their loved ones have been killed. In some cases it may also be perceived as a solution of cowardice to leave when the situation was dangerous. Naasson in an article uses the words “je perds la face et pars aussitôt dans un pays lointain”. The choice of words is more than intriguing. It could be wondered in how far the incapacity to prevent the death of one’s family and friends from abroad might also create feelings of a similar type.

Second, with regard to the structure and shape of an autobiographical narrative, hints can also be found in the study of survivors' testimonies that permit to make links with the above-presented narrative-schema. Considering the performative function of retrospectively presenting one's life to a stranger, the accounts brought together partly also can be seen as a narrative effort to give coherence to one's life. Once more we refer to R. Waintrater and her observations about the form of survivors narratives. She has in fact been able to observe that the narrators in her cases has often wanted to

“délivrer un message, sorte de “morale de l’histoire” qui s’apparente à un credo, parfois formulé comme une croyance ou une interprétation” (124).

Furthermore, she supports that this credo is the

“pierre angulaire du récit, un élément organisateur” (125).

She builds on the concept of E. Kris and speaks of a “personal myth” that brings with it a “defensive function” (ibid). The idea that it functions as a defence/protection and aims to “counterbalance the eradication that he is objected to” is here combined with the idea that

“le mythe est utilisé comme facteur d’ordre, opérant par discrimination et addisgnation, fonctions qui consistent certaines qualités à des êtres ou à des événements en les combinant dans un agencement générateur de sens” which implies for example the “insistance sur les passages édifiants” (126).

Considering these apparently recurring structural elements in narratives, we can wonder in how far a similar operation is at play which might account for the striking similarity of the interviewees' narrative structure. It is surely true that the structure is shaped by the

“rencontre entre la disposition du survivant à parler et les possibilités d’être écouté” (Heinich, 2011, 35).

Beyond these reflections, I would like to draw attention to another dimension of meaning that these narratives could have, especially with

regard to the sub-groups of interviewees that have been in exile prior to 1994.

3.2.2 The myth of home

Indeed, when linking together trajectory, the idea of “réconciliation avec soi” appears in another light. In order to view the object of research under this aspect, I need to come back to the issues that have been presented in the introduction above and the central question of return. In many of the contemporary writings concerned with issues of exile and return a “strong presumption of authenticity attributed to this link between nationality’, homeland’ territory, and a desire to return” can be observed which often leads to “a reified, essentialised notion of belonging — a primordial identity that is lived in links with the ‘homeland’ and a yearning to return home” (Jansen and Löfving, 2007, 5). I therefore try to follow their call to “critically investigate the unequal, differential, and contested processes by which persons come to be (dis)associated — and (dis)associate themselves — with or from place” (ibid).

In this regard, M. Hovanessian concludes that the “promised land” invented by Armenians living in France in the 1950’s

“ressemble davantage à un instrument de musique dont chaque corde vibre selon les résonances de la mémoire de chacun” (277).

Affirming the complexity and paradoxes of the representations of and relations to a country that one has left under constraint, it becomes clear that the ‘homeland’ can be a different place for everyone. Following this logic of argument, it is also important to reconsider the idea of a “myth of return”.

The pervasiveness of exile In order to do this, the pervasiveness of the experience of absence, exile and return in Rwandan society has to be taken into consideration. When looked at from a long-term historical perspective, it stands out that cyclical forced movement of exile and return has been a characteristic shaping social logics of Rwandan society

since at least the 1950's. Besides playing an important role in political decision-making and for the shaping of public policies, explained in the next chapter, this experience also has a more subtle dimension. Indeed, it is constantly present in the form of an experience that shaped the trajectory of not only of the political leadership, many of which have engaged militarily for return and known exile in refugee camps, but also of big shares of the Rwandan population.

This is the case for the sub-group of the interviewees that I focus on in this section. The years spent in exile have often been characterised for many of them with active implication in movements that favoured or actively engaged in the creation of a possible return (cf. previous chapter, dance troops, Collège St. Albert). In a text entitled “La communauté politique des exilés, une nation hors l'État”, S. Dufoix (2005) takes up this theme by explaining that exile conceptually seen constitutes a “temporary” (6) space and

“un espace logiquement orienté vers sa propre disparition”.

If in this case the home regime is perceived as a “common enemy”, the country of origin bears crucial importance and orientation through the idea of a “possible return” (ibid, 9).

This perspective on the country of origin echoes a central theme in studies of movement and migration. Studies on so-called “diasporas” tend to insist on their “homeland orientation” (Brubaker, 2005, 5) and the omnipresent “myth of return” (Anwar, 1979; Shuval, 2000, 48). Taking into consideration the observations made above on this theme of return and home, the question is intriguing when considering that exiles who had come *home* to Rwanda were faced with a “country to some degree emptied of people” (Newbury, 2005, 277); by genocidal killing and flight.

The realisation of loss Therefore, liberation in 1994 has in many cases been associated with the realisation of loss. J. Kagabo, for instance, explains that one of the reasons for going to Rwanda in August 1994 was to establish who of his family had died and who had survived; i.e. “to count the death” (Kagabo, 1995, 109). A realisation of loss

also for those who have taken the arms with the aim of protecting their families, and who fought a way to Rwanda only to realise that they were all dead. It is once more J. Kagabo who notes that

“les jeunes du FPR se tuent tellement en voiture. Ils conduisent saouls, mais avec une idée en tête [...]: “On s’est battu pourquoi? Je me suis battu pour défendre ma famille, mais il n’y a plus personne...”. (117)

For those that came to Rwanda for the first time, liberation meant a clash of an idealised vision of the country with the reality and devastation of genocide and war. For those returning from exile liberation had most certainly been accompanied by the realisation of drastic change since they left the country.

S. Jansen and S. Löfving put forward that considering the massive scale of change induced by movement and violence, one should rather refer to a “myth of home” (2007, 9) than to a myth of *return*. According to them, forced movement is coupled with loss; “this includes loss of capital and entitlement, as well as dramatic disconnections from persons, objects, and environments invested with emotional attachments – often experienced as a loss of “home”” (ibid, 10). Indeed, in this case, movement has been caused by violence, so that the context is shaped by “dramatic transformation such as war or socio-economic restructuring” (ibid) so that the home left behind is rarely unchanged.

A changed home This is particularly true for a country that has experienced a massive extermination of its population through genocide and important movement and displacement of its population. In the Rwandan context, the following observation seems to be of particular pertinence: “the “home’ that has been lost has not simply been left behind in another place. Rather [...] it has also been left behind in another time and is therefore often experienced as a previous “home’, irrevocably lost both spatially and temporally” (ibid). The imminent post-genocide period has for many brought with it the reality of this loss. One of the interviewees, Dr. Munyandamutsa Naasson resumes this feeling when he states that

“j’étais convaincu, c’était en 94, que je ne retournerais jamais dans ce foutu pays. Parce que un pays où n’habite pas ma mère, mes sœurs, mes frères, n’est pas un pays”.

Most interestingly, he conceives his return to and installation in Rwanda as a *“bout de réconciliation avec moi-même”*.

3.2.3 (Re)making home

This close link between reconciliation and home has also been noted by M. Hovanessian in her study on Armenians in France. She quite nicely catches this idea by stating that

“le mythe de retour ne se réduit pas à la simple volonté de réintégrer les territoires [...] il affirme infiniment plus suggestive, une capacité à percevoir les prolongements et les effets d’une histoire en rupture et interpelle le sujet pour qu’il rétablisse un retour à son appartenance” (280).

And indeed, what can “home” be or mean after witnessing the destruction of it from abroad? R. Waintrater quite correctly points out that as much Auschwitz as a “Rwandan swamp” are

“lieux hors de l’histoire où chaque survivant a subi une grave attaque à ses origines tant sur le plan familial que sur le plan de son groupe d’appartenance. La tentative d’anéantissement n’est pas seulement physique: elle porte aussi sur l’histoire du groupe, à coup de mythes qui véhiculent des idées destinées à réduire la victime à une entité méprisable, indigne d’appartenir à l’espèce humaine... détruire chez chacun de ses membres l’estime de soi et de semer le doute sur la légitimité à exister en tant que groupe, et partant, en tant qu’individu” (127).

And once more I would like to extend this question to those that have suffered the same experience but at a distance.

Relation to space and territory Coming back to N. Munyandamutsa statement on the fact that a country where his close family was killed could not be a or his country permits to re-consider also the transformation of links and relations to space and territory. It clearly emerges from the interviews conducted that home is “not only about place but also about the people through whom we ‘feel-at-home’” (Jansen and Löfving, 2007, 6). Not only N. Munyandamutsa but also G. Bazigaga (who did not leave before but during the genocide) mention the difficulty to physically go where home was, i.e. where the people who made you feel at home used to live. This idea is reinforced by a statement made by Immaculée:

“Je n’ai plus de poids parce que, bon, je peux aller dans ma colline, je peux partager une boisson avec n’importe qui. C’est pas comme avant. (.) Parce que je suspectais qu’ils peuvent même m’empoisonner”

N. Munyandamutsa very similarly explains that:

“J’allais jamais à mon village. J’avais difficile je crois à y aller, j’y vais maintenant, de temps en temps, pas beaucoup, c’est loin, euh, mais j’y vais, c’est aussi une réconciliation avec moi-même”.

Again it is striking to note the choice of words “before” and “now” which make reference to the turning point of personal transformation.

Working on the representations of home Therefore, reconciliation also means to work on representations and relation to “home” and healing involves possible return to it (accompanied by the acceptance of its loss through the death of those that made it feel like home). These quote show that after their turning point the representations of home change. At the possibility of return and actual return “home” the myth of home becomes linked to the possibility of ‘making home’, i.e. engaging for reconciliation. As a matter of fact, they imagine forms of intervention on how home could function, especially with regard to the

organisation of social relations. And as previously seen, the way they imagine this is shaped by their biographical trajectory (exile and the experience of genocide from abroad). Seen in this light, the narratives on engagement could be considered as what Waintrater refers to as “counter myth” (127) which on the one hand serve to counterbalance eradication but also to make sense of their experience so that these narratives might be a way to “shed light on their lived experience” (128). In this sense, these narratives of engagement are a way to imagine and represent a continuity and a sense in the face of rupture.

M. Hovanessian speaks of the “appropriation of one’s story”, or to become subject of one’s own history once more; an idea that can also be found in a quote from Dr. Naasson:

“Je crois se réconcilier avec soi-même, c’est en fait essayer de voir différentes étapes aussi de sa vie et essayer de voir comment on est une personne qui vient de quelque part, qui appartient et qui a une vision”.

This idea is translated into a voluntaristic conception of how to shape the nature of home; i.e. the “living together”. The engagement for what they conceive to be reconciliation is therefore a work on two levels: individual (on oneself) and collectively (intervention on the level of society); interior and exterior.

In this section, I have tried to create a link between the specific meanings with which the interviewees invested the notion of reconciliation. The point of departure for doing so is the observation that the mode of internalisation by which our local actors’ meanings of reconciliation are characterised, need to be read against the backdrop of the fragmentation that marked their trajectory. This fragmentation is not only derived from the experience of exile but also the witnessing of extermination at distance.

✱

Concluding chapter 3. This chapter has addressed various aspects that touch upon the meaning with which the interviewees invest the

concept of reconciliation. Contrary to prevalent models, local actors seem to embed their understanding of it in the experience of personal conversion and voice the idea that reconciliation is first and foremost “*une réconciliation avec soi-même*”. This was the nearly unanimous answer to this question whatever their walks of life may have been. The interviewees invest reconciliation with a meaning that is closely linked to a reflexive understanding of internal healing and work on oneself. I have also shown that these conceptions add a new dimension to the prevalent academic versions, which have mainly focused on its relational aspect. The stress on emic meanings by actors that engage for reconciliation has furthermore brought to the fore the complexity of lines of cleavage inside Rwandan society which could also enrich future definitions.

In the second section of this chapter, the internalised meaning of reconciliation proposed by its Rwandan militants is linked to their biographical trajectory which is marked by fragmentation. In order to do so, I focused on one share of the interviewees; namely those that have been in exile prior to the genocide. Linking up the two, suggests that the experience of biographical rupture has to a large extent shaped their way of conceiving of reconciliation. Furthermore, the experience of witnessing the genocide, and the physical extermination of their loved ones while being in exile — therefore suffering at a distance, has also to be taken into consideration. Indeed, it was pointed out that engagement for reconciliation is closely linked to the idea of remaking one’s home after returning to Rwanda. This is not without recalling the experience of personal healing described in chapter 2 and the sense they make of the concept surely has to be attributed to this interpretation.

However, it is also pertinent to contextualise it by taking into consideration that this very personified and internalised conception is very much in line with the spirit a given type of social world of international peace-makers which favour the expression of emotion, spiritual and individual healing experiences after violent conflict. In this sense, exile is not only a moment of rupture but can also be seen as a moment when new practices are acquired. Accordingly, I argue that what has been presented here is but one way to read testimonies namely to relate them

to violence that they have been conducted in their life to experience, but in order to understand the practices in which they translate it these testimonies and experiences need to be situated and contextualised. As the next and final chapter will demonstrate, considering the structural dimension of reconciliation it turns out how important extraversion is in order to understand not only the meanings discovered in this chapter but also the position of actors. Given that all of them evolve in networks that cross Rwanda's national frontiers, these transnational ties need to be accounted for in order to fully capture the phenomenon under study.

Chapter 4

Structures of reconciliation

In this final chapter of the thesis, we come back to the questions that had been opened at its very beginning. Attention has been drawn to the symbolical importance of independence day in Rwanda. One may wonder what happens when the project of armed return turns out to be a success. As the space of exile dissolves and exiles become returnees, what happens to the *myth* of return once it has turned into reality? The question is even more intriguing when considering that exiles who had come *home* to Rwanda were faced with a “country to some degree emptied of people” (Newbury, 2005, 277); by genocidal killing and flight.

As a reminder, the late summer of 1994 was characterised not only by massive genocidal killings but also by a massive movement of populations in and out of the country. The genocide had decimated more than one million people. And in the wake of the return of the RPF, an estimated two million people left the country. It is estimated that at the same time around two million fled the country (Newbury, 2005, 277) and settled in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, while others (mostly the former political elite with the necessary connections) moved to Europe and North America. At the same time, the arrival of the RPF meant not only a return *home* of Rwandans whose parents or who themselves had been forced to take the road of exile from the late 1950’s onwards but also of an estimated 1,000,000 of exiles who return to or discover their “homeland”.

This final chapter deals with structural features that underly and

shape individual and institutional practices of reconciliation. It will show that extraversion is a crucial element that accounts for structural implications underlying reconciliation. By using social network analysis as a tool for visualisation, this chapter analyses the reverberations of massive population movements for social configurations. Through this tool it becomes visible that activities and actors analysed go beyond national borders and bring together a multiplicity of social fields. This transnational dimension situates Rwandan reconciliation between here and there which in turn influences strategies of extraversion.

Structure of the chapter This extraverted dimension of reconciliation is mirrored in individual networks and practices as much as in political practices of reconciliation. Therefore, this chapter uses the tool of social network analysis as a means of mapping this strategy adopted by individual actors and to give some insights on how to explain it. This element of orientation to the outside can be observed on two levels: (1) in individual networks and interlinkages and (2) in political practices and policies. The demonstration of this chapter is structured around these two structural dimensions of reconciliation. In a first step, the structural visualisation tool of social network analysis demonstrates the importance of extraversion for understanding individual networks and consequently practices of reconciliation. The second step shows that extraversion is indeed a key element for understanding also practices of reconciliation on a more institutional level. While it shapes political actors' networks it also influences the orientation of policies in the domain of reconciliation.

First, we will analyse in more detail the findings of our fieldwork by presenting our interviewees and their initiatives. They will be situated within Rwandan society and with regard to each other with a network approach. The most important research result is that social configurations of militants of reconciliation go beyond national borders. As much activities as actors are transnational and bring together a great variety of social fields from many different countries.

Second, given the particular extraterritorial dimension of reconcilia-

tion in Rwanda, it examines more closely a new category of analysis to understand social worlds in the light of return. Here, the approach of J-F Bayart on “extraversion” is mobilised. Indeed, the position, links and lines of division between the militants can be much more comprehensively understood when placed in the perspective of extraversion. With this approach it turns out that linkages are mainly influenced by spiritual practices that are inspired from outside Rwanda. Particular stress is laid on alternative practices, such as the *New Age*, that have so far remained invisible for the academic literature on reconciliation in Rwanda.

Third, it will show the essential importance of this extraverted dimension of reconciliation for political practices of reconciliation. These practices on a political level are also shaped by strategies of extraversion in terms of personal networks but also the interpretations of reconciliation in practice. Actually, it stresses the “unity” of Rwandans and favours return and therefore the physical coexistence on the territory of Rwanda. Taking serious the very particular characteristics of post-genocide return, means interrogating public policies with regard to how the protagonists have imagined this very return. Or using the words of I. Delpla, we presuppose that public policies aiming at (social) reconstruction are based on and take position with regard to the question of “comment re-peupler un pays ?”.

4.1 Social constellations of reconciliation

So far, this thesis has dealt with Rwandans that engage for what they conceive to be reconciliation as individual actors by focusing on how they make sense of their engagement and the aim of their mobilisation. Here, we will turn to how they can be situated with regard to each other, and thereby, within the larger social logics of Rwandan society. In order to do so, the data collected during fieldwork concerning the actors studied, their initiatives and practices will be presented in further detail. As a means of visualisation and to structure this presentation,

we have made use of a social network perspective¹. In the frame of this chapter, however, the technicalities of this methodological tool are only mobilised as far as they are necessary for the understanding of the data presentation. Let it be mentioned here that network analysis is here a tool for visualising our fieldwork data. Furthermore, this method was used as a means to test the findings obtained through the overall qualitative approach. The preceding qualitative biographical approach indicated the importance of exile and outside orientation of the actors studied. Looking at the data through the lens of network analysis, the importance of extraversion becomes even more clear. All in all, this is a first tentative to combine these two approaches. More data and with a larger sample would be needed to push these first findings even further.

Just a quick note on the empirical input with which we have fed this data presentation. The type of network structure chosen are “affiliation networks”. These are special kinds of networks composed of two different *sets*, made up of *actors* and *events*. The term *event* should not be misleading as to its temporality, an event can be a punctual event but as well an institution or organisation. In affiliation networks, links are indirect, and as a consequence, there are no direct linkages between actors or between events². For our analysis, the *actors* are the actors who engage for reconciliation and that have been interviewed in the frame of doctoral investigation. The *events* refer to their initiatives, to associations but also institutional organisations (as for instance the NURC). The *links* between them are composed of three types:

1. An actors **works for...** (i.e. Gloriosa Bazigaga works for *International Alert*);
2. An actors **has worked for...** (i.e. Antoine Rutayisire has worked for *African Evangelist Enterprise*);

¹This technical network analysis that was at the basis of this visual support has been realised with the help, expertise and support of Gaëlle Pellon. The analysis of the network structure is the output of a collaboration between her technical knowledge of network analysis, and my empirical knowledge about the field studied. G. Pellon has generated the general structure of the network with a social network package *Pajek*, developed by Vladimir Batageljv and Andrej Mvrrar from Ljubjana University.

²This type of network by affiliation is also called “two-mode network” and permit to analyse non-dyadic relationships.

3. An actors **has collaborated with...** (i.e. the psychologist Simon Gasibirege has collaborated with *Association Modeste Innocent* for the writing of the brochure “Pour que nos cœurs blessés guérissent” on trauma counselling)

This “micro” network analysis is based on the persons that have been interviewed for this thesis and therefore, constitutes a snapshot representative of the period covered by my research (2009-2012). The interviewees were selected according to snowball sampling (cf. chapter 1). Being situated in an in-depth qualitative approach of interviewing, the sample is relatively small. Accordingly, this could constitute the basis for a wider research that would include a larger sample of actors.

