Appropriating the Past:
A Comparative Study of Official Memory
Practices in Rwanda and Burundi

by

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Abstract

In the aftermath of mass violence, the political and social nature of memory becomes even more apparent. The way in which past abuses are remembered and represented significantly influences the ability of individuals and communities to reconstruct social relations. The cases of post-genocide Rwanda and Burundi reveal strongly the relationship between memory, identity and power in the aftermath of mass atrocity. Although contemporary Rwanda and Burundi are often contrasted due to their diverging approaches to ethnicity, this paper argues that the memory of past conflict and ethnic tension has been appropriated by elites in both nations, resulting in the subjugation of alternate narratives of the past. It further asserts that the restriction of political space for dialogue on the past prevents a collective appreciation of the inherent complexities of genocide and mass violence in both nations. The failure of dominant groups in both cases to allow for a critical engagement of the past is concerning, as divisive identities and overt conflict risk being reproduced rather than deconstructed.

Keywords: Ethnic Identity; Historical Narratives; Mass Atrocity; Memory; Political
Space, Power Relations

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my mother and my fiancé, my inspirations. Mom, thank you for your unwavering support for me and all of my endeavours, wherever they may take me. Your warm and wise words and unfailing belief in my ability to do great things has carried me through every challenge of my life, including this one. I am where I am today because of you. Tyler, the greatest part of closing this chapter is knowing that I get to open the next one with you. Thank you for the countless hours you spent helping me work through my ideas, thoroughly editing, encouraging, and making sure that I remembered to smile and laugh. You lived the ups and downs of this experience with me and I could not have done it without you. Here's to our next adventure!

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

"Navigating the waters of Rwandan and Burundian representations of
history and ethnicity is a treacherous undertaking."
- Villia Jefremovas[1]

In the aftermath of mass atrocity, comprehending and giving meaning to the past becomes a crucial activity for individuals, communities and governments, making the role of memory and narrative in the post-conflict context characteristically distinct in many important ways. How past atrocities are remembered and interpreted in the historical narratives of different groups plays a significant role in determining present opportunities for reconciliation or a renewal of cycles of violence. Furthermore, it is often the case in the highly politicized atmosphere of a post-conflict society that some accounts of the past are ignored or fervently silenced in favour of a dominant narrative. The resulting relationship between memory, identity and power has defined the post-conflict environments of Rwanda and Burundi, visible in the ways in which the past has been appropriated by the state and political elites in both nations. As evidenced by the history of ethnic relations in Rwanda and Burundi, conflicting interpretations of past atrocities and a failure to engage these divergent narratives can become the foundation upon which oppositional identities are consolidated and mass violence justified.

Thus, in order to explore the ways in which memory and identity are reconstituted through mechanisms of power in the aftermath of mass atrocity, a comparative study of dominant memory practices in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi will be conducted. This analysis will seek to move beyond the limited parameters of the commonly

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[1] Villia Jefremovas, "Treacherous Waters: The Politics of History and the Politics of Genocide in Rwanda and Burundi," *Journal of the International African Institute* 70, no. 2 (2000): 298.

employed ethnic fear and ethnic hatred theses[2] of conflict in Rwanda and Burundi and focus attention on how the construction of ethnic identity is implicated in broader social processes of attributing meaning to the past and present. Moreover, Rwanda and Burundi have taken diverging official approaches to ethnic identity in the present context. The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF) policy of eradicating ethnicity can be contrasted with Burundi's formal recognition of different ethnic groups in its governing institutions. Thus, this paper endeavours to uncover how dominant approaches to ethnicity and remembering the past in Rwanda and Burundi compare.

1.1.1.　Research Question

The purpose of this analysis will be to address the following questions: How do dominant narratives of the past in Rwanda and Burundi appropriate the history of ethnicity and violence in both nations, and what are the consequences of these memory practices on the current salience of ethnic identity? In other words, how are the social processes of post-conflict memory and identity formation implicated in mechanisms of power in post-conflict societies? What can be learned from comparing the cases of contemporary Rwanda and Burundi in this context?