Another point, which we will come back to later, is the fact that I have conducted more observations on one sub-part of the network (i.e. those actors having worked for or still working for the *Association Modeste Innocent*) than on others. As a consequence, I have obtained more precise information regarding the nature of their mutual links, which is the reason why their practices will be examined in more detail in the next section.

In terms of social configurations post-genocide and post-exile, a number of studies have addressed this question with regard to the political elite. When former exiled return ‘home’ they become part and parcel of the governing instances while the former governors take the route of exile. Many have noted the change in dominant social positions that this process brought with it. P. A. Cantrell notes that “[t]he victory of the RPF also opened the way for many Tutsi exiles, first and second generation refugees from the conflicts³ of 1959 to 1973, to return to the country. The return of the refugees, estimated at 800,000, marks the most significant social change for Rwanda’s post-genocide history” (Cantrell, 2007, 339). The author also proposes that “the return of the

³Note that the word ‘conflict’ may be considered more than not appropriate given the conditions of their departure and that the authors leaves aside other important dates such as 1963. This stance is probably not surprising since the author presumes that “the image of the Tutsi returnees as suffering refugees seeking only to return home, obscures both the complex role played by the Tutsi exiles in Uganda’s turbulent political history [...]”.

Tutsi diaspora signifies a replacement of the ‘old elite, most of whom fled into exile, by a new elite that consisted mostly of English-speaking returnees from Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya. English was adopted as an official language, facilitating the transition for the returnees as well as the work of international NGOs and donors from the English-speaking world’⁴.

E. Zorbas also agrees with this interpretation of shift in post-genocide social configuration. Referring to a study conducted by Gakusi and Mouzer, she points out that power dynamics can not be reduced to “ethnicity”. She insists that “though Tutsi enjoy a disproportionately large representation in the higher echelons of political and economic (and military) power in Rwanda, it is more specifically the *Tutsi returnees*, in particular those with close affiliations to the RPF, that form the inner clique” (Zorbas, 2004, 44).

In how far can these hypotheses on new social configurations in Rwanda help us to better understand the position of the actors studied in contemporary Rwandan society? This section is structured into two parts. First, it starts with the general presentation of actors, initiatives and their mutual links; alternatively, the structure of networks. We want to examine in how far the hypothesis put forward by the scientific literature, namely that English-speaking Abatutsi that have spent exile in Uganda are central, can also be applied to the field of individual engagement for reconciliation. So that, with the help of this presentation, we will test the predominant hypothesis about social composition and functioning of Rwandan society. It will be argued that a multi-dimensional reading of actors’ characteristics is needed in order to comprehensively understand their position within society. Instead of focusing on only the language, the country of exile or the “ethnic” criteria of a given individual, their trajectory (and its passage through exile) is the essential element to understand the position of actors and at the same time their practices. It is, in fact, the category of analysis of exile and the resulting strategies of extraversion that can shed a new light on this question,

⁴This quote is taken from a World Bank Group working paper: Obidegwu, C. (2003). Rwanda: the search for post-conflict socio-economic change, 1995–2001, World Bank Group, Africa Region Working Paper Series 59, pp. 1–53, p. 11

especially with regard to spiritual practices of reconciliation.

4.1.1 Complex interlinkages

The network in 2011 has a very particular structure since it appears to be clearly composed of three parts. In **figure 4.1** (below, page 210) the green triangles represent events and yellow circles people. Its largest component is composed of 80 points (87.91 %) and the second biggest of 6 points.

The smallest component is disconnected from the main part. It is a sub-network composed of three people and three events. It is a network between Collin Sekajugo (*IVUKA Arts*, IVU), Carole Karemera (*Ishyo Arts*, ISC) and Hope Azeda (*Mashirika Arts*, MA). They have collaborated around a number of artistic initiatives, such as a dance performance of the piece “Africa’s Hope” by *Mashirika Arts* or the exposition of paintings “Rwanda Turns” by C. Sekajugo at the *Ishyo* centre. However, they do not entertain links with the other actors so that we will not go into further detail on this sub-network.

The biggest component is very large: it is composed of 39 actors and 41 events. Its structure is very particular. As shown in the graph below, it is divided into two main parts put together thanks to a group of actors and events that have a very specific position within the network. Another important feature of this network is its very low degree of centralisation (24 %) ⁵. A very low degree of centralisation, as is the case for our network is associated with the absence of leaders. This is of course quite noticeable with regard to the readings of reconciliation practices in Rwanda that we have described above. In the domain of individual militants studied, therefore, it is not a centralisation but a diffusion that can be observed.

⁵In this type of analysis of a network the degree of centralisation is expressed as the variation in the degrees of vertices divided by the maximum degree possible in a network of the same size.



Figure 4.1: The general network in 2010.

Militants and initiatives

With regard to this constellation, the activity⁶ of actors is also a dimension worth exploring. In **figure 4.2** (below, page 211) the frequency of activity is expressed through the size of circles which are proportional with the number of participation in initiatives and projects⁷.

⁶The rate of participation is measured in terms of the number of participation in events.

⁷The colours represent classes of rates.

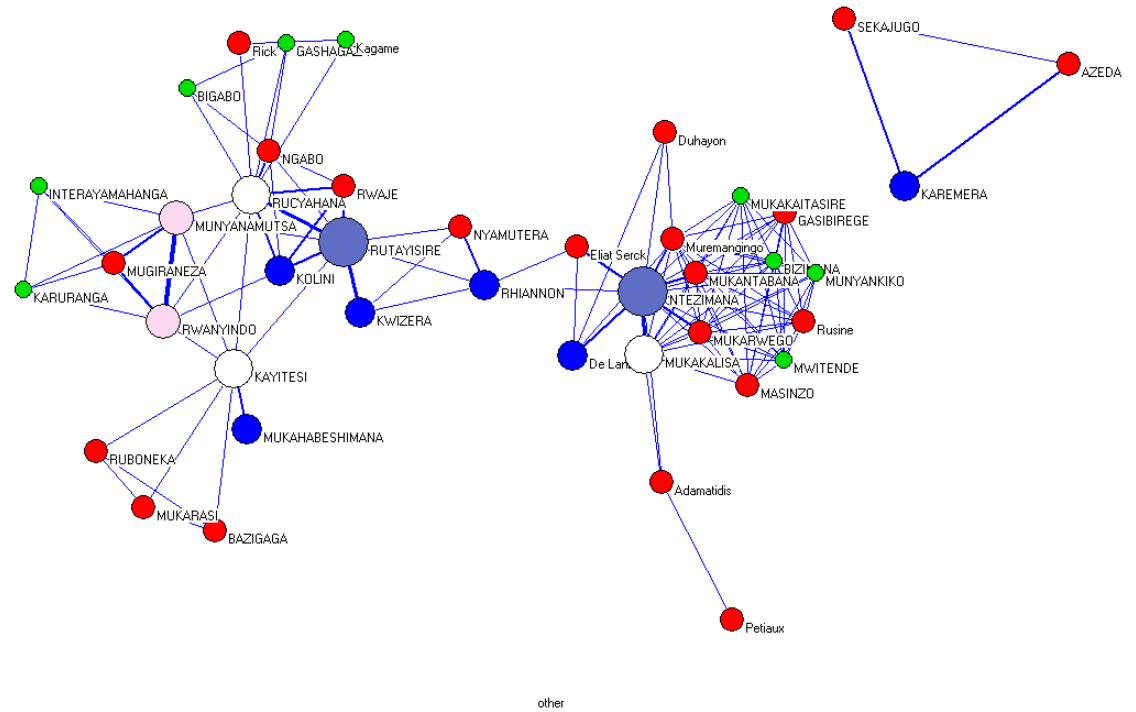


Figure 4.2: Actors' rate of participation.

Note that the two biggest circles (light blue colour) are those of Laurien Ntezimana and Antoine Rutayisire. Antoine Rutayisire has already been presented with regard to his trajectory and personal turning point in chapter two and three, and some elements of his life story have been presented in a box on page 110. As a reminder, Antoine is an Anglican pastor who is a public figure of reconciliation in Rwanda today, not only having served as Commissioner (1999-2002) and Vice-chairman (2002-2011) for the NURC but being also involved in numerous non-governmental initiatives. Furthermore, he is quite known for his engagement for survivors of the genocide; being one himself. He calls himself a “typical Rwandan, who knew Rwanda since his birth” (cf. page 109). He was born and has lived all of his life in Rwanda? except during the genocide when he was in a refugee camp. In more than one sense, it is peculiar to consider typical Rwandans those that have not left Rwanda,

given the predominance of movement of a large share of the population. It is also interesting in the light of the academic conceptions pointed out above that insist on the fact that we should expect it to be much more “typical” to find a “Tutsi returnee” from Uganda to be a very active individual in reconciliation initiatives. This is obviously not the case for A. Rutayisire.

So let us take a look at the second person with a very high rate of participation. Who is Laurien Ntezimana?

Box 4 (Laurien Ntezimana).

Laurien Ntezimana is widely known; as much in Rwanda as in Belgium. In Rwanda, he is invited each year to give his testimony during the genocide commemoration. This is since he has saved himself a considerable number of people and also partially since his sister, a nun, has died during the genocide when refusing to be separated from her Abatutsi sisters. In Belgium, he has taken part in and initiated such an important number of projects that he is considered by many Belgian NGOs as the number-one person to contact when a “perspective du Sud” is needed. He has become even more widely known through the interview realised by P. Adamantidis^a and, which is ever since regularly diffused on Belgian radio.

In terms of education, he is a trained theologian of the University of Leuven. However, he decided at the time not to defend his thesis due to a perceived incompatibility of his approach to religion and the academic criteria of a PhD.

Furthermore, he is an ardent practitioner of Tai Chi and Qi Kong. He uses these techniques in the frame of the *Association Modeste et Innocent*, of which he is a co-founder and today the “coach”. Today, he lives literally between “here and there” dividing his time between Butare and Quevaucamps in Belgium.

^awww.rcn-ong.be/-Si-c-est-la-c-est-ici-?lang=fr

As much as Antoine, Laurien does not correspond with the criteria that we have identified above as characterising Rwandans active in today's society. He was born and raised in Rwanda, speaks French and presents himself as Abahutu⁸. What is even more, and as we shall see below, his activity is not at all geographically limited to Rwanda.

To resume, both Laurien and Antoine are rather untypical of the profile that is generally expected to dominate Rwandan post-genocide society, and more specifically reconstruction efforts.

Central actors

As much as the qualitative observation as the network approach indicates that Laurien and Antoine hold very central⁹ positions with regard to other actors. Both are linked to an important number of other actors, through common participation in projects and initiatives. What had been observed during fieldwork has been confirmed by the network analysis, which nicely illustrates in **figure 4.3** (below, page 214) how much Laurien and Antoine stand out with regard to the others¹⁰. He is chairman of the "Rwanda Leaders' Fellowship", which organises the "National Leaders Prayer Breakfast". Being the author of "Faith under Fire: Testimonies of Christian Bravery" (1995) which was published by the AEE editions he is also doing a PhD at the Fuller Theological Seminary and has translated Rick Warren's books "Purpose Driven Church" and "Purpose Driven Life".

⁸Cf. Adamatidis, P. (2009). Laurien NTEZIMANA, "Vivre à l'endroit". Brochure of the programme is online available: www.rcn-ong.be/IMG/pdf/Radio_RCN.pdf

⁹In this type of network it is measured with a degree of centrality, by accounting for the number of "neighbours" of an actor. The number of "neighbours" stands for the number of co-participants in the same event.

¹⁰In more technical terms: Figure 4.3 quite clearly shows the outstanding centrality of Laurien Ntezimana, who has 16 neighbours. In the same way, Antoine Rutayisire ? while being less central than Laurien ? also occupies a position that sets him apart from others with ten neighbours.

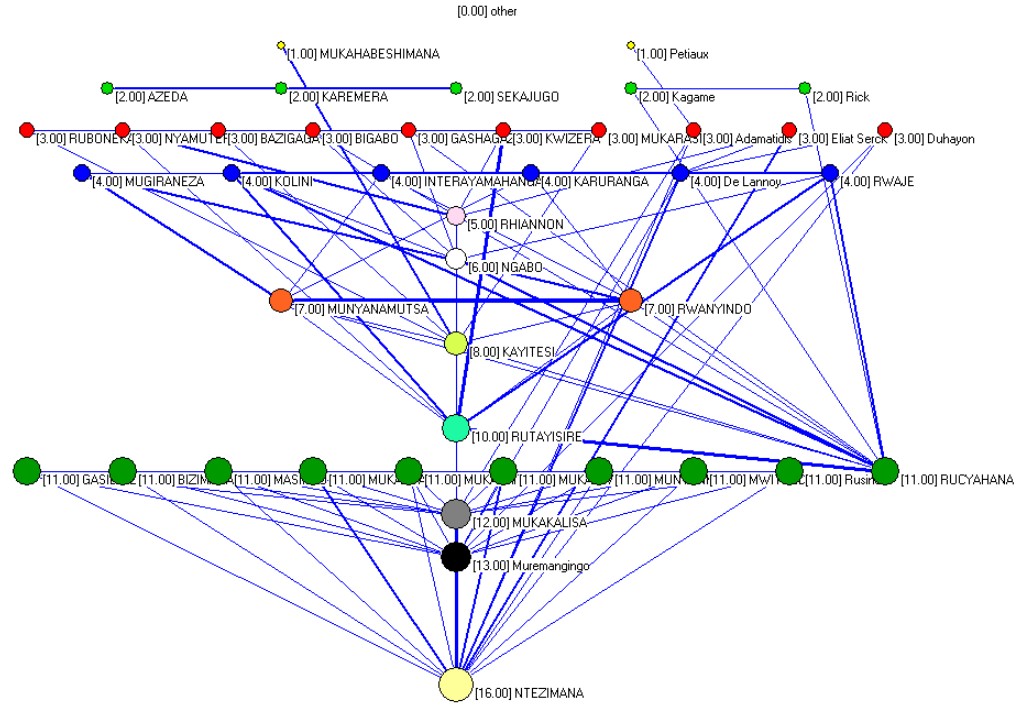


Figure 4.3: Centrality of actors in 2010.

Laurien's central position, i.e. having participated together with an important number of other actors in common initiatives, can be explained through his particular position within the network. He is not only the co-founder of the *Association Modeste Innocent* but is also at the heart of an significant number of other initiatives that have been set up in Belgium. It is important to note that through the *Association Modeste Innocent* a very important number of actors had been linked together around the them of reconciliation. In order to understand this, we need to briefly describe this association that has in many ways left a mark on Rwanda.

Association Modeste et Innocent The AMI¹¹ was founded in 2000 by 12 people in Butare ? the city of the National University of Rwanda (Southern Rwanda). The *association sans but lucratif* (asbl) was imagined by Laurien Ntezimana, and as its name indicates, to honour the memory of his two friends and colleagues Modeste Mungwarareba (who died in 1999) and Innocent Samusoni (who was assassinated during the genocide in 1994). This team of three founded in the so-called *Service d'Animation Théologique* (SAT) in 1990 in the Catholic diocese of Butare. The years prior to the genocide this organisation had trained local government officials and police staff in close cooperation with the mayor, so that members of AMI sometimes pride themselves of stating that it has also been the SAT's merit that the genocide started two weeks later in Butare than the rest of the country. Resuming the philosophy of AMI in scientific terms while being at the same time comprehensible is quite a difficult task. Therefore, we make use of L. Ntezimana's words from a speech he held in 2003 at the reception of the "Theodor-Haecker-Preis"¹². He resumes the philosophy and objective of AMI as such:

"promouvoir le droit-devoir fondamental de l'être humain, droit d' "être bon", devoir d' "être don". Par "être bon", nous entendons la santé physique, émotionnelle, mentale et spirituelle. C'est ce que nous appelons "mettre les gens debout". Par "être don", nous entendons la mission de promouvoir la santé des affaires de la cité, par un engagement positif dans l'économique, le politique, le culturel et le social. C'est ce que nous appelons "mettre les gens ensemble et au travail". Nous soulignons le "lien organique" qui existe entre "être bon" et "être don": ce sont les deux faces d'une même monnaie. La santé de la cité procède de la santé des citoyens et vice-versa. Pour atteindre notre objectif global, nous nous sommes donnés comme objectif opérationnel d'initier des in-

¹¹ "Ami" means "friend" in French.

¹²The speech is available online: www.esslingen.de/site/Esslingen-Internet/get/653286/rede-preistraeger-franz.pdf

dividus et des groupes à ce que nous appelons “la bonne puissance”, cette maturité de l’humain dans l’homme. La bonne puissance est constituée du trinôme de l’assurance (non-peur), de la force de vivre (non-résignation) et de l’accueil absolu d’autrui (non-exclusion)”.

As this short extract indicates their conception of individual health, and well-being are closely interlinked with their idea of a functioning society. In this sense, it will not come as a surprise that besides practicing Tai Chi every Tuesday, the members of AMI have been at the origin of the first and only macrobiotic restaurant in Butare¹³.

The two persons that follow Laurien in terms of centrality in figure 4.3 (above, page 214) are Marie-Goretti Mukakalisa (grey, 12 neighbours) and Didace Muremangingo (black, 13 neighbours). They have and do play a central role in this part of the network.

Marie-Goretti Mukakalisa and the *Association Ubuntu* She has for a long time been involved with and worked for AMI prior to her departure for Europe. This has put her also in a central position. However, today she rather works from her base in France and in the frame of the *Association Ubuntu* that she founded. It is based in Niort, France where Marie lives today. The *Centre Ubuntu* is the project of building a centre that would be dedicated to “ubuntu” in her place of birth Bwira. Mukakalisa has a diploma in economics from the National University of Rwanda. Both her parents were teachers in the local school of Bwira, a prestigious status that has its effect until today and could clearly be remarked when she returned to this area for the first time since eight years¹⁴. Projects of the association include bringing electricity to the area, a road, the building up of eco-tourism and impacting on the socio-economic situation of the locals. They also set up the *Abihuje* women cooperative (who make agaseke which are then sold in France) and are thinking about going into the coffee business. If the economist

¹³<http://m.wikitravel.org/en/Butare>

¹⁴In 2010, I spent one week with her in Bwira in her parents’s house that her brother, living in Gitarama, has helped to restore together with her sister-in-law and a friend from Niort that are also founding members of the association.

Marie has a very pragmatic approach; the activity dearest to her is the building of the Centre that will be dedicated to alternative healing techniques (such as Reiki).

Prior to living in France, Marie had actually been based in Belgium, where together with Laurien and Didace, she was involved in the setting up of an initiative that sought to promote reconciliation between Rwandans ? but in Belgium.

Promotion de l’Art de Vivre The Project “Promouvoir ensemble l’art de vivre ensemble au sein de la diaspora des Grands Lacs Africains” was mainly initiated by Marie-Gortetti Mukakalisa, Laurien Ntezimana and Didace Muremangingo. Started in 2004, this “project of reconciliation” for the diasporas from the Great Lakes region (RW, BUR, RDC) in Belgium (and partly also in other African countries) was initially financed by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has been actually ran for one year during which the people in charge of the project effectuated a mapping of all Rwandan associations in Belgium and selected those that they considered to be able to create a “espace à l’art de vivre ensemble”. The main conclusion drawn from a large consultation on most important problems that Rwandans encounter in Belgium among each other was the following: “Rwandans systematically fear one another” ; “there is no specific place for dialogue”. After this phase of one year, the project received no more funding. However, the lack of financial support did not constitute the exclusive reason for “failure”. Indeed, as one of the interviewee personally involved in this project puts it, the willingness to reconcile all categories of Rwandans living abroad was repeatedly perceived as “strange” or even “suspicious” (“*On nous prend pour des fous*”).