1.1.2.　Main Argument

This paper will demonstrate that, despite adopting seemingly contrasting approaches to political space in the post-conflict period, political elites in both Rwanda and Burundi have appropriated discourse on past abuses, silenced alternate and competing narratives, and reframed ethnic identity in a manner which conceals imbalanced power relations. Further, by co-opting the collective memory of past atrocities and denying the existence of multiple interpretations of the events, elites in

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[2] Lee Ann Fujii (2009, 5-7) discusses the limits of these analytical approaches in explaining the dynamic nature of genocide and the complexity of the actions and decisions involved. The ethnic fear and hatred theses fail to explain the level of fragmentation in actions of ethnic groups in times of conflict; the fact that hundreds of thousands of Hutu did not participate in the Rwandan genocide, for example.

both states fail to allow space for a critical engagement of the nuances and complexities of past violence. As a consequence, ethnic tensions and ethnic identities risk being reproduced rather than understood and deconstructed.

Thus, this analysis also seeks to illustrate a wider relationship between political space and opportunities for reconciliation and transformation in the aftermath of mass atrocity. Violent conflict and oppositional identities are social constructions created through discourse and language; as Susanne Buckley-Zistel states, if they can be made and imagined, they can also be "unmade discursively."[3] For this to be possible, however, competing memories and narratives of past violence must be engaged with in order to problematize categories of victim and perpetrator, and contextualize the actions taken by individuals and groups in times of conflict. By giving voice to experiences of victimization from all sides of the conflict and democratizing memory of the past, survivors can begin to unmake divisive identities. In Rwanda and Burundi, the absence of this political space for dialogue about the past and the subjugation of alternate narratives serve to reinforce the foundation upon which the existing social and political status quo is based and further conceal these relations of power.

1.1.3.   Academic Relevance

The relationship between social memory and identity is very relevant to the fields of transitional justice, conflict resolution and memory studies. The public engagement of diverging narratives of past violence can have transformative effects on conflict-related identities. Matters of preventing and resolving communal conflict and moving societies forward from mass violence are inherently connected, and as such it is crucial to recognize the structural continuities of violence which transcend boundaries of war and peace. Furthermore, the arguments presented in this analysis are equally relevant for

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[3] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "In Between War and Peace: Identities, Boundaries and Change after Violent Conflict, *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (2006): 3. Buckley-Zistel advocates this kind of hermeneutic approach to studying the construction of enemies in violent conflict, arguing that post-positivist approaches to uncovering how violent conflicts and divisive identities are created should also be applied to analyze how "conflicts are undone."

development and conflict resolution practitioners, as appreciating that memory and identity intersect with power in post-conflict societies is crucial to ensuring that these professionals do not tacitly drive the appropriation of the past by political elites with whom they conduct their work. International donors and NGOs can have a significant influence on the direction of post-conflict memory politics through the funding or direct coordination of memorial projects[4] and the provision of services which may be impacted by state categorizations of survivors and perpetrator communities. Finally, there exists a wealth of literature discussing issues of transitional justice and the politics of memory in post-genocide Rwanda, yet a significant lack of such inquiry into contemporary Burundi. This paper seeks to bridge this gap and problematize assumptions about the contrasting approaches to ethnicity in post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi.

1.2. Methodology

This analysis will be conducted through a comparative case study rooted in a qualitative and interpretive approach to the social phenomena of memory and identity in the post-conflict context. I will employ discourse analysis as my main research method, adopting the interpretive conceptualization of discourse as "not just a particular collection of words, but a constitutive set of structures and practices that do not merely reflect thoughts or realities, but rather structure and constitute them."[5] Thus, in order to understand the way in which dominant discourses impact the meaning and salience of ethnicity in Rwanda and Burundi today, we must understand the processes through which these discourses and representations came to be.