Since leaving Belgium for France, Marie has been less involved with initiatives that directly aim at Rwandans living abroad. Nonetheless, she and Laurien have been the object of the audio portraits realised by Pascaline Adamantidis (“Si c’est là c’est ici”) for the Belgian NGO *RCN Justice & Démocratie*¹⁵. Didace is loosely involved with new projects

¹⁵We have already referred to these audio portraits in chapter 2, cf. page ?? by explaining the image that they convey of Rwandans that engage for reconciliation.

that have been set up by Belgian actors and destined for Africans from the Great Lakes region. One example is the project “Dialogue au sein de la diaspora rwandaise en Belgique”.

Promotion de l’Art de Vivre, Ensemble presents itself as a follow-up of the *Promotion de l’Art de Vivre* but except the presence of Laurien there is little continuity between the two. This time, the organisation is much more centred on and carried by Belgian participants, such as the couple Isabelle and Bruno Eliat-Serck¹⁶. Meetings of the different sub-groups are regularly held in the office building of the *Mouvement International de la Réconciliation & l’International des Résistant-e-s à la Guerre (MIR-IR)* in Ixelles under the auspices of Thierry de Lannoy.

Reconciling Rwandans abroad.

A very important feature of the present network is that is not exclusively composed of Rwandan actors and that events are not limited to Rwandan territory. There are a number of initiatives that have been set up by outsiders (mostly Belgians) and are addressed at Rwandans living in Belgium. One example is the project “Dialogue au sein de la diaspora rwandaise en Belgique”. This project was initiated by *RCN - Justice et Démocratie*. It was animated by both a Belgian, Caroline Petiaux, and a Rwandan, François-Xavier Nsanzuvera (who dropped out after several months because he got a job at the TPIR). The aim was: “accroître la pacification sociale de cette communauté à partir de changements individuels”. The project eventually ended because the participants did simply not show up at the meetings anymore. According to the Belgian animator, Rwandans did actually not “appropriate” the space for dialogue. The turning point was the organisation of a public event when participants should have openly shown their participation. This project has therefore linked another Belgian actor, who is now a Yoga teacher to our network. Another example of a project set up in Belgium is the

¹⁶Authors of “Oser la relation: Exister sans écraser” they also offer training in non-violent communication in the l’ASBL Sortir de la Violence for those who “portent en eux le désir d’être constructeurs de paix, en soi et autour de soi” (www.sortirdelaviolence.org/asbl.htm).

“Commission Diasporas” by the Belgian branch of *Pax Christi*. This projects tries to reunite prominent figures from Rwanda (it loosely associates Laurien and Didace), Burundi and RDC around common issues of discussion but rarely establish formal links with their own projects.

Strategic positions

Another take on the analysis of the present networks is to focus on the position that different actors occupy within it. With this relational tool, a visualisation of the actors that can be considered as strategic is possible. Here a strategic position is one that creates a link between actors that are otherwise not in connection¹⁷. This means that if this actor was removed from the overall picture, some actors would no longer be in relation.

¹⁷A strategic position should not be confused with the centrality of an actor. An actor’s position in a network is given by the structure of its relations with the other points. Pajek allows to reveal the vertices that are in a strategic positions. These actors are called cut-vertex: if they are removed from the network, the network will be broken into several parts

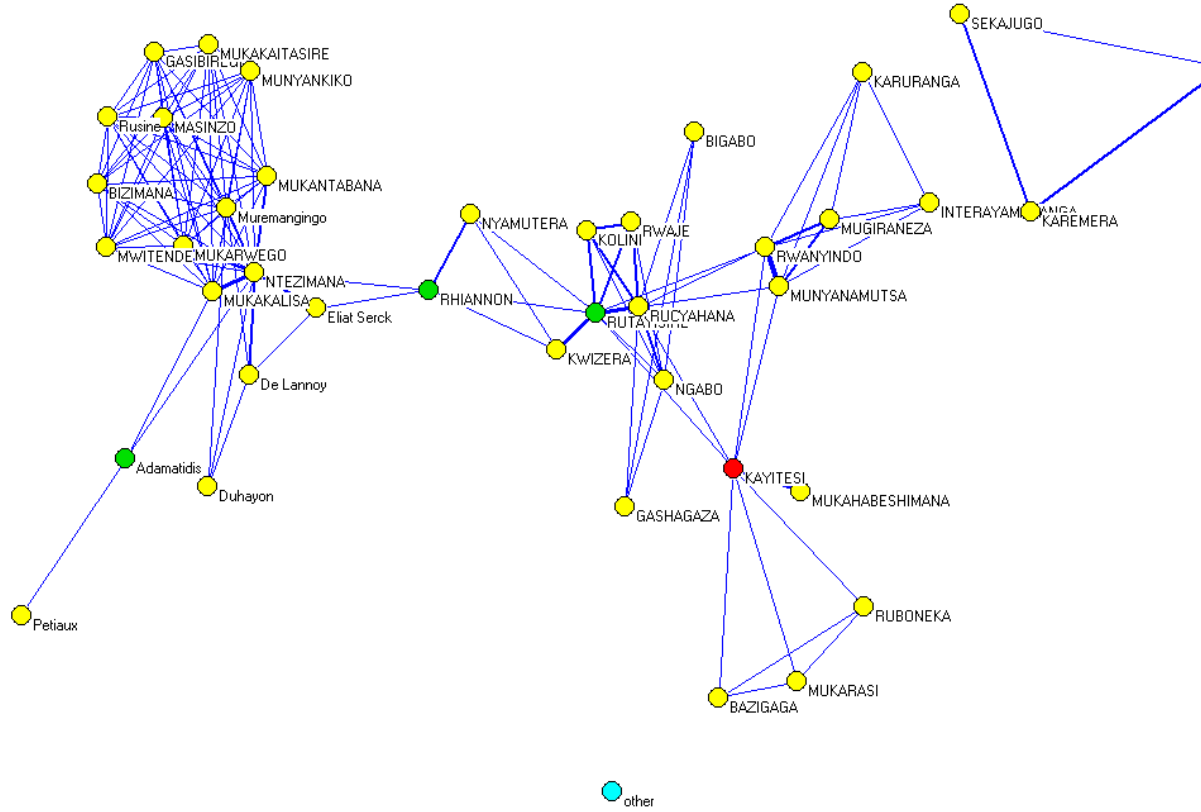


Figure 4.4: Strategic positions of actors.

As **figure 4.4** (above, page 220) shows, there is a number of actors that link social worlds which are otherwise not related. They are indicated in red and green¹⁸.

The red dot represents Mathilde Kayitesi, who has in the past been a Commissioner of the NURC. In the frame of this research she has been interviewed due to her status as founding member (together with Didacienne Mukahabeshimana) of the organisation *Umuhuza*¹⁹. In this figure her position might be over-evaluated due to her former institutional position (therefore linking to a maximum of other actors). Her

¹⁸The red vertex belongs to three components and the green vertices to two components.

¹⁹An organisation that is closely linked with “Initiative of Change”, cf. below.

status is less due to her personal engagement.

There are three green dots (i.e. linking two components): Antoine Rutayisire, Rhiannon Lloyd and Pascaline Adamantidis.

The actors in strategic positions are interestingly very diverse in their profile, no structural similarities between them could be established. Further research with a different approach and more comprehensive data (with a bigger sample) would thus need to be conducted to properly evaluate the impact of such a consideration in the study of reconciliation in the literature and especially in Rwanda.

Through Pascaline (and RCN) Caroline Pétiaux is linked to the general network. The two other green points represent a very interesting zone of the general network.

A connection in the middleground

On the one hand, we find again Antoine Rutayisire. And on the other Rhiannon Lloyd. The actors between them are Joseph Nyamutera and Emmanuel Kwizera. Joseph has already been presented above in a box on page. 75. Like him, Emmanuel is also an evangelist. This small group is linked through Rhiannon to the left part of the general network that evolves around AMI and through Antoine to its right side. This is why they somehow stand apart. Among each other, they are linked through their mutual participation in *African Evangelist Enterprise*.

African Evangelist Enterprise (AEE) The South African organisation founded by the South African Michael Cassidy in 1961. Cassidy's biography that can be found on the AEE website²⁰ explains that he "called to evangelize the cities of Africa in word and deed in partnership with the church". He absolved his education among others at Cambridge University in the UK and at the **Fuller Theological Seminary in California**, USA. This creates a link ? besides confession ? with Antoine Rutayisire and Onesphore Rwaje, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Rwanda. Antoine is currently conducting a Doctoral Degree

²⁰African Enterprise website: <http://s222745089.onlinehome.us/about/cassidy>

in Theology in the area of leadership at the Fuller Theological Seminary and Onesphore Rwaje already carries this title.

Rhiannon Lloyd started working for them in 1994 in Rwanda. When we refer back to Joseph's turning point (page 142), this is where we first heard of AEE during our fieldwork. He attaches his personal turning point strongly to the mediation and skills of Rhiannon Lloyd who chaired together with Anastase Sabamungu²¹ a workshop that he took part in.

The model of this workshop was set up by Rhiannon Lloyd shortly after the genocide when coming to Rwanda in 1994: "A workshop took shape which began to produce results that far exceeded all expectations, and with Anastase (Tutsi) this workshop was conducted in all the major towns of Rwanda, initially under the covering of African Enterprise. Joseph (Hutu) joined the team in 1997 after returning from exile in a refugee camp in Congo."²²

Note that the two former AEE members are constantly presented with (Hutu) and (Tutsi) in brackets behind their names; thereby presenting them as the perfect team for reconciliation in Rwanda and at the same occasion displaying a conception of the composition of Rwandan society and between whom reconciliation should take place. It is also important to point out that this formation around the personality of Rhiannon Lloyd is made up of profiles that would not be considered as characteristic by the literature presented above.

4.1.2 The Detmold experience

A Welsh lady among Rwandan militants

Indeed, Rhiannon Lloyd occupies a very strategic position in the network. Her affiliation structure binds together the two main parts of

²¹ "Pastor Anastase Sabamungu (Tutsi) was brought up in exile in Uganda, his parents having been chased out of the country during previous massacres. He moved to Rwanda with his wife and family after the genocide and began working with this ministry in April 1996. He is a pastor of Agape Community Church in Kigali, Rwanda. He now runs a ministry in Rwanda called Solid Marriage Ministry" (Source: <http://conversation.lausanne.org/de/people/profile/HeisaredeemingGod>)

²² Lloyd, R, Nyamutera, J. and Sabamungu, A. (February 2010). *Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict*. Le Rucher Ministries. Online available: <http://www.lerucher.org/Content/pdf/Principles%20of%20HWECE.pdf>

the network. Who then is Rhiannon Lloyd and what is her in different affiliations of actors of reconciliation?

Rhiannon Lloyd

presents herself on her personal blog “Rhiannon’s Ramblings” in the following way: “I am a former doctor of medicine and psychiatry. Since 1985, beginning with a time of training with Youth with a Mission, I have been in full-time Christian work, ministering extensively in cross cultural situations. Since 1994, I pioneered a reconciliation ministry in Rwanda, working initially with African Enterprise”²³.

She traces her involvement with work in the domain of what she conceives to be reconciliation back to a personal experience²⁴. Her personal narrative of conversion and subsequent engagement is therefore very close to the narratives that we described in chapter 2.

The Welsh Rhiannon explains that she had grown up with feeling of being part of a denigrated minority and felt hatred towards the English. Being involved in numerous prayer activities, one day an English woman confessed to her the sins of the English towards the Welsh. B. Guillou explains that

“ce geste suscita une émotion intense, des larmes puis une accolade: “J’ai pardonné à toute l’histoire du peuple anglais et j’étais capable de lui dire maintenant: “Tu es ma sœur””²⁵ (274).

It is from this experience that she derived her methodology to work in situations of conflict. She considers that forgiving is the only way to

²³The blog “Rhiannon’s Ramblings” can be available online here: www.rhiannonlloyd.blogspot.ie.

²⁴Lloyd seems to be a fervent adherent of the principle of transferring individual experience across a range of cultural and geographical contexts. As much as she used her personal experience concerning her place of origin Wales and her forgiveness towards an English friend to various contexts in Africa, she also transposes the experience of her work in different African countries back to her country of origin.

²⁵He refers in part to the book “Guérir le Rwanda de la violence” written by Fulgence Rubayiza, 1998.

respond to conflict²⁶).

She arrives in Rwanda in 1994 with *Medair*. From 1995 onwards she organises with AEE workshops for “Christian leaders on The Role of the Church in Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict”. They use a particular technique in these “cross workshops”, i.e. taking “all our pains and sorrows to the Cross [...] As we stood in the gap and asked forgiveness on behalf of whatever group we represented, we saw reconciliation take place to a greater degree than anything we expected”. She continued the work for a couple of years before handing over the work to “2 Rwandan brothers, a Hutu (Joseph Nyamutera) and a Tutsi (Anastase Sabamungu), both working with AEE”. In 1998, the structure came to be joined to Le Rucher Ministries.

She has been active in Rwanda very quickly after the genocide. As soon as 1996, she participated in the event that lead to the Detmold confession. The Detmold Declaration was very much the product of a group of people that are linked through their common participation in the SAT. Rhiannon however is more connected to another subnetwork through ambiguous group around AEE.

Linking two social worlds

Then how can we explain that these two sub-networks are only connected through one central figure that is Rhiannon? If Rhiannon was removed from the network, it would break into two parts appears clearly split. **Figure 4.5** illustrates the two disconnected components that appear when R. Lloyd is removed from the network.

²⁶Approach inspired by an interpretation of the bible and certain passages in particular: Daniel, Esdras and Néhémie (cf. Guillou, 275).

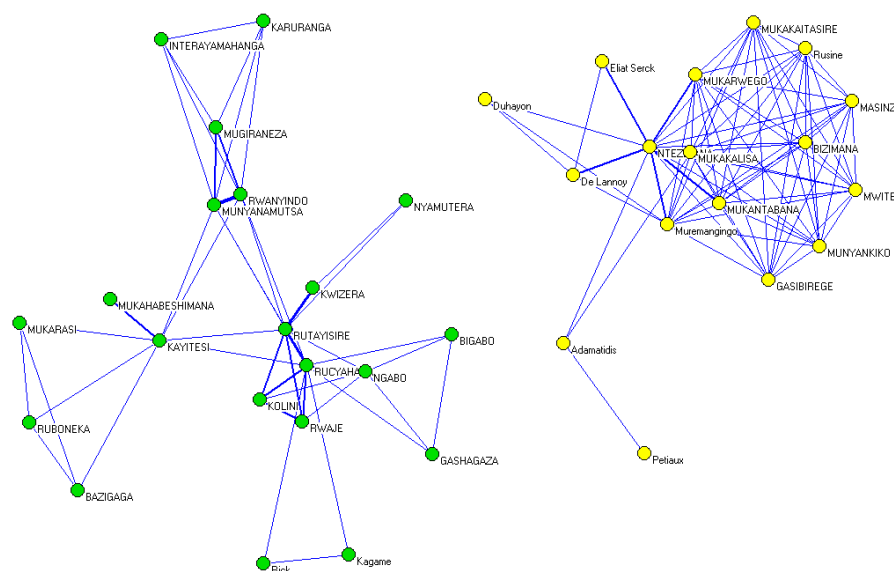


Figure 4.5: The two disconnected components (without R. Lloyd).

In order to understand the strategic position of R. Lloyd, we need to turn to the event through which she actually acquires her central position. This event is the *Confession de Detmold*, or *Confession of Detmold*, that took place in the German town of Detmold in 1996. This event, through the ? as we shall see quite surprising ? presence of R. Lloyd brought into contact two sub-networks that are otherwise not connected.

The Detmold Confession

In “The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1900-1994”, T. Gatwa explores among others the issue of repentance performed by Rwanda’s different churches after the genocide. He classes the *Confession of Detmold*²⁷ as a such exercise of repentance by actors representing religious institutions. It is noteworthy that T. Gatwa is one of the participants that was involved in its preparation and also one of its signatories. He describes the *Confession of Detmold* as an “ecumeni-

²⁷For the text of the confession, cf: <http://kirchenkreis-saarost-butare.chapso.de/confession-of-detmold-s200320.html>.

cal response” which brought together a “group of twenty-four Christians from various denominational backgrounds” (Gatwa, 2001, 230). As B. Guillou in his PhD thesis remarks, the Detmold experience has been modeled on an initiative by the Protestant and Catholic churches of Germany after the Holocaust. They presented a *mea culpa* to the Jewish people in 1947 (2011, 270). The Rwandan experience, however, did neither bring together official representatives nor those that have been mandated by the different Rwandan religious denominations. Indeed, the event was initiated privately by a Rwandan doctor, Fulgence Rubayiza living in Germany at the time. A point that we will come back to later is his belonging to the Catholic charismatic renewal, which played a role for the form that the confession was to take but more important the people that he would recruit for his project to bring together Rwandans in his city. B. Guillou (2011) points out that the people united in Detmold in December 1996 constitute in fact quite a homogenous group. Among the 18 Rwandans and six Europeans (who lived or had strong links with in the Great Lakes region) there was a majority of religious actors (8 priests, three pastors and one nun) while the others were layman but

“engagés dans des associations confessionnelles ou caritatives. Presque tous les membres du groupe étaient des praticiens et des militants de l’éducation civile en faveur de la paix et de la réconciliation” (ibid, 282).

Furthermore, a big share of them had completed higher university education and was involved in forms of intellectual practices (like writing books²⁸). And not at least a point of crucial importance is that the group was mainly composed of people residing outside Rwanda.

All in all, the homogeneity of the group is not really surprising given that “the choice of those invited was effectuated according to the princi-

²⁸As well the Rwandans as the Belgians have been active in publication activities. Most of these books are situated in the intersection between the academic and the spiritual domain. Self-help, advice in non-violent communication or theological books can be found by these authors. For instance, the Belgian couple I. Serck and B. Eliat wrote “Oser la relation : Exister sans écraser” or L. Ntezimana “Libres paroles d’un théologien rwandais”.

ple of co-optation and under the responsibility of Fulgence Rubayiza”²⁹ (Guillou, 2011, 282), so that most of them knew each other before and were involved in some form of common activity.

Given the enormous amount of publications on this declaration, we will here only briefly recall its content. In the document that was produced through the meeting in Detmold, Hutu, Tutsi and Westerners collectively present excuses for past wrongs. These individuals present themselves as representatives of these groups. The confession has incited an enormous number of reactions. At the risk of simplifying them, it can be stated that while inside Rwanda its reception has been rather negative and sceptical, outside Rwanda (Rwandans and non-Rwandans) it has been received more positively³⁰. Scepticism in Rwanda is mainly related to what P. Rutazibwa (1999) refers to as the

“danger de l’amalgame et de globalisation induite” (72).

Seen from the point of view of networks and the internal structure of certain social worlds in Rwanda and its diaspora, the Detmold confession has created an interlinkage between social worlds that usually are not necessarily linked. However, this crossing of paths has not happened in the form of meeting of the people involved, it rather happened through the presence of Dr. Rhiannon Lloyd. When reading through the texts that have been written on this event³¹ some astonishment as to her presence can be found.

²⁹Personal translation of the following original text: “le choix des invités s’effectua sur le principe de la cooptation et sous la responsabilité de Fulgence Rubayiza”.

³⁰It would be more than interesting to examine in further detail the conceptions of reconciliation that this confession conveys and to contrast them with the institutional responses inside Rwanda. Probably, the confession itself and the responses to it could serve as basis for a comparative analysis of conceptions of reconciliation inside and outside Rwanda. However, here we will take it as an object of social inquiry of a different nature. As a matter of fact, in the sense if the network analysis that we have operated it constitutes an “event” of a very particular character.

³¹One of them published by its convenor, F. Rubayiza, is the most extensive: “Guérir le Rwanda de la violence: la Confession de Detmold un premier pas” (1998). B. Guillou’s PhD thesis that deals with different practices of forgiving in post-genocide Rwanda also offers rich interview material with some of the participants of the confession.

Testing the hypotheses on Rwandan society

To sum up the presentation of our empirical data, let us come back to the point of departure of this chapter. In sociological terms, the return to an emptied country is often resumed with the hypothesis that the old elite (Hutu, French-speaking) is replaced by a new one (Tutsi, former exiles, English speaking). Yet, as this section has demonstrated this binary analysis does not render the whole picture of the individual actors and initiatives of reconciliation.

What has the presentation of my data told us about the structure of social constellations in domain of reconciliation? First, it can be noted that there are not only Rwandan actors involved. Second, activities are not only located in Rwanda. Both activities and actors, therefore, can be considered to span across borders and link together a multiplicity of social fields. Third, there does not seem to be a typical profile of individual actors that holds a predominant position within the network. Fourth, initiatives are not limited to top-down or institutional (visible) activities. Fifth, the structuring element is not hierarchical and it is also decentralised. There is not leader, even if there are actors that occupy very strategic position but they do not correspond to any particular type of profile. The Rwandan society is indeed a very complex mixture, and many elements need to be raised to understand it fully to understand the interlinkages between actors.

Concluding this first section on constellations of reconciliation through a social network approach, the importance of extraversion for their shaping has to be underlined. The findings obtained through a visualisation of the network model indicate that reconciliation really takes place between “here and there”, social dynamics cannot be limited to top-down and neither to visible actors. There is an urgent need to put reconciliation practices into context. The most appropriate category for this being the question of exile and extraversion as we shall see now.

4.2 Extraverted social worlds

The analysis with an emphasis on relations among the actors studied has brought to the fore a dimension of “here and there” of Rwandan reconciliation. This applies at the same time to actors (not only in Rwanda, not only Rwandans) and initiatives (spanning across borders). This insight sheds a new light on the ways that the functioning of post-genocide society can be read. Indeed, we argued that the actors engaged for reconciliation and their position in Rwandan society could be much more comprehensively understood when placed in a perspective of “extraversion”.

With regard to our object of study, namely individual engagement for reconciliation, this perspective carries crucial implications in the domain of their spiritual practices. These practices are closely linked to their understanding of reconciliation. This touches on the one hand on their trajectory that brought them into contact with social worlds beyond the Rwandan context. On the other, it is also closely linked to their subjective interpretations of their trajectory (linked to their personal “turning point”) and brings with it affinities with certain types of practices and networks.

And this brings us back to the Detmold declaration. As was demonstrated above, it had reunited two normally disconnected social worlds. A Welsh evangelist participated in an event that is largely representative of a network of Catholic traditions. This is why we suggest to read the strength of ties within the network and its internal divisions among spiritual lines. This means that it is spiritual links that create links, or affinities, and thereby the common basis for action and initiative.

4.2.1 Spiritual dividing lines

A qualitative reading of the Detmold declaration shows that it represents the meeting of two distinct social worlds. The network analysis indicated the strategic position of R. Lloyd (figure 4.4), through her participation in the event in Detmold; she has linked together two networks that would otherwise be disconnected (figure 4.5). This constellation can

be also found within the texts on the event. The participants seem to have noted differences of practices in this type of socially circumscribed situation. B. Guillou describes the perceived difference between Catholic and Protestant practices of forgiveness. The latter noting in the group a divergence from the individual, person-to-person character of confession that they were used to (275). It appears that many ascribed the difference to the presence of R. Lloyd. B. Guillou restitutes the reaction of the abbé Jean-Baptiste Busingo ³². He describes her with the following words:

“Une bible dans une main et la guitare dans l’autre” (284).

He underlines the difference in prayer practice and the importance accorded to certain bible passages. On the one hand, he explains to B. Guillou in an interview in 2004 that according to him the protestants were “plus spontanés que les catholiques attachés à un lieu et à un moment précis pour prier” (284). On the other hand, he underlines another aspect where he noted the difference in behaviour that he observed on her:

“Au début les échanges étaient localisés au niveau de la tête: tu écoutes puis tu préapres tes objections. Rhiannon Lloyd a contribué à nous faire bouger. Lorsque c’était tendu elle nous faisait chanter, tu imagines une Européenne avec l’accent anglais fredonner en Kinyarwanda... Elle en profitait pour nous lire et méditer régulièrement des passages de la bible notamment sur “l’agneau de Dieu”, c’était révolutionnaire pour le Rwanda, ça changeait radicalement les perspectives, on n’était plus dans la globalisation ou les condamnations mais invités à contempler l’agneau innocent qui donne sa vie pour sauver le monde” (ibid).

³²A Catholic priest who today lives in Belgium, as a political refugee. He is the author of “Le pardon, source de guérison”. He is equally mentioned in the book “Led by Faith” by I. Ilibagiza as her godfather and she describes him as a survivor like her.

The Detmold experience is very important for understanding the perspective of analysis here. Its descriptions make visible the perceived difference in spiritual traditions and practices between its participants. That is why the spiritual factor helps to better grasp the overall structure.

In the extracts quoted above, this difference is attributed to religious affiliation; namely Protestant and Catholic, of the participants. However, we argue that this conception also merits to be complexified and that only by taking into account the whole range of spiritual practices, can social configurations fully be understood. These practices cannot be understood within the frame of the national Rwandan context only. Given, the marking characteristic of Rwandan society with regard to population movements, these practices need to be placed in a perspective of “extraversion” in order to be analysed in their full complexity.

4.2.2 Strategies of extraversion

When testing the hypotheses on the functioning of Rwandan society, it was demonstrated that a uni-dimensional reading is not sufficient. Exile is a much more comprehensive category of analysis. We argue that exile is a factor of extraversion that has brought our actors into contact with social worlds and practices beyond Rwanda. This is why the lines of division among spiritual lines is stemming from different inspirations that have been found outside Rwanda. And it is among these lines that the approach through extraversion is an appropriate tool of analysis for our purpose. The concept of “extraversion” has been coined by J.F. Bayart (1999) to situate the relations that African countries have entertained with the outside (especially Europe) following exchanges that have been introduced by slave trade and of course colonisation.

Contrary to other African countries, Rwanda can be considered an exception with regard to slave trade which did simply not affect the country. It could indeed prevent external intervention and even penetration for a considerable time. So that at the arrival of the first slave traders and Europeans; Rwanda had been populated by kinyarwanda-speakers, followers of the same religion and traditions and had been subject to an

outstandingly unified administration. Historians point out the importance of art in combat Rwandan warriors and that only the arrival of fire arms had led to a victory over them. It can be argued that with colonial military occupation of the country, the rules of the game of political or social power had been profoundly changed and transformed. The PhD thesis of Allison Des Forges “Defeat Is the Only Bad News. Rwanda under Musinga, 1896-1931” richly captures changes that occurred with the appearance of Germans on the scene.

In order to follow Bayart’s argument we need to consider his way of understanding the character of relations that Africa has and is entertaining with Europe and Asia. In fact, he explains that

“le caractère inégal et asymétrique de la relation de l’Afrique avec l’Asie et l’Europe, qui s’est accentué à partir des années 1870 et a culminé avec son occupation militaire, n’exclut pas qu’elle ait eu un rôle actif tout au long de ce processus de mise en dépendance” (Bayart, 1999, 98).

As a consequence he argues that

“les acteurs dominants des sociétés subsahariennes sont incliné à compenser leurs difficultés à autonomiser leur pouvoir et à intensifier l’exploitation de leur dépendants par le recours délibéré à des stratégies d’extraversion, mobilisant les ressources que procurait leur rapport ? éventuellement inégal ? à l’environnement extérieur” (ibid).

He goes on to argue that the relation to the outside therefore had become a

“ressource majeure du processus de centralisation politique et d’accumulation économique, mais aussi des luttes sociales menées par les acteurs subordonnés, dès lors que ces derniers ont cherché à prendre le contrôle, éventuellement symbolique, de l’extériorité sur laquelle les dominants assoient leur puissance” (ibid).

It is important to bear in mind that the aim here is not to deny the dependance that colonial occupation had forced upon the countries concerned but to

“penser la dépendance sans être dépendantiste” (ibid).

In the frame of this thesis, and building on Bayart’s work, we enlarge the idea of extraversion in order to accord room for the transformations that take place through the passive adoption of strategies of extraversion by the actors studied. Indeed, I argue that far from only adopting external ways of functioning they fully appropriate them and thereby transform them. Here we draw on the approach of cultural studies, and in particular P. Gilroy (1993). The understanding put forward in this thesis of extraversion includes the perspective of “hybridity”. This perspective underlines and gives expression to the idea of a mutual influence and most important of all the potential for mutual shaping between here and there. So that by speaking of extraversion we refer to strategies of mobilisation that are situated in a space between interiorisation and appropriation.

In how far can this reading of political structures and resources help to understand better our object of study? In fact a point of crucial implications for our analysis is the orientation to the outside that could be observed on the Rwandan militants we are interested in. This outside orientation is as much a resource for action as its inspiration. Note that they use this resource in a creative manner which means that they use it at an intersection between appropriation and adaptation.

In chapter 2, through studying the trajectories of our actors, the militants have been described as extraverted. The trajectory of our interviewees has acquired a dimension of “extraversion”; either through exile and/or exposure and belonging to the international milieu in Rwanda which most of them have become part of or at least are very familiar with.

As a consequence, they all have been led to frequent social worlds and got in contact with practices outside Rwanda. One point that seems of crucial importance here is that extraversion has brought them in contact

with spiritual practices of other countries and milieus than what could be traditionally found in Rwanda. This inscribes them into social dynamics that span across national frontiers.

4.2.3 Alternative spiritual practices of reconciliation

An important number of publications has been dedicated to the role of so-called “new churches” or “new religious movements” in African countries. Concerning the Rwandan context, a number of texts have also analysed the contributions of these new religious movements to reconciliation policies or discourses. All attribute the massive growth³³ of these new denominations to the genocide and the crisis of the Catholic institution that had been predominant prior to it. A. Corten (2001) analyses the contributions of these new, mainly Protestant, denominations to the discourse on reconciliation in Rwanda. Others, such as P.A. Cantrell (2007, 2009), work on the Anglican church and “post-genocide reconciliation”. This author, for instance, apprehends Anglican actors as part and parcel of a strategy to tap into international funds through the construction of “international linkages” for the sake of “domestic agendas” (2007).

Here, we will explore another part of the network that was presented above, a group that can be regrouped under the term “new age”. Interestingly, these practices have so far remained invisible in the literature.

Affinities around *Association Modeste et Innocent*

Let us now come back to one sub-group of the general network that has been described in the beginning of this chapter. Figure 4.6 (page 235, below) presents a visualisation of the group of people that evolves around *Association Modeste et Innocent*. This group is separated from the general network when Rhiannon Lloyd is removed from it (cf. page 225). The most striking attribute of this component is the important cohesion between actors³⁴. Here cohesion means the number of initiatives or

³³A. Corten (2001) notes that some sources indicate a growth of about 30%, that he however considers as slightly exaggerated.

³⁴In the network approach this type of network is labelled a “clique”.

projects that these actors have participated in together. This means also that all actors are connected among each other directly through this common participation. The structure of this network and its internal cohesion is mainly due to the fact that all actors have at some point or another worked for or been involved with AMI.

AMI has been presented above. We have furthermore shown that their conception of individual health and well-being are closely inter-linked with their idea of a functioning society. In this sense, it will not come as a surprise that besides practicing Tai Chi, the members of AMI have been at the origin of a macrobiotic restaurant in Butare³⁵.

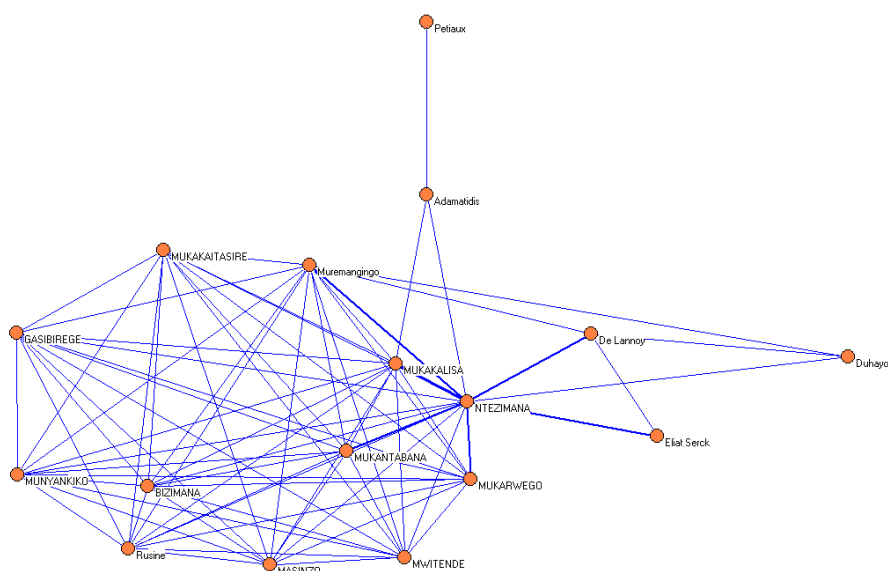


Figure 4.6: The cohesive group that evolves around AMI.

To resume the main points about this group of people, it seems to evolve strongly around the charismatic personality of Laurien Ntezimana, and also his personal spiritual practices. Furthermore, many of its members have set up their own initiatives after having worked for AMI (and rarely are linked to more institutional initiatives such as the NURC). We have already made allusion to the “Centre Ubuntu” and Marie-Goretti Mukakalisa. Other examples are “Méthodes de l’Etoile

³⁵<http://m.wikitravel.org/en/Butare>

du Développement” or “Ubutwari Bwi Kubaho”.

Méthodes de l’Etoile du Développement was set up by Alexis. He is the author of the very well selling book “Ibanga ry’Ubukire” (“The Secret of Wealth”) that is meant to teach how to change one’s mindset in order to acquire a mental attitude that allows to become rich. Alexis Rusine is equally the General Secretary of the trade union Congress for Labor and Brotherhood.

Ubutwari Bwo Kubaho Abbé Jérôme Masinzo set up this initiative very quickly after the genocide in rural Southern Rwanda where he worked as Catholic priest. This initiative that still brings together widow genocide survivors and women whose husbands are in prison is called *Ubutwari Bwo Kubaho* which can be translated as “courage to live”.

Furthermore, many non-Rwandans are involved in this cohesive group. Recall the two initiatives entitled “art de vivre”. In this sense, it is not surprising to note that this group is strongly oriented towards Europe, once more with a focus on Belgium. Finally, the members of the catholic network did not change belief, contrary to the Anglican part of the network where many religious conversions could be observed. Even if some may have transformed their practice through the discovery of *new age* philosophy.

Unusual spiritual practices The previous descriptions already give a good indication of how difficult it is to situate Laurien Ntezimana and his followers with regard to religious practices. Although he has been brought up as a practicing Catholic and this belief is still the one he practices, he has also taken his distances from the institutional manifestations of it. Probably the first instance we have to mention is the fact that he decided not to defend his PhD thesis in Leuven. According to him he took this decision because he felt that the understanding he had gained of believe and the human being could not be fitted into the style that academia demanded for it to be validated as a PhD thesis.

In the end, his work “Libres paroles d’un théologien rwandais - joyeux propos de bonne puissance” was published in 1998 as a book at Karthala with a foreword by C. Vidal and Marc Le Paper. The practice of Karate, Tai Chi and now the Qi Gong, a knowledge that he acquired in Belgium, make him stand out in Rwanda (as well as inside the diaspora).

Furthermore, the discovery of an alternative, or new age, approach to spirituality have had the impact of distancing him from a more classical Catholic practice. On the one hand, this has attracted an important number of people who are interested in this type of spirituality to him but, on the other, has also alienated many.

In 2012, the book “Dépasser la haine, construire la paix ? Témoignages de paix de la région des Grands Lacs” was published with the collaboration of *Eirene Suisse*. One of the testimonies is the one by Laurien. The publishing of this book apparently was a reason for the organisation *Initiative of Change* to invite Laurien to their place of meeting in Caux in Switzerland. In terms of religious denomination, it seems at first glance surprising that a Protestant evangelist organisation would invite a Catholic to give his testimony at its headquarter. With regard to this contradiction, S. Lefranc has noted something similar when studying a Colombian group of *Initiative of Change*. She explains that

“les effets propres des techniques de pacification employées impliquent paradoxalement un dépassement du prosélytisme religieux. A l’échelle internationale, l’ONG fait activement oublier ses liens avec le mouvement évangélique, tandis que l’organisation colombienne compte de nombreux membres conjuguant l’appartenance au groupe et les reliquats parfois actifs d’une identité catholique” (2008, 47)³⁶.

So, given the fluidity of these practices, how can we situate them in more

³⁶The same is true for Didacienne Mukahabeshimana, another of our interviewees whose account we have described above. She is also actively involved with *Initiative of Change* and belongs to the wider network around Laurien; in fact she is a friend of Marie-Goretti Mukakalisa. Both have worked for the Rwandan *Dutirembere* that is involved in micro-credit strategies for women. In 2011, for instance, she organised for the Rwandan *Initiatives of Change* – *Ubupfura* team the “International farmers’ meeting” with the help of *Farmers’ Dialogue*; a sub-group of Initiative of Change.

analytical terms? And what are their implications for the conceptions and practices of reconciliation proposed by these actors?

4.2.4 *New Age* in Rwanda

Contrary to the scholarly interest in Protestant new religious movements in Africa, the reflections on alternative practices with a spiritual dimension are sparse. E. Simon (2003), working on the case of an NGO promoting traditional medicine in Senegal, wonders if what she observed with regard to these emergent new perspectives on health and healing do indeed constitute an “exportation of *New Age* to Africa”. For our object of study, we argue that what we have observed all throughout fieldwork is a circulation of alternative healing and spiritual practices. This can be inscribed in a generalised trend that has been observed in many African countries:

“les formes de la croyance qui innervent le continent africain traduisent les migrations, la circulation globalisée des informations” (ibid, 883).

A hybrid phenomenon With regard to this circulation, the *New Age* has remained much more discrete than other practices and has not been studied in the case of Rwanda at all. This can maybe be explained by a relatively negative perception of it. The concept of *New Age* carries a number of negative connotations and most of the time englobes a stunning variety of activities and groups. In the frame of this research, we use the term non-normatively and just like C. Ghasarian (2002) in his work on the *New Age* in San Francisco. He also underlines that it englobes very diverse models of well-being (ibid, 143). Furthermore, he explains that it constitutes:

“un savoir local hybride et éclectique se crée ainsi continuellement en intégrant des éléments composites qui participent du global. Dans une logique holiste, les multiples propositions et modèles du mieux-être conjuguent des pratiques physiques,

diététiques, spirituelles, etc., pour constituer ce qui veut être un “art de vivre” (145).

Note that the exact same concept of “art de vivre” is literally the name of the initiatives set up by Laurien and his colleagues in Belgium. This focus on well-being and its therapeutical dimension have also been underlined by other authors (e.g. D. Hervieu-Léger or F. Champion). This also touches directly on the perceived interlinkage between personal health and the good functioning of society. With regard to the group studied and its practices of reconciliation, it is interesting that C. Ghasarian refers to a “social dimension of health” (147).

Who are then the persons that are generally considered to be attracted to this type of practice? C. Ghasarian has observed that they this movement

“touche des individus pluriels, aux identités fragmentées et à la recherche de nouvelles réponses à leur interrogations” (154).