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[4] Rachel Ibreck (2010) observes this important factor in her study of the challenges faced by Rwandan genocide survivors in efforts to create their own memorials and influence the official public narrative of the past.

[5] Yoshiko M. Herrera and Bear F. Braumoeller, "Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis," *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1 (2004): 16.

It is important to establish that discourse analysis is "fundamentally concerned with power relations and the situatedness of the meaning of language."[6] Thus, I will pay particular attention to the way in which dominant representations of the past are constituted by and through mechanisms of power, particularly institutions and activities of the state, such as government-led memorialization campaigns in Rwanda and transitional justice mechanisms in Burundi. More specifically, the direction of this analysis is largely inspired by the Foucauldian genealogical approach to deconstructing the relationship between knowledge and power in the social world. A genealogy is a historical method which attempts to understand the *origins* of dominant discourses; how certain representations come to form social reality and truth, and how these particular forms of knowledge work through societal institutions (and vice versa) while subjugating inferior knowledges.[7] For Foucault, the genealogical project of critique is "only made possible by the 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges,'" these being "historical contents long since masked or buried … by the organizing structures of orthodox systems of theory and knowledge."[8] Thus, subjugated and marginalized knowledges, or in the case of this study, narratives, are crucial to understanding how power and knowledge intersect to maintain a particular order.

However, I must acknowledge the limitations of applying Foucault's historical research method to the present analysis. Foucault's genealogies were centered upon more broadly defined, constitutive knowledges and social institutions in modern societies, such as psychiatry, sexuality and punishment. Thus, I recognize that the genealogical method cannot adequately be applied to local discourses such as historical narratives of past violence, as they operate at a different level of knowledge. However, keeping the fundamental tenets of Foucault's genealogical method in mind, I will highlight how dominant narratives of past violence work to subjugate alternate accounts

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Derek Hook, "Genealogy, discourse, 'effective history': Foucault and the work of critique," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2005): 14. Foucault's method of discourse analysis, then, seeks to unearth the very objects of knowledge upon which societal structures are situated by historicizing the emergence of these knowledges.

[8] Ibid., 5.

– and thus attain the status of truth and official history - through mechanisms of power in Rwanda and Burundi.

Three central principles of Foucauldian discourse analysis that I can apply to the present analysis – while acknowledging the limitations - are: an acute awareness of the role of history and extending the analysis beyond the limits of the present context; conceptualizing discourse as knowledge and thus as tied to broader social, historical and political conditions; and paying particular attention to the material effects of discourse and its physical manifestations in social institutions and structures.[9] The principles of this method of analysis are indeed closely related to the very issue at the heart of this research project: namely the need for dominant narratives and discourses to be historicized and politicized through the recovery of space for subjugated narratives.

I will locate the dominant historical narratives of political elites in Rwanda and Burundi largely through a close reading of the published secondary literature of scholars who have conducted ethnographic research on these particular subjects. Some of these publications specifically provide insight into the nature of subjugated and local level narratives at work. Using a method of triangulation to substantiate the findings in the literature and enrich my own discourse analysis, I will complement the secondary research with primary sources in both cases. By referencing available primary sources, I can ensure that the information found in the secondary literature is indeed accurate and properly represents the dynamics at work on the ground, while decreasing the impact of bias inherent in secondary sources.

First, for both Rwanda and Burundi, I will conduct a thorough reading of the new constitutions adopted in 2003 and 2005, respectively, and look specifically for the ways in which the past, ethnicity, and reconciliation are framed. Second, in my analysis of the

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[9] For a more detailed explanation of how Foucault's critical approach is operationalized, Hook (2005, 12) provides a breakdown of four constitutive elements of Foucauldian discourse analysis: reversal, discontinuity, specificity, and exteriority. For the current analysis, the principles of reversal (tying discourse to political motives and interests) and exteriority (paying attention to those external elements which give rise to particular discourses) are most relevant.