A community of seekers Note that he refers to a certain type of White American in the bay of California; or a “community of seekers” (160). However, we argue that this characteristic applies as much to the Rwandan and Belgian individuals that we have studied. First, it could be considered as a new response to the biographical rupture that all the Rwandan militants studied have known in their lives. Second, the Belgians involved with this network also seem to have lived through difficult personal experiences and seem to be attracted to new or alternative responses to questions that have (psychologically) burdened them. In these cases, Laurien sometimes acquires the role of a personal coach or even therapist by giving advice on very personal questions. It is striking to observe that in these constellations, the Rwandan actors are admired by the Belgians. Not only for the quality of their personal practice and inspiration, but also when a comparison between a personal difficult situation in Belgium is compared to the experience of genocide and flight in Rwanda.

In terms of belief and religion, the adoption of *New Age* practices does not necessarily include a break with one's religion of origin. As we have noted above, we rather witness an eclectic fusion and invention of practices, that are strongly inspired by the Catholic faith. Here, we also find a point of congruence with C. Ghasarian who explains that

“si la dimension religieuse de New Age est incontestable, le mouvement ne se pose pas explicitement comme religion”
(157)

It does not seem exaggerated to refer to an “experimental” practice, which can among other include the “channeling, ayurvedic medicine and Qikong” (160).

Finally, these rather uncommon practices in the Rwandan context are a strong indicator for the degree of extraversion of our actors. In fact, these above-described New Age practices can be considered as a geographically and socially situated expression of a certain type of society. Or in other words, they are:

“hautement revelatrice de la société californienne d’aujourd’hui”
(Ghasarian, 144)

Bringing New Age to Rwanda This shows that the Rwandan militants studied have come into contact with and adopted a life-style and practices that originate in another time and place than their country of origin. Furthermore, it hints to the extremely fluid circulation of spiritual practices, especially in a post-genocide context where certain individuals seem particularly open to search for alternative answers outside their close environment. Because if these practices have come into circulation mainly through Laurien who has acquired them in Belgium, those around him (and who do not necessarily have been outside Rwanda) adopt them with the same ease. This brings us once more back to the issue of extraversion of our actors who are extremely oriented to the outside for spiritual inspiration when it comes to practices of reconciliation. In any way, it has a decidedly extraterritorial character and goes far beyond internal Rwandan lines of cleavage or categories of cleavage.

This network appears like a Belgian and Catholic inspired version of these tendencies. The Rwandan actors have found Belgian counterparts that are as interested as they are in these types of alternative practices. They are all close to Belgian versions of contemporary manifestations of the Catholic faith (practiced by young persons and with an emphasis on emotions). To give an example of the circulation of these practices, let us once more turn to Laurien. During his studies in Belgium he has started to practice Karate and later Tai Chi. Furthermore, he mentions as his source of inspiration the Belgian therapist Thierry Janssen, who is the author of the book “La solution intérieure”. This book is a plea for alternative approaches to medicine and healing.

The parallels with what has been observed by C. Ghasarian are striking. The name “art de vivre” is just one very obvious point. Indeed, the individuals and initiatives are all combining health and healing approaches to propose answers to the ways of living together in post-genocide society. Here, a proximity to international initiatives that use similar healing approaches to reconciliation could be observed.

One could, for instance, mention *Capacitar* which is active in Rwanda since 2006. This organisation has been founded by the psychologist Patricia Mathes Cane in 1998 in Nicaragua. The organisation describes itself as “an international network of empowerment and solidarity. We teach simple wellness practices, team building and self-development to awaken people to their own wisdom, strength and resources. From personal healing and transformation people can reach out to their families and communities to heal injustice and create a more peaceful world”³⁷. There so-called “body-mind-spirit” include among others Tai Chi, “Fingerholds for managing emotions, Energy Tapping modalities” or “work with the energy system and chakras”.

Multiple organisations involved in New Age We mention this organisation here since it is very much representative of a generalised trend that applies personal alternative (or *New Age*) healing techniques to post-conflict situations. And what is even more important for our

³⁷cf. *Capacitar* website: www.capacitar.org/history.html

analysis the fact that a former *animateur* of AMI is today working for *Capacitar*. It was also him who introduced me to Brahma Kumaris meditation centre in Kigali³⁸. This centre offers free introduction to meditation according to the method set up by the Indian guru Brahma Baba. Indian inspiration seems very predominant among our interviewees, an important number of them recommending the writings of Krishnamurti for personal growth.

All these illustrations of practices that are mostly inspired and stem from either alternative health domain or Indian traditions show how much the practices that can be found in this group of people are inspired from orientations to outside Rwanda. And as mentioned above, it is through strategies of extraversion that these orientations and or resources have been acquired.

In terms of international attention and acclaim, many actors from this network are highly visible in international media. The numerous prizes, books or other forms of testimony sharing dedicated to them testify to that. However, the inverse could be true on the national scene. Especially their alternative twist of peace-making and healing techniques could be considered a reason for marginalisation on the national scene of peace-makers. In the end, they have also stayed largely unexamined in academia.

These therapeutical approaches and alternative healing mechanisms make a link with what has been described above concerning our actors' conceptions of reconciliation. Indeed, there is another important point that C. Ghasarian touches upon in his work:

“l'idée de changer le futur [...] de changer le monde dans son ensemble est présentée comme passant par un travail sur soi” (148)

This leads us straight back to the previous chapter, where we pointed out that reconciliation is first and foremost conceived as a “reconciliation with oneself”. And as a reminder “reconciliation with oneself” is

³⁸ *Brahma Kumaris* Kigali centre: www.bkwsu.org//whereweare/center

considered as a state that can be reached through a personal work on oneself.

Transposition of healing conceptions

The conception of healing as a “travail sur soi”, is closely mirrored in the conceptions of reconciliation of our actors. Here, we also can introduce another example with the conception of Laurien Ntezimana that he exposes in a text entitled “La voie de la réconciliation”³⁹). Let us have a look at the definition that he proposes of reconciliation in this text:

“se réconcilier, c’est entreprendre un travail sur soi qui consiste à faire cesser en soi-même le désaccord qui existait avec qui (quoi) que ce soit.

Une personne réconciliée, c’est celle qui vit l’accord avec toute chose et tout le monde, qui vit en harmonie avec le tout. D’où il apparaît que le travail de réconciliation est analogue au rapprochement d’une courbe et de son asymptote : on ne l’atteint jamais tout en s’en rapprochant à l’infini.”

Here again, we find the idea of “travail sur soi”, this time very clearly and directly linked to the concept of reconciliation itself. This idea has already been developed in the previous chapter 3. It is also closely linked to the interpretations of their turning points that were described in chapter 2. The interviewees put forward an approach to reconciliation that goes through an individual and internal healing process. This goes hand in hand with a work that these persons have undertaken on themselves and their ways of perceiving their world. They explain that they have indeed been transformed through this work. It is precisely after this internal transformation that felt the need to engage for reconciliation. So that their very conception of it is closely linked to the personal interpretations of their trajectory.

It is in this way that they seem to propose therapeutical mechanisms to translate their conceptions into practice. In this realm, we can observe

³⁹Ntezimana, L. “La voie de la réconciliation”: www.trilogies.org/spip.php?article25

a certain transposition of their conception of individual healing to a collective level. Interestingly, it seems to be exactly this spiritually based conception of individual healing that is transposed to a societal level.

To conclude, they translate their understandings of reconciliation into practice by transferring a personal understanding of healing to a larger social scale but also draw on their position within and links to extraverted networks. By rendering visible some of the traits that characterise the landscape of practices of reconciliation in Rwanda today, we shall see that the changes that took place after the genocide can be more attributed to international practices and constellations of actors that are favourable to a particular approach to reconciliation than a mere exchange of the Rwandan elite. As this discussion of fieldwork results has shown, strategies of extraversion are essential for understanding the constitution of networks between our actors as much as their practices. The same can be said of political practices of reconciliation as we shall see now in the third section of this chapter.

4.3 Extraterritorial political practices of reconciliation

The first two parts of this chapter demonstrated that actors engaged for reconciliation and their position in Rwandan society could be much more comprehensively understood when placed in a perspective of “extraversion”. This perspective has brought to the fore the extraterritorial dimension of practices of reconciliation in Rwanda and through this, a new way of reading post-genocide society.

If this is true for actors who have often remained invisible, it also is for official political practices of reconciliation. As we have laid out in the first chapter of this thesis, the assumption that assigned a nearly exclusive role to a top-down governmental initiative of reconciliation are predominant. It has been noted that reconciliation as a public policy has rarely been constituted as an object of study as such. Which is why we have referred to it as a “black-box”.

Furthermore, the political logics of reconciliation are often seen as

serving an ultimate (hidden) aim of oppression⁴⁰, grasp for internal power or simply a “veneer” (Melvin, 2012) for other political practices and aims. Given these visions on political leaders and practices of reconciliation, the question is in how far can the approach of extraversion lead to alternative readings and therefore, shed another light in the blackbox of Rwandan reconciliation.

As we argue throughout this chapter, this approach can provide new insights at two levels. First, it can help us better to understand the nature of political affiliations that are to a large extent shaped by exile and therefore, extraversion. Second, this approach permits to see the interlinkages of the “here and there” of political practices aimed at reconciliation.

Refugees and the emptied country

In order to grasp this two-fold dimension of extraversion of the political affiliations and practices, we need to come back to what it meant to return to an “emptied” country in 1994. The journalist Philip Gourevitch conducted a series of interviews with Paul Kagame – the then vice-president of Rwanda in 1996 that nicely reveal some of the logics that we are interested here.

Philip Gourevitch: So you want the refugees back? Paul Kagame: We want people back because it is their right, and it is our responsibility to have them back, whether they support us or not. Philip Gourevitch: That means all Rwandans living together in Rwanda for the first time since independence. It's more an experiment than a norm. [...] I heard from the minister of rehabilitation that something like 70 percent of the people in Kigali now are newcomers, returnees from the diaspora. These are huge population changes. Do you perceive the mixture of old and new ? the fact that people are not familiar with each other ? as an advantage or a disadvantage in the aftermath of the war and the genocide?

Paul Kagame: What I'm going to say, personally, is that everyone in Rwanda has a right to be in Rwanda. Perhaps this is the mistake

⁴⁰ “Assassinat de la mémoire hutu” (Lemarchand, 2006, 21)

the previous regime made, telling the people they have no right to come back. The moment you deny that right, somebody will fight for it, even if he did not want it. Habyarimana was too stupid to realize that simple thing. So what we are saying is whoever wants to come back is free to return. You can have dual citizenship; we don't care. It's a question of rights⁴¹.

P. Gourevitch asks P. Kagame, whether they wanted the “refugees back”. The refugees he is referring to and whom their conversation very much centres upon are those Rwandans that left Rwanda at the arrival of the *Rwanda Patriotic Front* in July 1994. They are discussing an issue that was particularly pressing in 1996, namely the massive presence of Rwandan refugees in camps on the state's borders.

The enemy that ran away On the one hand, the question of the security threat remains important due to the fact that “one-fifth of the population remains in exile in and around the refugee camps controlled by the former government and the army and the militias” (ibid, 175) and the frequent insurgencies by these armed forces into Rwanda (the so-called “guerre des infiltrés”). On the other hand, the discussion of the presence of a very important number of Rwandans outside Rwanda allows a glimpse at the logics that were to guide post-genocide political reconstruction efforts. As P. Gourevitch interestingly points out:

“It's sometimes said that you won the territory of Rwanda, but you didn't win the war. You didn't defeat the enemy, he just ran away, and sooner or later you'll have to fight again” (ibid, 190).

Kagame replies by talking about the choices made by its army and his conviction that another war⁴² to “do away with the refugee situation” (189), in order to ensure security within Rwanda, will be easier to conduct from within the country than as a rebel army directly after the

⁴¹ *After Genocide*; P. Gourevitch interviewing P. Kagame in 1996, 185.

⁴² This war then actually happened and is still a major issue of concern today as the current UN report and the aid crisis demonstrates.

genocide. However, this issue has already attracted a great deal of scholarly attention and is not our main concern here.

A deserted landscape For the purpose of understanding current political practices of reconciliation in Rwanda, it is of greater importance to consider the first part of Gourevitch's question: "You didn't defeat the enemy, he just ran away". And although this remains an issue of major debate, it cannot be denied that the civilians that left Rwanda together with the militias, killers and soldiers had been constrained by the latter to do so. As much as they also prevented them from going back to Rwanda. Certainly not all had been forced into exile, and the fear of revenge killings had played a significant role, the role of propaganda and pressure to leave had been important.

In 1993, G. Prunier notes that

"Le Front demeure persuadé [...] de sa capacité à attirer le soutien des masses rurales hutu. Pourtant celles-ci ont toujours fui l'avance du Front à cause d'un mélange de crainte de vengeances liées au passé, d'une propagande effrénée de la part du régime et d'un simple désir de se mettre à l'abri des projectiles. En 1992, il n'y avait qu'environ 1 800 civils dans toute la zone tenue par le FPR qui offrait le spectacle, étonnant dans une région de telle densité, d'un paysage entièrement vide, déserté par toute vie humaine" (Prunier, 1993, 137).

He adds that during his fieldwork, he discovered, to his own surprise, the extent of government propaganda (ibid):

"les paysans de la région de Byumba en 1992 furent très surpris de se rendre compte que, contrairement, à ce que leur avait dit l'armée les combattants du FPR n'avaient ni queues ni oreilles pointues ni yeux brillants dans la nuit".

Here again, we are faced with the description of a "paysage entièrement vide, déserté par toute vie humaine".

The decision to vacate the country The image of an emptied country is also taken up by F. Rusagara in his book “A History of the Military in Rwanda”. The RPF veteran quotes P. Rwarakabije ? a former commander of *Armée de Libération du Rwanda* and *Forces de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) who returned to Rwanda in 2003 and works as a Commissioner of the *Rwanda Demobilisation and Re-integration Commission*. F. Rusagara explains that according to this spearhead figure of the current public policy of return and re-integration of former combatants,

“it was during a meeting of leaders of the fleeing genocidaire regime in July 1994 at Mukamira military camp that the decision to “vacate” the country with the “entire” population was taken. The fleeing genocidaire government expected a humanitarian catastrophe, which would prompt the international community to put pressure on the RPF-led government in Kigali and portray it as illegitimate “without a population” to govern (2009, 203).

These impressions from the period of war and genocide in Rwanda illustrate and make visible the social logics that seem to underlie political stakes. Seen from a historical perspective, these logics were introduced or set in motion at the period prior to independence when a large share of the population was forced outside the country. It was from this moment on that the territory of Rwanda no longer coincided with the population of Rwanda⁴³ and that political space was extended well beyond national borders. This forced departure and resulting exile created the very reasons for the return in arms in summer 1994. And it also laid the basis for design of future policies aiming at the shaping of social relations between Rwandans. This is not only true for the type of policy that we are interested in, namely those designed and put into place after

⁴³This tendency could already be observed from the Berlin conference onwards, but was of a different nature. D. Newbury mentions that “because of the arbitrary vagaries of defining colonial boundaries, in recent times many Kinyarwanda speakers have been located in what is today Uganda and Congo as well as Burundi and Tanzania” (263). Therefore, “the extent of Rwandan culture (at least as defined by language patterns) differ[s] from the colonially constructed boundaries” (ibid).

the genocide ? and labelled with “reconciliation” ? but as well those political practices prior to it.

The population-territory nexus Here we want to draw attention to the continued importance of the population-territory nexus ? or the “here and there” ? of political practices of reconciliation in Rwanda. The remainder of this section will explore its role with regard to two questions. First, the dimension of affinities and affiliation between political actors is examined. This is the occasion to examine the role of the omnipresent experience of exile not only for the trajectory of many Rwandan leaders but also the creation of networks that resulted from it. Secondly, the extraterritorial dimension of policies that embody visions of how living together after genocide, war and exile should be designed is explored.

4.3.1 Exclusive affiliations

The importance of extraversion for understanding reconciliation in Rwanda has already been demonstrated with regard to individual networks and strategies with regard to reconciliation. It is also an essential element for political practices and actors on an institutional level. Let us come back to the work of Bayart on “strategies of extraversion”. Indeed, it is striking to note that the networks and alliances of extraversion are constantly present in discourse on Rwandan politics. Another extract from the interview conducted by P. Gourevitch can help us to illustrate this. At some point, P. Kagame explains the following:

“Now the whole world is up in arms about the refugees who are in Tanzania and Zaire. Everyone kept quiet about the Rwandan refugees who were on the outside for thirty years. Nobody talked about us. People forgot. They said, “Go to hell.” Even during the war, everybody was against us, except maybe Uganda, which was always being accused of helping us. But everybody else was on the side of Habyarimana, whether directly or indirectly. This was a big problem. The French came in here and fought, and the Belgians, and the

Zairians. We saw ourselves fighting against the whole world with our small war.” (Gourevitch and Kagame, 1996, 72)

Note the interesting formulation “everybody was against us” and “everybody else was on the side of Habyarimana”. In our view, this quote is a very good illustration of how political practices are inscribed in a complex set of extraverted networks. The use of “against” or “on the side of” means a clear distinction between opposed alliances. This way of interpreting events leading up to the genocide and beyond are by no means particular about the leaders of the RPF. Indeed, it can be observed that many observers read Rwandan politics and their evolution nearly exclusively concerning the role, position and interventions of Occidental powers. The representations of these over-spanning networks can in some cases attain the status of theories of conspiracy with a strong sense of imagination (or paranoia).

The “Anglo-Saxon conspiracy”

A very popular theme is the “Anglo-Saxon conspiracy”. It is often depicted as a war of shadows between French-speakers and English-speakers in the region of the Great Lakes. Theories of conspiracy have flared up markedly when English was adopted as the national language and the country joined the Commonwealth. This theme is illustratively expressed in a review of the book “Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale: Révélation sur les réseaux rwandais et occidentaux” (H. Nzambo Ngabanda) written by S. Mbonyumutwa in the revue “Dialogue”⁴⁴:

“Selon l’auteur, Kagame, avec ses alliés américains qui l’ont spécifiquement recruté, veut réaliser le “rêve d’un empire hima-tutsi dans la région des Grands Lacs”” (Mbonyumutwa, 2004, 98, quoting Nzambo Ngabanda).

⁴⁴Note that S. Mbonyumutwa was presented in the RTBF documentary mentioned above as one of the Rwandans that should be persecuted for their role in the genocide. His family has ever since protested against what they consider diffamation (Cf. www.musabyimana.net/lire/article/la-lettre-de-shingiro-au-journal-le-viflexpress/index.html). Note that the *Père Blancs* are implicated in the publication of *Dialogue*.

The “commando de charme” Very recurrently this way of perceiving and reading Rwandan politics and its geopolitical context refers to a “commando de charme”⁴⁵ that supposedly are the

“ “hirondelles” rwandaises, ces jolies filles tutsi jetées dans leur lit des années durant par les stratèges rwandais” (ibid)

The book review by S. Mbonyumutwa quotes another excerpt that puts forwards that they are

“au service du lobby tutsi, au sein des organismes internationaux, des gouvernements européens et des associations les plus puissants de ce monde” (ibid, 97).

The same topic can be found in “L’Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise. Rwanda, Burundi: 1988-1994” by F. Reyntjens (1994). As very pertinently and precisely observed by C. Vidal in her 1995 review of the book, F. Reyntjens insinuates that the RPF mediatic “war” prior to its invasion of Rwanda, made use of the exiled Rwandan communities in Europe

“et des Européens liés à eux, notamment par mariage”.

It is worth considering the detailed analysis that C. Vidal makes of this statement. In fact, she starts her argument by stating that there have also been Europeans who are married to Hutu women and may have maybe adopted an anti-RPF stance. Furthermore, there are Europeans, who have sympathies for the ideas of the RPF without being married to Rwandan women at all. However, it is even more interesting for the purpose our analysis is when she explains that

“pour qui connaît le dossier rwandais, cette notation a quelque chose de très choquant: elle fait, bien fâcheusement, écho

⁴⁵In the beginning of our fieldwork in the midst of Rwandan political opponents exiled in Brussels, this theme had been presented to us repeatedly. It is often used with regard to the Belgian politician A. Destexhe.

à la propagande raciste propagée, au Rwanda, à partir de 1990. Le journal *Kangura* [...] diffuseur extrémiste d'une idéologie raciste, avait publié, en décembre 1990, les 10 commandements que les Hutus devaient appliquer pour contrer le "machiauvélisme" tutsi, machiauvélisme utilisant deux armes: l'argent et les femmes. Les Tutsis, en effet, selon cette propagande, "vendaient" leurs femmes aux haut fonctionnaires hutus pour les espionner et les influencer [...]. L'évocation sans prise de distance, par Filip Reyntjens, des soutiens d'Européens qui ont "immédiatement épousé" la cause du FPR, en raison de leurs liens matrimoniaux avec les communautés de réfugiés tutsis, rappelle, de façon malheureuse, le texte odieux de *Kangura*" (Vidal, 1995, 283).

Recalling the pre-genocide period and the growing stigmatisation which was to precede extermination, this clarification puts into perspective these remarks. This way of looking at Rwanda is not without recalling of what C. Coquio referred to as "fantasmes exotiques" (Coquio, 2004, 23); embraced with enthusiasm not only by Europeans. Besides being tendentious, these remarks very clearly inscribe political developments in the existence of affiliations that go beyond national borders and are built on personal affinities.

Leaders' friendships

These networks do not only exist in discourse on policy but are also present in practice. Despite the danger of being caught exactly within these rather polarised discourses, the existence of persistent strong links and affinities cannot be denied. In order to pick just one example, we could mention the implication of France in the genocide and its support to the pre-genocide regime. This is documented in an ever-growing body of literature.

However, there are other more subtle ways of reading this transnational connection of different social sites. G. Prunier mentions the loose ends of this very intricate mosaïque of alliances that were enacted in the beginning of war in 1990:

“dans la nuit du 4 au 5 octobre [1990], l’armée rwandaise avait monté une habile mise en scène dans les rues de Kigali pour faire croire à une attaque des rebelles sur la capitale. Des milliers de cartouches furent tirées (sans qu’on ne recense aucun mort !) et le montage fut utilisé pour persuader Paris d’intervenir militairement, officiellement pour “protéger les ressortissants étrangers”, officieusement pour “défendre le Rwanda contre l’invasion ougandaise”. Les liens personnels très cordiaux existant entre le fils du président Habyarimana et Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, conseiller de son père à la Cellule Afrique de l’Élysée, facilitèrent énormément les choses. Le président Museveni, très dépendant de l’aide économique occidentale au moment où l’effondrement des cours internationaux du café avait ruiné la balance commerciale ougandaise, se trouvait dans l’obligation de chercher un compromis qui le protégerait de l’hostilité française” (Prunier, 1993, 134).

This extract dating from 1993 is interesting with regard to several aspects. First of all, it points out the alliances and counter-alliances that took shape or simply persisted during the war and then the genocide (i.e. *Opération Turquoise*). The ambiguity of Uganda, and particularly Y. Museveni, are touched upon. Many authors draw attention to the importance of understanding developments internal to Uganda prior to the attack of October 1990 and notably the role of imminent personalities, such as Fred Rwigyema, Chris Bunyenyezi and Paul Kagame, who were to become leaders of the RPF ? in order to grasp what happened inside Rwanda later.

Second, the text makes references to the impact of socio-economic (im)balances that presumably affect the positioning of some actors. The rapid falls of coffee prices are as well often referred to as a reason to explain the radicalisation inside Rwanda of political actors.

Finally, the text mentions the personal and very “cordial” that linked the two sons of presidents Habyarimana and Mitterrand. It seems that this type of linkage based on mutual affinity and shared belongings to

certain types of social worlds has rarely been taken into account by academics. However, it appears that these factors, if combined with a holistic sociological analysis, could help to have a more comprehensive grasp of the evolution of policies and politics in general. For instance, it would be more than interesting to exhaustively analyse the transnational links that weave together Rwandans and Europeans based on shared commonalities of education⁴⁶ or religious affiliation.

Shared religious practices

It has been noted more than once that the Belgian King Baudouin and Rwandan President Habyarimana had shared a close personal link due to their shared affinities for *Opus Dei*. Léon Saur in “Influences parallèles. L’Internationale Démocrate Chrétienne au Rwanda” also draws attention to these extraterritorial linkages:

“Avec François Mitterrand, il [Habyarimana] se fit défenseur de la langue française. Il s’investit dans le mouvement charismatique avec le fervent catholique qu’était le souverain belge, et y gagna l’amitié sincère du roi Baudoin et de son épouse, la reine Fabiola. À chacune de ses visites à Laeken, le chef de l’État rwandais priait l’Esprit Saint dans la chapelle royale. D’aucuns soulignent la grande affection de Jean- Paul II pour Juvénal Habyarimana et affirment même que celui-ci occupait un poste important dans l’Opus Dei” (Saur, 1998, 29).

He is, however, not the only observer who points to the more or less hidden ties built within the influences of the Catholic charismatic revival. These voices are not limited to academic writings but also include an important number of websites and blogs⁴⁷.

⁴⁶Cf. also L. Saur (2008) who reasons for the existence of a direct link between the functioning of Belgian society (pillarisation) and the impact it had on Rwandan political developments after independence.

⁴⁷For instance the website “Wihogora” that presents background documents with regard to genocide trials and as well mentions a famous webpage of the Spanish branch of Opus Dei in support of Habyarimana (that is today inaccessible, but has aroused many critics): <http://users.skynet.be/wihogora/index-wihogora.htm>. Another example is the website of the Belgian “Cercle républicain”, which in a text “La monarchie,

Shifting alliances in the 1950's

When looking at the events surrounding Rwanda's independence (described in chapter 2) through this lens of extraversion, the close inter-linkages between the "new elite", the Catholic church and the Belgian administration acquires a different meaning.

First of all, we can wonder whether the shift in preference of the Belgians had not been triggered by exactly a capacity of this new elite to turn the contact with the occupier into a resource that ultimately led them to acquire political power and social predominance. And accordingly, in how far the "old elite" was less adept, willing or prone to conceive a power stemming from the outside and therefore, much less intent on tapping into this potential resource to maintain traditional power.

As it has been pointed out by many observers (cf. chapter 2), the 1950's and especially the years preceding independence constitute an important period that left its mark on future developments. Not only has this period witnessed a shift of alliances but has also set the basis for new alliances that proved quite stable over time.

4.3.2 Comparing political practices of "living together"

While having a remarkable impact on extraverted alliances, this period also allows us to take a close look at the logics that have characterised political practices aimed at the shaping of "living together" of Rwandans. In fact, this moment of transition and crisis permits us to study and see more clearly the social logics that were at work and have structured political action ever since.

It is important to note that we are guided by M. Dobry's approach with regard to the assumption of on the one hand the complexity of social systems and on the other with regard to the continuity of social logics, be it in times of crisis or not. First of all, we think that it is consequential

aujourd'hui est uniquement protocolaire" mentions the links between the Belgian Catholic revival network and their links and supports of not only Habyarimana but also of Rwandan accused of genocide in Belgium (i.e. procès des quatre de Butare). Online available: www.crk.be/?La-monarchie-aujourd-hui-est.

to consider with regard to Rwandan social transformations that

“c’est l’existence dans un grand nombre de systèmes sociaux modernes d’une multiplicité de sphères ou de champs sociaux différenciés, inextricablement enchêvetrés et, simultanément, plus ou moins autonomes les uns par rapport aux autres qui constitue le fait structurel essentiel pour l’intelligibilité des processus de crise politique pouvant apparaître dans ces systèmes. [...] C’est cette complexité [...] que l’analyse des processus de crise doit prendre au sérieux : ce sont certaines de ses composantes qui offrent le moyen d’entrevoir aussi bien de quoi est faite la *plasticité* des “structures” de ces sociétés que l’impact que peuvent avoir à cet égard les mobilisations qui s’y déploient” (Dobry, 1983, 402).

It is in this sense that we think it is of utmost importance to consider to study the conceptions of reconciliation that have guided policies in Rwanda since independence. This period, due to the multiple mobilisations and political formations and formulations, offers the possibility to exactly “catch a glimpse of” the shaping of these logics. This brings us to the second postulate from M. Dobry that supports our analysis, namely a

“point de vue continuiste sur les processus de crise politique [...] rien ne nous permet d’affirmer que même les moyens mis en œuvre dans les conjonctures de crise soient radicalement “autres”, radicalement différents de ceux qui ont cours dans des conjonctures plus routinières” (395).

It is exactly this that stands out when analysing different practices of what could be termed reconciliation, namely the continued and consistent predominance of particular logics of (non-)cohabitation. From the 1950’s onwards, any government in power had to position itself and propose strategies as to the idea of how social relations should be designed.

This question constitutes a focal point which policies ? spanning over and interlinking various and very diverse sectors ? are structured upon.

The continuity lays here in the predominance of this logic, whereas a break may appear with regard to the position towards it. It seems that those in power are forced to take a stance with regard to this to define their form of government. Here the general lines of political themes of the times will be presented chronologically.

The First Republic (1962-1973)

In “When Victims Become Killers” M. Mamdani lays out his analysis of the political and social stances that could be observed at the times of independence. In fact, he explains that politicians of Hutu Power of the 1990’s and those that were involved in the “social revolution” in the late 1950’s have in common the “overriding conviction that the Rwandan nation is Hutu and, therefore, power in an independent Rwanda must also be Hutu. Tutsi may live in Rwanda, but only as resident alien minority, at sufferance of the Hutu nation. For the Hutu who disagreed, Hutu and Tutsi, majority and minority, belonged to a single nation ? Rwanda” (Mamdani, 2001, 126).

Exclusionist policies He names these tendencies that “vied for supremacy”, “exclusionist” and “accommodationist” (ibid). He insists that “these tendencies did not correspond to the political divide between the Tutsi and the Hutu political elite, [...] both tendencies could be found on either side” (ibid). Accordingly, he delivers an interpretation of the events of 1959 that is in line with the interpretation of political struggles along the lines of exclusion and inclusion: “1959 began with a sharp split between Hutu and Tutsi political leaders. Kayibanda, by then the leader of the revolution, called for Hutu power and for the exclusion of the Tutsi from political life” (ibid). It is interesting to note that at the time when Belgians (under the auspices of the Catholic church) shifted and supported this “new elite”, the latter adhered and developed the conception of a Rwandan political community that would have to exclude one part of its citizens. The predominant political force that gained momentum was actually focused on an exclusionist vision of Rwandan society. Contrary to the beginning of the 1950’s the idea was no longer

to withdraw and/or undermine the power of the traditional chiefs, but social relations could only be conceived of by total exclusion of that part of Rwandan society that came to be conceived of as alien; i.e. death or exile. It is here that a new theme of thinking social relations in Rwanda took shape.

“Impossible” physical cohabitation It appears that for the first time in the country’s history it came to be conceived as incompatible to live on the same territory with a certain group of people. Let it be noted that if in a initial time probably only the high positioned former detainers of colonial power had been the targets of violence. However, violence soon became generalised and any Abatutsi (rich or poor, in a position of power or not) could become a victim of the successive waves of massacres.

As a means of illustration, we could consider the famous idea of “Hutuland and Tutsiland” in the newly independent Rwandan Republic. Rapidly after the 1959 “revolution”, Kayibanda called for a new form of exclusion by putting forward that “Hutu and Tutsi be “segregated” into two separate zones as a first step toward a “confederal organisation”. Citing Disraeli, he compared Hutu and Tutsi to “two nations in a single state”: “Two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy, who are as ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets” (Mamdani, 2001, 127). It is from this moment onwards that the policies to deport Abatutsi from their original homes to separate zones, especially in Bugesera; a very inhabitable region due to dryness and mosquito plagues⁴⁸ date. We can therefore conclude that physical cohabitation became to progressively conceived of as impossible and undesirable.

It is also noteworthy that the differences between Rwandans came to be seen as differences of “race” (cf. Manifeste des Bahutu, Semujanga et al. (2010), Mamdani, 134) which accordingly exacerbated the percep-

⁴⁸Cf. also Semujanga (1998, 166).

tion of difference. In the post-independence phase and during the “First Republic”, “Rwanda was exclusively a Hutu state. The rationale for this was disarmingly simple [...]: the Hutu were indigenous, the Tutsi were alien. Whereas the Tutsi had been treated preferentially by the colonial state as nonindigenous civilizing influence, the First Republic considered this claim reason enough to treat them as politically illegitimate” (Mamdani, 2001, 134) and thus Abatutsi “continued to be officially defined as a “race”” (ibid). As a consequence, it is not surprising that on March 11, 1964 Grégoire Kayibanda held a speech in Kigali that was addressed to “Rwandans in exile” in which he “announced that if the troops raised by the refugees⁴⁹ were to take the capital this would lead to “the total and sudden end of the Tutsi race” (Viret, 2010, 23).

The Second Republic (1973-1994)

The so-called “deuxième République” began with a coup by the Rwandan Minister of Defense Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana on July 5th, 1973. Although its promise of political stability after the violent massacres and unrest that characterised the end of the reign of Kayibanda, first seemed to come true, the change of regime was disastrous for the “former ‘barons’ of the First Republic” (Viret, 2010, 24). Indeed, 58 people who had been close to Kayibanda were assassinated and an important number imprisoned (ibid). In 1974, G. Kayibanda was sentenced to death and placed under house arrest, where he was to die⁵⁰ in 1976 (Viret, 26).

The radical stance of the new rulers with regard to their predecessors can be inscribed in nascent a competition and conflict between the Southern and Northern regions of Rwanda⁵¹. G. Kayibanda (from Gitarama in the South) and the first Republic represented the former, J. Habyarimana (from Gisenyi in the North) and the Second Republic the latter. Cohabitation between the two was seen progressively as ever more problematic. Note that, therefore, logics of cohabitation are not

⁴⁹These troop he refers to are the *inyenzi* raids that we have mentioned earlier.

⁵⁰Some observers claim that he was starved to death.

⁵¹A regional conflict that we have already mentioned above, cf. page 99.

centred on a binary level only. As a consequence, those who had formerly held socially dominant positions were either killed or marginalised.

The political changes were presented as a “moral revolution” (Viret, 25). When the single political party *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND) was created in 1975, it “fused completely with State structures” (Viret, cf. also Guichaoua, 1989). The state structure became tightened and closely supervised by the new president. It is interesting to note that “the regimes propaganda was inspired from the Zairian model” (Viret, 25) and elevated “développement” (amajyambere)” (Viret, 2009, 5) to the ideology of the state.

“Ethnic” reconciliation M. Mamdani explains that vis-a-vis the rising violence against Tutsi that characterised the end of the First Republic, Habyarimana promised “ethnic reconciliation” between Hutu and Tutsi” (Mamdani, 2001, 189). He furthermore explains that “branded an *alien* minority under the First Republic, the Tutsi were redefined, even rehabilitated, as a *Rwandese* minority under the Second Republic” (ibid). However, in practice it meant a concentration of power in the hands of those close to the President and originating from the North. Viret speaks of a “tacit quota system” through which between 80 and 90 percent of administrative positions were reserved for Hutu (Viret, 2010, 25).

Intransigence vis-à-vis return As was mentioned above, the government had a very intransigent position concerning the return of the refugees whom the violence in Rwanda had created. The intransigent position under the Habyarimana government with regard to return is epitomised in an often-quoted speech the former president is reported to have said: “The glass is full and we do not know where to put the rest of the water”. So that political discourse with regard to the refugees was characterised by exclusion, the insistence to stay outside and the idea that Rwanda was not big enough to hold all Rwandans.

The idea of renewed living together became even more unthinkable with the radicalisation of the political landscape and the Hutu Power movement. Quoting Mamdani once more, “for Hutu Power, the Hutu

were not just the majority, they were the nation” (190). This return to colonial thinking totally excluded the idea of physical cohabitation within the boundaries of Rwanda. This perception of impossibility was translated into physical extermination during the genocide. And finally at the end of the genocide, this logic was pursued unfalteringly by forcing the “nation” out of the country. It was decided that if the refugees return, it was better to be a refugee than to co-habitate with them. Numerous studies showing that civilians were forced to leave the country, underline that the governing logic was to impose the mutually exclusive vision of social relations. As a consequence, the return of former refugees led toward the creation of new ones in 1994. Let us now turn to current policy practices that have been designed by post-genocide governments with regard to social relations between Rwandans; be they living in Rwanda or not.

4.3.3 “Simbasaba gukundana” (post-1994)

In the post-genocide period, the question of cohabitation remains as salient as in the periods prior to that. The massive departure of 1994 and the issue of return continue to be of utmost salience for understanding Rwanda’s policies of today. In summer 2012, when many donors put into question the continuation of their financial aid in the face of the UN report accusing Rwanda of supporting the M23 rebel group in Eastern Congo recalls the questions of 1996. Then as today Rwandans that are outside the country play a major role for domestic policies.

Here, we argue that these questions also are a key to understanding political practices of reconciliation. Or put differently, the way that cohabitation is conceived of in public policies is shaped by the massive presence of Rwandans outside Rwanda. Note that the experience of being outside, or in exile, has a temporal dimension. First, a past one by having marked a big share of today’s leaders. Second, a present dimension through the massive flux of populations. This is why exile needs to be taken into consideration in order to grasp the logic underlying policies. It has an important bearing (1) on the trajectories of many contemporary political leaders and (2) on the conceptions at the very

basis of policies.

1. Leaders' trajectories

Exile has shaped the political landscape through its impact on the personal experience of Rwandan leaders. Indeed, the trajectory of many of the most influential political leaders is marked by the experience of prolonged exile (often in neighbouring countries, experience of refugee camps and exclusion in "host" country). President P. Kagame explains his memories of exile in *A Thousand Hills – Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man who Dreamed it*: "you were always reminded, in one way or another, that you didn't belong there, that you were not supposed to be there. You have no place that you can call yours. You have no right to speak". The author of the books goes on to explain that "with an almost mystical focus, they came to believe fate and history had assigned them a transcendent task: to find their way back to a homeland many of them barely remembered, but all idealised" (Kinzer, p. 15).

In exile, or as good as dead Furthermore, Rusigara explains that "being in exile to a Rwandan was considered "as good as dead"⁵² (Rusigara, 142, 153). This experience is not at all limited to former RPF fighters but has been even more complex bearings for former combatants of the FDLR or other rebel formations. P. Rwarakabije, for instance, shows that while he has been engaged in the armed opposition of the current government, he has been reintegrated and obtained a very visible function in Rwandan society. As a consequence, during official festivities on the tribunes of state dignitaries it is not rare to see sitting side by side Rwandans that actively fought one another with arms. Additionally, many members of today's elite have participated in the longstanding mobilisation in the diaspora in favour of the RPF (formation of dance troops in Belgium collecting funds, foundation of the Collège St. Albert in Bujumbura). The experience of exile, therefore, marks the trajectories of many influential personalities in Rwanda.

⁵²An idea which he finds expressed in the proverb: "nta munyarwanda uhera i mahanga/ishyanga".