Rwandan case, I also use excerpts from speeches and statements given by President Paul Kagame which provide strong examples of the government's rhetoric on reconciliation. When possible, I also substantiate sections of the analysis with accessible official statements on the past found on the Kigali Genocide Memorial website and documents produced by the Rwandan Government.

In my analysis of the Burundian case, the primary focus remains on the findings in the literature due to the greater difficulty associated with accessing recent speeches and statements by the President or other political leaders on the subjects of ethnicity and reconciliation. Indeed, because public discussion and memorialization of the past have been neglected by the post-transition governments in Burundi until very recently, documents which display the official approach to memory are either dated or unavailable. Thus, I substantiate the evidence of dominant discourses found in the literature through research into the current political atmosphere as documented by organizations such as Amnesty International and the International Crisis Group, as well as statements made by local Burundian human rights organizations.

The limitations associated with engaging in a rigorous discourse analysis of narratives in Rwanda and Burundi while relying largely on secondary sources are explicitly acknowledged, as is the lack of primary source data for the Burundian portion of the analysis. However, this paper will indeed provide a valuable addition to the current literature by highlighting the way in which *both* official government methods of framing the past and ethnicity work to conceal the status quo and subjugate alternate narratives.

1.2.1. Case Selection

The wealth of existing literature on the topic of the Rwandan Government's approach to ethnicity and post-genocide discourse prompts the exploration of parallel yet overlooked areas of inquiry including how Rwanda's post-conflict environment compares to that of its closely related neighbour, Burundi, and why there is a paucity of such comparative analyses. Rwanda and Burundi are indeed two of the most suitable cases to employ in order to demonstrate the relationship between the politics of memory and identity and power dynamics in the aftermath of mass communal violence. As René

Lemarchand states, "how seemingly uncontroversial facts can be turned around and utterly misrepresented remains one of the most puzzling aspects of the Hutu-Tutsi problem."[10] The appropriation of public discourse on the past and present and the political manipulation of ethnic identity by elites have been integral in refuelling multiple cycles of violence in both nations. Moreover, there is indeed a practical significance to engaging in a comparative analysis of memory and identity in post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi, in that "no attempt to come to grips with the Hutu-Tutsi problem in one country can ignore the impact of the other."[11]

Furthermore, due to the closely related histories, demographics, cultures, and politics of Rwanda and Burundi, the choice to conduct a comparative analysis of their post-conflict environments is intuitive. Although ruled as separate kingdoms until 1922, when they were first merged by a League of Nations mandate (under Belgian administration), Rwanda and Burundi experienced very similar pre-colonial and colonial circumstances. With an almost identical ethnic make-up of a Hutu majority (84 and 85 percent respectively), a Tutsi minority (15 and 14 percent), and a very small Twa population (1 percent), the dynamics of ethnic relations and conflict in both nations are strongly comparable. The details which make this comparison particularly interesting, however, are first: the way in which ethnic power dynamics in Rwanda are inverted in the Burundian case, and second: how both states have taken different approaches to ethnicity and governance in the post-conflict period. Thus, Rwanda and Burundi provide an excellent example of two states with analogous historical and demographic contexts yet contrasting political arrangements, enabling an analysis which problematizes assumptions about political space, memory and identity in Rwanda and Burundi and highlights the centrality of power relations in post-conflict processes.

[10] René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, xxvii.
[11] Ibid., 1.

1.2.2.   Organization

Beginning with a primarily theoretical discussion, the next chapter will establish the relationship between memory, historical narratives, identity and political space in the post-conflict context, setting the stage for the subsequent application of these concepts to the analysis of memory practices in Rwanda and Burundi. Chapter 3 will then provide an in-depth analysis of the dominant historical narratives at work in first Rwanda, and then Burundi. The final chapter will then highlight the important conclusions which have been drawn regarding the need for political space and the engagement of oppositional interpretations of the past in the aftermath of mass atrocity.