2. The conception of policies

The title of this subsection “Simbasaba gukundana” succinctly the position of the current government. The expression is often used by President Kagame and other government officials in speeches and can be translated as “I do not ask you to love each other”. This expression has to be understood in connection with two others: “turi abanyarwanda” (“we are all Rwandans”) and “icyo dupfana kiruta icyo dupfa” (“what unites us is more important than what divides us”). These expressions, or slogans, actually express the essence of political attitudes towards the desired return of absent Rwandans. The top-most priority is to bring Rwandans on Rwandan territory; conversely, at least make their return a possibility. It is obvious that return of all Rwandans ? irrespective of their background ? means the, often uneasy, cohabitation of Rwandans that might be in conflict or have harmed each other (or their ancestors) in the past. D. Gishoma (2007) explains that Rwanda after the genocide resembled a

“rond-point plongé dans une circulation routière dense sans l’existence d’un code de la route. Tout était réuni pour qu’il y ait des collisions ininterrompues jusqu’à ce qu’aucune circulation de vie ne soit plus possible. (...) Mis à part le fait que ce petit pays était devenu dans l’après-génocide une mosaïque de souffrance et de violences, il avait également acquis presque les mêmes caractéristiques que la tour de Babel. Certains parlent le kinyarwanda, d’autres le swahili, d’autres le lingala, d’autres le kigande. D’autres s’expriment en anglais à côté de ceux qui s’expriment en français, etc.”.

Faced with a country that first was emptied and then re-populated by Rwandans with a great variety of trajectories and experiences, the very idea of cohabitation is extremely challenging. One major issue has also been to pacify (in the sense of preventing physical violence) the extraordinary proximity of killers and survivors of the genocide. This constel-

lation is somehow unique⁵³ compared with other countries that have experienced similar cataclysms.

So far, different mechanisms have been put into place to ensure a “peaceful” cohabitation, which often means the prevention of genocidal or vengeance killings through the insurance of physical security, which in turn explains the accent put on this aspect. To sum up, the political will is directed towards the creation of cohabitation between Rwandans irrespective of their backgrounds while being fully aware of the difficulties that this can potentially bring with it. Below, we will take a brief look at some characteristics of public policies that reveal very particular conceptions of how “living together” is conceived nowadays.

Widening political space. A first essential element is the strong tendency and willingness to integrate Rwandans abroad into Rwandan domestic political space. The “Rwandais de l’extérieur” are today considered as a “sixth province”⁵⁴. The creation of a so-called *Diaspora General Directorate* (DGD) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation by a cabinet decision on June 20th, 2008 indicates the importance of this part of Rwandan population. Its actions are guided by “The Rwanda Diaspora Policy” of 2009⁵⁵. Here Rwandan diaspora is defined a voluntaristic way:

⁵³Note that it is generally assumed that in Germany after the end of WWII, there was simply no proximity between victims and perpetrators. However, as the book “Jews, Germans, and Allies” by A. Grossmann pertinently points out, the imminent post-war period had been characterised by “close encounters” between exactly these categories of people. The fact that she dedicated an entire publication to this unexpected proximity demonstrates its unique position compared to other contexts. Note that in the German case proximity has been temporally limited to the immediate post-WWII period.

⁵⁴The territory of Rwanda is administratively divided into five provinces.

⁵⁵This policy is based on three pillars: (1) The cohesion of the Rwandan diaspora, (2) The Rwandans in diaspora are equipped with accurate information about their nation and (3) The Rwandan diaspora playing a significant role in the socio-economic development of Rwanda, *The Rwanda Diaspora Policy*. Kigali, p. 27. Note the interesting way of writing history by this policy document: “For decades, Rwandans, have been migrating into different parts of the world for political, social or economic reasons. This migratory dynamics dates back to pre-colonial times and became more important during the colonial period and especially since 1960. As a result, Rwanda has an important Diaspora community in various countries across the world, with major concentrations in neighbouring countries, Western and Central Europe and North America.

“all Rwandans including foreigners holding Rwandan nationality, who left their country voluntarily or were forced to live in other countries of the world, and are willing to contribute to the development of Rwanda” (8).

Note that this rather open definition coexists with a (normative) categorisation of Rwandans abroad. It is within the category of those who “fled Rwanda due to political and security reasons” that the most interesting point that somehow carries, in a nutshell, the policy positioning to Rwandans abroad.

It is here that a two-fold distinction comes up. Indeed, the distinction is based on the cyclical movements of populations since the 1950's. The definition makes reference to an important element of differentiation that (forced) movement has introduced into Rwandan social relations. On the one hand, it mentions “a large population of Rwandan who fled between 1959-1994 in different events where Tutsis were persecuted, killed, and forced into exile” and on the other, “after the 1994 genocide, a big group of Rwandans fled the country to different parts of the world mostly in South and West Africa. Others fled to far countries in Europe and North America” (12). With regard to the second group, the text puts forward that “it was identified that part of this population are grouped into armed and political subversive groups, social, cultural and the so-called human rights associations while others operate as individuals to spread genocide ideology and sensitize other Rwandan Diaspora to go against Government's policies and programmes targeting national development” (ibid).

However, we argue that the distinction between Rwandans overseas is less determined by these criteria linked to date of departure or return, than by the willingness “to contribute to the development of Rwanda”.

Rwandans outside the country are rather classed around the pole of “national development”. The policy options that have been developed with regard to the “Rwandais de l'extérieur” can be situated on a continuum ranging from a position being perceived as “negative” for national development towards the “positive” one. And notwithstanding the trajectory of any Rwandan, if he or she is perceived to find him-

or herself in the second category, they can potentially be included into political space as we shall see below.

Favouring return. Recalling a recent event can help to illustrate the openness ? at least more open than is often assumed ? towards the return of Rwandans of all walks of life. The event took place in 2011 in the frame of the government-sponsored campaign “Come and See ? Go and Tell” (*Ngwino Urebe*); i.e. the government pays flight tickets for Rwandans abroad so that they can visit the country and return to their countries of residence and “tell” their experience to other Rwandans.

A generalised indignation has been observed, especially among survivor groups, when it became apparent that two Rwandans living in Belgium and widely known to be *génocidaires*, Ernest Gakwaya, also known as Camarade, and Eugène Mbarushimana had as well visited Rwanda in the frame of *Ngwino Urebe*. This incidence was of course quite embarrassing for the *Ngwino Urebe* campaign and aroused criticism concerning too much willingness to incite Rwandans from the outside to come to Rwanda.

However, charming Rwandans “home” is not the only option that has been employed. One could think about the military dismantling of the refugee camps in the 1996’s; which was aimed to force return. All in all, return is rather more often incited than forced nowadays. The borders of Rwanda are considerably open. The acceptance of a double nationality (and the relative ease to obtain a Rwandan passport for those who speak Kinyarwanda) is but one example. Furthermore, we could mention facilities to buy territory and housing and of course to perform investment in the country.

The meaning of “ubumwe”. So far, the official title of the public policy of “unity and reconciliation” has little been studied. Indeed, although mostly attention is paid to reconciliation, unity is also of central importance to understand its very logic.

As a reminder the precursor to the RPF was called “Rwandan Al-

liance for National Unity” (RANU) and formed in 1980 in Kampala⁵⁶. The importance of the word “unity” is also mirrored in the so-called “eight point plan”⁵⁷ which constituted its political programme. This first point is “the restoration of unity among Rwandans”⁵⁸. Recall the quote from D. Gishoma who refers to Rwandan post-genocide society having the characteristics of the tower of Babel due to the various trajectories of exile of its citizens which has left their mark through the languages spoken. This approach also explains the occurrence of the word *ubumwe*/unity besides reconciliation. It was as early as 1993 (even before the genocide) that the Arusha Accords laid down the creation of a National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC)⁵⁹. The origin of this commission being formally established in 1999 had therefore been negotiated between the pre-genocide government and the RPF leader under the auspices of international mediators.

It would be more than interesting to conduct an analysis of the genesis of these terms in a historical perspective. To give but one example, we would like to draw attention to the reflection meetings that were held between 1998 and 1999 in the “village urugwiro” (the office of the president of the republic), also called “Uruwugwiro Talks”. In this report, chapter one is dedicated to “the unity of Rwandans” and reconciliation is nowhere to be found in the titles. A word count of the report⁶⁰ on these meetings reveals that while the word “unity” is used more than a hundred times, reconciliation can be found twelve times only. These aspects of policies explain that the accent is often more on unity than on reconciliation, so that policies can often be more comprehensibly read against this vision of reconstruction than that of reconciliation.

To sum up, we have seen that from the 1950’s onwards practically any sector of Rwandan society and particularly any regime that came

⁵⁶It was renamed into RPF in 1987.

⁵⁷An updated version of the eight point plan can be found online: www.rpfinkotanyi.org/en/index.php/about-us/political-program?lang=

⁵⁸Cf. also (Eltringham, 2006, 85).

⁵⁹The *Protocol of Agreement on Power-Sharing within the Framework of a Broad-Based Transitional Government between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front* (annex III of the Accords) stipulates in Chapter IV the establishment of this Commission.

⁶⁰An online version is available online: <http://www.grandslacs.net/doc/2378.pdf>.

to power had to position itself and propose strategies as to the idea of how social relations should be put into practice. To put it more clearly, it could be argued that prior to the genocide physical cohabitation between Abahutu and Abatutsi was simply disfavoured by successive political leaders; they even went as far as proning genocidal extermination as a way of preserving and enforcing their vision of how social relations should be structured. The post-genocide governments have adopted very different practices with regard to this question. Today the stress is on the very idea of return. The new perspective being centred on the assumption of the importance of “unity” of Rwandans independent of their backgrounds, the stress being put on physical cohabitation on the territory of Rwanda. While it is acknowledged that this very cohabitation potentially is the source of a multitude of tensions and problems, this approach favours the return of Rwandans of all walks of life and believes in the possibility to prevent open conflict through security measures and economic development.



Concluding chapter 4. This final chapter has demonstrated the extraterritorial dimension of reconciliation through a presentation of the structural configuration of social constellations with the help of the network analysis tool. This finding applies as well to individual as to institutional actors and practices. Let us turn to each point separately.

The conducted analysis of social configurations has shown that in the frame of the field researched the shape of social configurations can be most comprehensively explained by adopting a perspective of extraversion. Through a visualisation with network analysis, actors and their activity could be put into a geographical context. When considering the initiatives and actors observed in the light of extraversion, their extraterritorial dimension spanning between “here and there” becomes visible. This approach can give us more clues as to the way that local actors are linked to and integrated in transnational networks practices. By their orientation to and integration in social worlds across Rwanda’s borders, the actors under study draw on external inspirations and connections

that play an important role for their position inside Rwanda.

And this brings us to the next finding of this final chapter. There is an urgent need to also study “alternative” practices of reconciliation (such as the “new age” ones) and especially those that link up actors across borders. Through the perspective of extraversion it can be apprehended how much lines of division and links are shaped by spiritual practices. And most important of all, these practices have either been acquired in exile or in contact with social worlds outside Rwanda. This finding once more underlines the need to bring to the fore the extent to which individual actors make use of strategies of extraversion when mobilising for reconciliation “at home”.

Finally, the chapter highlighted the significance of extraversion for political practices and actors. The institutional dimension is also determined by strategies of extraversion not only for personal networks but also for the translation of reconciliation into policies. The chapter therefore is a tentative to shed a new light on the structural features that influence political actors and institutional initiatives in the domain of reconciliation by acknowledging their somewhat ambiguous border-spanning position. By considering how much institutional actors are integrated in transnational networks, it can be perceived that their activity in the domain of reconciliation is shaped at the intersection of the biographical experience of exile and the personal interpretation of it. Therefore, this chapter underlines the idea to reconsider actors, initiatives and policies of reconciliation between “here and there”.

Concluding remarks

This thesis proposes to open the black box of Rwandan reconciliation by shifting the perspective of its study. This perspective includes the question of exile and return in order to explore the meaning of reconciliation in contemporary Rwanda. Indeed, Rwandan social logics have been shaped by massive movements of population in and out of the country. This is why I argue that a cyclical movement of exile and return fashion the logics of Rwandan reconciliation so that it can only be fully understood when taking its extraterritorial dimensions into consideration. Furthermore, this thesis aimed to discover the meaning of reconciliation “from below”, by taking an interest in individual actors who engage for what they consider to be reconciliation.

It is for this reason that three dimensions of this phenomenon have been at the basis of my analysis. First, there is the issue of **massive movement of populations**. Since the 1950’s, the cyclical movements of exile and return have had a crucial bearing for social relations inside the country. It is from this period onwards that a massive exodus in successive waves took place. This overall characteristic has been most clearly visible at the end of the genocide when a veritable “exchange of diasporas” took place. While the formerly persecuted return or arrive in Rwanda, another part of the population feels constrained to leave. It is estimated that while around 1, 000, 000 moved inside Rwanda, around 2, 000, 000 left the country.

Second, I accounted for the extra-territorial dimension of Rwandan reconciliation. In the light of massive (forced) departure from and return to Rwanda; it is significant to note that experience of exile has strongly marked Rwandan history. Given that a consequential number

of Rwandans had always found themselves outside the country, reconciliation cannot be circumscribed to the national territory and frontiers only. Due to this massive absence, political space has extended beyond national frontiers. This is why I argued that Rwandans outside Rwanda also have to be taken into consideration.

Third, I argue that reconciliation in Rwandan has to be read in the light of return. It was demonstrated in how far the movements of exile and return have shaped Rwandan recent history. Social relations today are determined by the question of return. In order to understand the complexity of contemporary Rwandan society, it has to be born in mind that after the genocide, a massive influx of Rwandans, that have left the country in the 1950's or had been born in exile, has taken place. Furthermore, those Rwandans that left after the genocide also return at different paces and moments. I have pinpointed in how far Rwandan citizenry is composed of individuals with very divergent walks of life. This results in a marked difference with regard to experience and trajectories of Rwanda's citizens. Furthermore, return entails an often uneasy cohabitation of Rwandans that might have harmed each other (or their ancestors) in the past. And finally, given the salience of Rwandans abroad, coexistence also includes that with the physically absent.

The puzzle

The central puzzle of this research has been focused on those individual Rwandan militants who have appropriated and engage for what they conceive to be reconciliation. The underlying research question is the following: How to conceive of reconciliation in a society marked by genocide when the social context is characterised by massive and cyclical population movements in and outside national frontiers? Adopting the perspective that Rwandan reconciliation cannot be fully understood without considering this flux of populations and therefore, the questions of exile and return, I am interested in social experiences of individuals. That is the reason why I argue that in order to study reconciliation in

contemporary Rwanda, the sense with which it is invested by those that engage for it, has to be invested. This question has been addressed from a micro-sociological perspective by focusing on actors who have so far remained invisible. The main research objective was to produce a sociological portrait of these actors, which implies a non-normative research posture.

The empirical data has been generated through a qualitative field-study conducted between 2009 and 2011 in Rwanda and Belgium with Rwandan actors who are actively engaged in practices that they define as aiming at reconciliation since at least five years. The method for data generation has been qualitative biographical interviewing and participant observation.

Although the actors studied are sociologically rather heterogeneous with regard to age, gender or “ethnicity”, they all are part of Rwanda’s educated elite and have experienced (still experience) an element of extraversion in their lives. Extraversion is closely linked to the experience of exile whom the majority of the interviewees have known in their lives. Nevertheless, this experience has occurred at different moments in life and of history, which indicated the variety of walks of life of our interviewees.

It is interesting to note that despite these differences, they all share a very similar expression and conception of the sense of their engagement and reconciliation. Analysis of their narratives has indeed revealed the omnipresence of exile in the discourse of actors but also in their interpretations of reconciliation. In the light of very fragmented biographies, they all express internalised conceptions of their “vocation” for reconciliation and sustain that reconciliation is first and foremost a “reconciliation with oneself”. The thesis has shown how much conceptions of reconciliation are intertwined with their interpretation of their personal trajectory.

Resuming the findings

Chapter 1. Locating reconciliation between here and there

In this first chapter of the thesis, I argue to re-locate the perspective for studying Rwandan reconciliation. This chapter describes the theoretical and methodological choices of this thesis in which reconciliation is studied “from below”; i.e. focusing on individual actors that engage for it through a qualitative micro-sociology spanning beyond Rwanda’s national frontiers.

The idea is to consider the location of reconciliation in the Rwandan context differently with regard to three aspects. First, it is put forward that new insights on reconciliation can be gained by studying Rwandan individual actors who engage for it. Second, we argue that in order to more completely grasp the dynamics of reconciliation in Rwanda, its transnational and extra-territorial dimension needs to be taken into consideration. Third, we propose another approach of studying it: qualitative interviewing and the biographical method.

Chapter 2. Understanding engagement for reconciliation

With the help of the sociology of engagement, the motivations underlying this militant engagement for reconciliation was examined. The aim is to bring to the fore the sense that this form of militantism carries for the individual studied. This issue is addressed through the use of an analysis combining the objective and subjective dimension of their trajectories, thus combining an analysis of their trajectory and the way these actors make sense of it retrospectively.

The analysis shows that exile stands out as an experience that has crucially marked their external or geographical trajectory and is as well reflected in their subjective interpretations of it. All live and describe the experience of a two-fold turning point in their lives. While the rupture through exile is lived as causing suffering and feelings of hate, the second one tends to reverse this tendency. The first external one is presented as causing a wound and the second internal one is lived as a moment of healing from the consequences of the first. Most important, they ascribe

their motivation for engagement as resulting from this experience, which constitutes a “vocation” for them.

Chapter 3. On “reconciliation with oneself”

The third chapter dealt with the meanings of reconciliation. Contrary to prevalent academic conceptions, Rwandan militants seem to embed their understanding of it in the experience of personal conversion and voice the idea that reconciliation happens above all “with oneself”. Reading this meaning in the light of their trajectory, a tendency oscillating between an internalisation and extraversion via fragmentation becomes visible. The internalised interpretation of reconciliation stands in contrast to the dispersion of their trajectory which is marked by the disruption of places and experiences.

This very particular conception of reconciliation is closely linked to their personal experience of internal healing, initiated through personal (spiritual) work, which alters their way of dealing with (painful) biographical ruptures. The analysis has shown that this way of apprehending reconciliation is influenced by the experience of extreme violence at a distance. It has also demonstrated that exile and extraversion have brought them in contact with transnational social worlds where this type of practice is highly valorised and applied. This accounts for the fact that these practices circulate and are integrated into local interpretations

Chapter 4. Extraverted reconciliation

The last chapter of this thesis puts forward a structural analysis of the impact on social constellation of massive population movements. Indeed, by using the tool of social network analysis as a means to visualise interlinkages between the actors studied, the importance of extraversion has been pointed out. This perspective brings to the fore the structural importance of extraversion, both in terms of actors and practices. It is important to note that it is reflected not only on the individual level but also on the institutional one. Both of these types of actors draw on strategies and link up with other actors that span beyond Rwanda’s borders.

On the one hand, extraversion is an essential element with regard to the individual actors studied and has a bearing on their position within Rwandan society. Furthermore, it actually is mirrored in their practices of reconciliation. Especially in the spiritual domain, these militants draw on a complex network of transnational resources, contacts and inspirations that link them to social fields way beyond Rwanda's borders (especially the *New Age*).

On the other hand, political actors and practices are in the same way positioned within a complex configuration of extraverted networks, affinities and strategies. This insight has bearings on the understanding of institutional actors' links and interaction with external political players. But it also implies that political practices are heavily influenced by this transnational dimension. A tentative analysis has laid out that these practices themselves are oriented to the outside by including and focusing on Rwandans residing outside the country.

Contributions to the study of reconciliation

Original method and approach to open the black-box

The starting point of this thesis is the observation that Rwandan reconciliation in many aspects resembles a black box. The trigger for the present research was the observation of a considerable blind-spot in the academic literature on reconciliation in Rwanda. Indeed, there is a gap between the existence of an important number of individual Rwandans, who engage for reconciliation in Rwanda and Belgium, on the one hand, and their invisibility to academia, on the other.

A review of the relevant literature revealed that this invisibility is due to two characteristics of this very literature. First, it is a matter of methods. The most crucial point that has been identified in this regard is the exotic imaginary that seems to underlay a big share of the researches conducted. Consequently, many readings of Rwandan society are coloured by a normative (and in some cases, neo-colonial) undertone. Due to this, a strong polarisation can be observed between authors, which implies a rather simplified and binary conception of Rwandan

social dynamics. By seeing society in this way, a lot of weight is given to the political level that is considered to impose reconciliation on citizens.

And second, the approach or perspective of study has so far also prevented these actors to be apprehended in academia. In line with the normative readings of societal functioning, most of the literature adopts a top-down approach and limits its scope of study to inside national Rwandan frontiers.

As a result, individual militants have stayed invisible and the study of reconciliation is most often geographically limited to the national territory of Rwanda. Consequently, individual actors and initiatives spanning across borders and linking up social worlds and practices on a transnational scale have so far attracted but very little attention. Let us now turn to my choices in terms of methodology and approach and examine the contributions that they have offered in opening the black-box in an original way.

Methodological choices

Let us turn to the contributions that my methodological choices may have for the study of Rwandan reconciliation. Indeed, the core of this thesis is the proposition to adopt a new position and empirical method to study this phenomenon.

First, the research design was heavily oriented towards an **inductive and qualitative exploration** of the subject under study. These choices support the general aim of this research being the exploration of the meanings and interpretations of reconciliation. The research design, inspired by grounded theory, made space for data to “emerge”, especially during extensive exploratory fieldwork.

Second, that is the reason why semi-structured **qualitative interviewing**, learning from informants and observation have been the privileged research tools. More explicitly, biographical interviewing was used so as to apprehend the trajectories of our individuals and the ways they influenced subsequent engagement. Furthermore, I chose to spend a considerable time with (participant) observation. Not at least, it was through this that the particular spiritual and well-being practices of our

interviewees became clear.

Finally, I gave importance to a **non-normative position** to research. This implies a focus on understanding rather than explaining, and on describing rather than evaluating of what we observed during fieldwork. Furthermore, my positionality as a researcher has been duly taken into account and explicated.

Micro-sociological perspective

Besides adopting different methodological postures, the thesis also adopted a new perspective on the phenomenon studied. Contrary to the predominant approaches identified, I chose to study Rwandan reconciliation “from below”, by observing actors that have so far remained invisible. This is why a **micro-sociological perspective** — focusing on the individual Rwandan actors who have appropriated what they conceive to be reconciliation — was adopted. In order to give space and accord importance to their personal forms of expression, we operationalised the research through an emic definition of the concept which helped produce a conceptualisation of reconciliation in terms that are meaningful for the actors under study.

However, adopting such an approach also supposes that the other flip of the coin, i.e. the macro-sociological perspective, has been somehow neglected. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct further research in order to articulate the micro-sociological findings of this thesis with the broader macro-perspective. In that sense, the following questions could be interesting avenues for these researches such as: how can the individual logics with regard to reconciliation that have been observed in the frame of this thesis be linked to the broader political framework put in place by the Rwandan government?

Additionally, their activity was framed as individual militant engagement, which means the adoption the **sociology of engagement** as theoretical perspective. This implies a critical use of frame analysis by putting the accent on the sense that actors attach to their engagement. By focusing on the cognitive dimension of engagement, we give importance to the way that our interviewees express their implication. This is note-

worthy since I applied ordinary tools of scientific analysis to a situation that is generally referred to as exceptional. This is the case not only because we are faced with a post-genocide situation but also with an African country, which often inspires a less rigorous methodology than Occidental contexts to researchers.

Finally, the scope of the study was designed to render visible the extraterritorial dimension of Rwandan reconciliation. This means that the perspective of study also included Rwandans and initiatives outside Rwanda, mostly in Belgium. This aspect of the perspective of research has confirmed that Rwandan reconciliation can only fully be understood when considering actors, initiatives and networks that span across borders and link several national social worlds across these borders. It is here that the importance of strategies of extraversion has proven as a crucial factor for understanding not only the resources but also inspirations for individual engagement for reconciliation. In this sense the application of social network analysis has proved to be a tool particularly interesting to combine with the micro-sociological approach. Further exploration of this combination could open new avenues for researching Rwandan reconciliation.

Discovering new aspects of reconciliation

These choices made in the domain of methodology and perspective of study, have allowed to perceive Rwandan reconciliation in a brand new light. Particularly, with regard to two aspects, this study has brought up new insights.

An internal dimension of reconciliation

As was demonstrated at the beginning of this thesis, reconciliation is most often perceived as a relational concept. It is indeed studied as the rebuilding of relations between categories of people that have been/are in conflict or represent categories of people that may have been/are in conflict. Furthermore, relation is conceived of as desirable between two groups of people: victims and perpetrators. It is not uncommon that

through this vision, societal relations are read through a binary lens that tends to class people rigidly and into monolithic, homogenous categories.

I have argued that in a society marked significantly by massive population movements, through exile and return, this dimension needs to be included when studying the meaning reconciliation carries for the actors who engage for it. This is why the sense of this concept depends on their individual trajectory in the light of this divergent experience and walks of life. And indeed, the biographical perspective, that takes into account the objective biography and the subjective interpretations of it, has revealed a novel meaning of reconciliation that has so far not been observed in research.

With striking unanimity my interviewees define reconciliation as “reconciliation with oneself”. By focusing on the cognitive dimension of engagement, we have paid particular attention on how they verbally frame the ultimate aim of their militant activity. And this has shown that the meanings with which reconciliation is invested are above all determined by the ways that these individuals interpret their trajectory. The very personalised and internalised conception can be understood in parallel to the interpretation of their trajectory, which is marked by fragmentation.

When analysing their trajectory, we are faced with a two-fold turning point. The first is presented as a biographical rupture, that most often takes on the form of exile. The second turning point is described as a spiritual, internal one. While the initial external one is presented as causing a wound, the second internal one is lived as a moment of healing from the consequences of the first. Especially, when considering the importance of alternative practices of health and well-being, it is striking to note the stress on the internal aspects of reconciliation. This is why internal healing and re-establishment are considered to be achieved through internalised work on oneself. Consequently, coming to terms with one’s life story is conceived as much more important than coming to terms with a significant other; an external aspect of relation that becomes secondary.

Reconciliation beyond borders

So far, reconciliation after violent conflict has analytically been envisaged inside national frontiers. However, it is most often this very conflict that has caused massive population movements outside, and sometimes also inside, the country. In the Rwandan context, it was shown that since at least the 1950's, the cyclical character of the movements of exile and return is a primordial element that has to be taken into consideration.

It is from this time onwards that an important share of Rwandans had always found themselves outside the country's territory. Although the end of the genocide has witnessed a huge return, it has also been accompanied by massive exodus. The current political debates on the alleged support of the Rwandan government to the M23 rebel group in Congo illustrate some of the salience of this issue, even today.

In the frame of this research, it is argued that exile is a category of analysis for the study of reconciliation. Indeed, reconciliation cannot be confined to national frontiers since it takes place within but also beyond them. The space of actors, initiatives and networks does not correspond to these geographical frontiers. This has implications at four levels.

First, for the study of reconciliation actors, initiatives and networks that span across borders have to be taken into consideration. So that the scope of study needs to be larger than national frontiers.

Second, exile has to be taken into consideration as an experience that has shaped the trajectory of many. As this thesis has shown, it is this experience of exile which shapes personal interpretations of reconciliation. Furthermore, it is also through this experience that the actors I studied have come into contact with transnational social worlds and developed a set of strategies of extraversion.

Third, at the political level, exile has shaped leaders' trajectories and is a major element that orients policies put in place in the domain of reconciliation. Rwandan society is composed of citizens who have returned from different countries and moments of exile and of course those that have not left the country. Furthermore, still today an important share of Rwandans reside outside Rwanda. This means that policies in the domain of reconciliation have to address the essential issue of

how to design social relations not only between victims and perpetrators but also between returnees, between returnees and stayees; between the physically absent and the present.

Finally, exile is furthermore, a category of analysis that has to be taken into consideration when it comes to the question of identification. Fieldwork seems to suggest that in the light of the multiple and cross-cutting lines of cleavage introduced by the experience of exile, categories of identification merit to be seen in a more complexity than binary opposition.

Future research

Generalised reconciliation with oneself?

Being interested in leaders of reconciliation, the thesis has mainly dealt with representations of reconciliation held by an educated elite. As a matter of fact, these individual militants play a role as leaders with regard to the rest of the population through their engagement for reconciliation. Indeed, this went along with a level of education that has been quite elevated with regard to the rest of the population. This study has explored actors with regard to their sociological representativeness, taking into accounts the variety of profiles that engage for reconciliation. Statistical representativeness, meaning of the entire population, was not sought in this thesis.

This is the reason why future research could be conducted to test in how far the representations discovered in this thesis can also be transposed to the rest of the Rwanda population. Does the conception of “reconciliation with oneself” appeal to Rwandans of different socio-economic backgrounds as well? And in how far can they make sense of this concept in the same way if their trajectory has not been directly marked by the experience of exile?

For example, one way to further elaborate on this would be differentiate between men and women in terms of narrative patterns of reconciliation. This would require further fieldwork and subsequent systematic analyses, though. The same applies to the individual actors who did not

live out the experience of exile. Even though it falls beyond the topic of the present research, it would be interesting to assess the relevance of the findings for this population as well.

Spiritual alternatives

Chapter three and chapter four have pointed out the importance of spiritual practices for the conceptions of reconciliation proposed by the actors studied. The spiritual dimension of reconciliation has been explored with regard to the interpretation of the concept, and it was shown that spirituality is primordial with regard to the turning points and thereby the interpretation of the trajectory. Furthermore, the spiritual dimension of reconciliation is also important with regard to their extraverted orientation.

Especially in the last chapter it was demonstrated that particular, and indeed alternative, spiritual practices influence the translation of personal understanding of healing to a larger social scale. By drawing on their position within and links to extraverted networks, a group of actors inscribe their practices of reconciliation within the *New Age*. In the frame of this thesis, the *New Age* has been approached as a set of practices that focus on alternative forms of medicine and well-being. Interestingly, the idea put forward here is that well-being can be achieved through a “work on oneself”. This conception closely coincides with our actors’ conception of reconciliation, that according to them can mainly be achieved progressively through a healing process initiated from inside.

These parallels appear particularly promising with regard to the comprehension of how personal and societal reconstruction can be imagined in post-conflict contexts. However, this dimension of reconciliation has so far been totally neglected by the academic literature. Future research could be directed at the exploration of the importance of these practices even beyond Rwanda. At issue is whether the extraordinary openness of Rwandans to non-mainstream practices and world visions is representative of societies that have experienced extreme violence.

Furthermore, it seems of utmost importance to take also into consideration the regional dimension of the circulation of practices. Given the

orientation to the outside for inspiration of (spiritual) practices of reconciliation among the actors studied, a study with a larger geographical scope could equally address the character and persons implicated of these networks. Here it could also be helpful to complement research methods with a more quantitative network and prosopographic approach.

Reconciliation and diaspora opposition

Given the extra-territorial dimension of reconciliation those Rwandan militants who live and spend their life between Rwanda and Belgium, between “here and there” have been included in the sampling. On the one hand, it was shown that a continuity exists between social worlds in these two countries in terms of engagement and practices. So that the location of Rwandan reconciliation clearly links up these two countries. On the other, the discourses on reconciliation in these two countries are much more characterised by discontinuity.

As this thesis has shown, the conceptions found among our interviewees are focused on an internalised vision of reconciliation with oneself. This meaning can be apprehended within the context of intimate physical proximity of former enemies. So that pacific cohabitation is closely linked with internal reconciliation, that is conceived as the best way to establish healthy relations with one’s neighbours.

This discourse starkly contrasts with those found within opposition groups inside Rwandan diasporas in Belgium. Here physical proximity is conceived of as a return to Rwanda; in arms if necessary. This is why it would be more than interesting to examine the “imagined worlds” (Appadurai, 1990) of reconciliation within this border-crossing space.

By opening a novel aspect of the black box, other characteristics worth exploring become visible. All these interrogations which could aliment future research, emerge from and are based on this thesis that constitutes an analysis of individual Rwandan militants who engage for reconciliation, between here and there.

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Annex. List of interviews

AZEDA Hope. *Mashirika Arts.* July 23rd, 2010. Kigali (Bourbon Coffe, Nyarutarama). 40"54 minutes.

BAKUSI Alphonse. *National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, civic education.* June 24th, 2010. Kigali (Hilton Hotel, Remera). 44"59 minutes.

BAMPORIKI Edouard. *film-maker, "Long Coat".* July 5th, 2010. Kigali (Remera, Hôtel Chez Lando) and November 8th, 2011. Kigali (Remera, Hôtel Chez Lando). 64"12 minutes.

BAZIGAGA . *International Alert.* November 11, 2011. Kigali (Kiyovu, Dutirembere office). 60"23 minutes

BIGABO Felix. *Prison Fellowship Rwanda.* June 25th, 2010. Kigali (Kicukiro, PFR office). 74"24 minutes.

BIZIMANA Jean-Baptiste. *Association Modeste Innocent (AMI).* June 29th, 2010. Butare (AMI office). 104"45 minutes.

GAHONDOGO Athanasie. *Parliament, commission genre & promotion de la famille.* July 8th, 2010. Kigali (Parliament). 34"36 minutes

GASHAGAZA Déo. *Prison Fellowship Rwanda.* July 2nd, 2010. Kigali (Kicukiro, PFR office). 99"00 minutes.

GASIBIREGE Rose. *Université Libre de Kigali, academic vice-rector.* July 6th, 2010. Kigali (ULK campus).

GASIBIREGE Simon. *Centre de guérison des blessures de la vie.* June 26, 2010, Kigali (Remera, Café Olympiade). 55"28 and November 17th, 2011, Kigali (Remera). 45"35

INTERAYAMAHANGA Révérien. *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix.* June 8th, 2010. Kigali (IRDP) and March 30th, 2011. Brussels (not recorded).

KANZAYIRE Bernadette. *Deputy Ombudsman, co-founder Association des Volontaires de la Paix.* July 15th, 2010. Kigali (Ombudsman building). 57"48 minutes.

KAREMERA Carole. *Ishyo Arts Centre.* July 7, 2010. Kigali (Ishyo). 84"30 minutes.

KARURANGA Jean-Léonard. *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix.* July 13th, 2010. Kigali (IRDP). 66"77 minutes

KAYISHEMA Jean-Marie. *Centre Universitaire des Arts, NUR.* July 16th, 2010. Butare (CUA). 70"41 minutes

KAYITESI Mathilde. *Umuhuza, former chairman NURC.* July 28th, 2010. Kigali (Karibu Lodge). 39"47 minutes

KENDE Mathias. *Ambassade Belge à Kigali, first secretary.* June 11th, 2010. Kigali (Kiyovu). 51"43 minutes

KOLINI Emmanuel. *Former Archbishop Anglican church of Rwanda.* July 27th, 2010. Kigali (Hotel Gorilla). 146"94 minutes.

KWIZERA Emmanuel. *American Envangelist Enterprise.* July 21st, 2010. Kigali (Remera). 119"96 minutes

MACHIELS Pierre. *CTP, Projet d'Appui au Développement socio-économique et culturel dans la province du Nord.* June 25th, 2010. Kigali (Kiyovu, his house). 68"34 minutes.

MASINZO Jérôme. *UBUTWARI BWO KUBAHO/Courage de Vivre.* July 1st, 2010. Rugango (maison de la paroisse). 68"08 minutes.

MASOZERA Robert. *Diaspora Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.* July 6th, 2010. Kigali (MINAFFET).

MAXIMO MWIRICA MITALI Dady. *film-maker, designer, "By the Shortcut".* July 13th, 2010. Kigali (Bourbon Coffee). 76"17 minutes.

MUGIRANEZA Assumpta. *Iriba Center.* August 4th, 2010. Kigali (Remera, Hôtel Chez Lando). 87"12 minutes

MUGIRANEZA Jean-Paul. *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix.* July 14th, 2010. Kigali (IRDP). 69"73 minutes.

MUKAKALISA Marie-Goretti. *Association UBUNTU.* November 3rd, 2009. France. 49"02 minutes and June 15th/16th, 2010. 102"54 minutes.

MUKASIRANGA Laurence. *National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, conflict management.* July 9th, 2010. Kigali (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission). 46"54 minutes.

MUKANTABANA Crésence. *Association NZAMBAZAMARIYA Vénéranda.* June 10th, 2010. Kigali (Kimihurura). 63"17 minutes.

MUKAHABESHIMANA Didacienne. *Umuhuza.* July 13th, 2010. Kigali (Muhima). 65"76 minutes and November 8th, 2011. Kigali (Muhima). 86"03 minutes.

MUKAKAYITASIRE Médiatrice. *Association Modeste Innocent (AMI).* June 30th, 2010. Butare (AMI office). 114"04 minutes.

MUKARASI Godelive. *SEVOTA.* July 19th, 2010. Kigali (Remera). 88"56 minutes

MUKARWEGO Beata. *Centre Autonome d'entraînement à la Bonne Puissance de Gatenga.* June 2, 2010. Kigali (Gatenga). 95"38 minutes and November 7th, 2011. Kigali (Gatenga). 68"44 minutes.

MUNYANDAMUTSA Naasson. *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix.* November, 10th/17th 2011. Kigali (IRDP). 58"79 minutes.

MUNYANKIKO Dieudonné. *Association Modeste Innocent (AMI).* June 29th, 2010. Butare (AMI office). 104"26 minutes.

MWITENDE I-Kabod. *Association Modeste Innocent (AMI).* July 6th, 2010. Kigali (AMI liaison office). 87"52 minutes.

NYAMUTERA Joseph. *Mercy Ministries.* August 2nd, 2010. Kigali (Bourbon Coffee, Kiyovu). 72"65 minutes and November 7th, 2011. Kigali (Bourbon Coffee, Kiyovu).

NYIRAHABIMANA Jeanne. *SERUKA.* July 15th, 2010. Kigali (Kiyovu, Eglise St.-Paul). 62"46 minutes

SAYINZOGA Jean. *Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission.* August 3rd, 2010. Kigali (Remera, Commission seat). 77"22 minutes

SEKAJUGO Collin. *IVUKA Arts.* July 29th, 2010. Kigali (IVUKA Arts centre, Kacyiru). 30"54 minutes.

SEBUHORO Céléstin . *National University of Rwanda, psychologue clinique.* July 5th, 2010. Kigali (Hôtel Mille Collines). 61"12 minutes.

RUBONEKA . *Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe.* July 29th, 2010. Kigali (at her house in Remera). 125"50 minutes and November 9th, 2011. Kigali (Hôtel Chez Lando, Remera). 74"52 minutes.

RUSIMBI John. *La Plume D'Or.* July 13th, 2010. Kigali. 68"86 minutes

RUTAYISIRE Antoine. *Commission Nationale d'Unité et de Réconciliation.* July 12th, 2010, Kigali (Cathédrale St-Etienne). 1"36"20 and November 9th, 2011. Kigali (Eglise Anglicane, Remera). 42"48.

RUTAZANA Francine. *The League for Human Rights in the Great Lakes Region, former executive secretary.* July 21st, 2010. Kigali (Remera). 59"37 minutes

RUZIGANA Maximilien. *Association des Volontaires de la Paix (A.V.P.).* June 22nd, 2010. Kigali (A.V.P. office). 59"40 minutes.

RWANYINDO RUZARABWOBA Pierre. *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix.* July 8th, 2010. Kigali (IRDP). 187"68 minutes

UWINEZA Peace. *Institut de Recherche de Dialogue pour la Paix.* July 13th, 2010. Kigali (IRDP). 23"31 minutes

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*Lebe jetzt die Fragen
- vielleicht lebst du dann allmählich, ohne es zu merken, in die Antwort hinein.*

Rainer Maria Rilke

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