2.   Memory, Historical Narratives, Identity and Political Space in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity

In his pivotal work on ethnic conflict in Burundi, Lemarchand effectively articulates: "There are, indeed, few parallels on the continent for the extraordinary combination of misperceptions, selective sifting of evidence, and denial of historical facts … On both sides of the ethnic fault line, summoning the past to explain the present has become part of a discursive practice intended to legitimize ethnic ideologies."[12] His statement is also closely applicable to the Rwandan case. The following discussion will illustrate how the construction of memory, historical narratives and collective identities is an intersectional process which significantly affects the ability to interrupt cycles of violence in conflicted societies.

2.1. Memory as Social, Collective, and Political

The field of memory studies has proliferated over the past twenty years, with a growing number of researchers engaging with the concept of memory as a production of social processes. Conceptualizing memory as a social mechanism, practice and product serves to acknowledge its significance in matters of politics, identity, and power relations. Much of the current repertoire of memory studies draws inspiration from Maurice Halbwachs' (1950) initial conceptualization of collective memory in contrast to

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[12] Ibid., xxviii.

individual memory. Halbwachs' work was crucial in the framing of memory as a sociological, as well as psychological, phenomenon.[13]

In Halbwachs' seminal study, *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, he affirms the social elements of recalling and recreating memories; "'It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.'"[14] This notion of memory and recounting the past as inseparable from the conditions and context of the present is crucial in understanding the current fascination with the role of memory in the politics of the nation and the community. Also drawing from Halbwachs, Jenny Edkins asserts that "we cannot think about events in our past without connecting those events to the systems of ideas and meaning current in a particular social group of which we are, in the present, members."[15] Thus, memory is social, political and dynamic, in that it is constantly being reshaped by other social forces with which it intersects.[16]

Further, Jeffrey Olick acknowledges that different conceptualizations of collective memory exist amongst memory studies scholars.[17] As he explains, individualist approaches emphasize psychological and neurological processes of memory formation at the level of the individual and tend to view collective memory as an aggregation of individual memories which are framed by social processes.[18] The collectivist approach on the other hand, with which Olick appears to sympathize more closely, emphasizes

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[13] Jeffrey K. Olick, "'Collective Memory': A memoir and prospect." *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 24

[14] As cited in Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," *Sociological Theory* 17, no. 3 (1999): 334.

[15] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 32.

[16] David Blight (2005, 6) notes that memory also serves a normative and moral purpose: "As individuals and societies, we cannot function in practical or moral terms without memory."

[17] Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," 333.

[18] Ibid., 337. Olick refers to this conceptualization as "collected' memory" rather than collective. The individualist approach appreciates the social nature of memory, yet maintains that at the root of collective memory are individual thought processes.

"the social and cultural patternings of public and personal memory."[19] The collectivist approach interprets collective memory as a force somewhat beyond the individual, a social process which takes on a life of its own. This view emphasizes the central role of language, discourses, and politics in shaping collective memory, and in turn, the influence of these productions on the individual level cognitive and neurological processes which constitute individual memory.[20]

Throughout my own analysis of memory practices in Rwanda and Burundi, it is important to note that I will emphasize the collectivist approach to social memory. This perspective allows us to appreciate that memories and narratives are constituted and reconstituted through collective social experiences and representations. Edkins reminds us that individuals are not the sole determinants of memory, nor is the public; rather the composition of memory is a constant interchange between the social individual and the social world.[21] Furthermore, "remembering is intensely political;"[22] in the aftermath of mass atrocity, dominant memory practices play a crucial role in defining historical narrative(s) - and the positions which different groups occupy within that narrative - allocating judgment and defining justice, reconstituting a national identity, and legitimizing or delegitimizing the current regime and its policies.[23]

It is important to note, however, that collectivist views of memory formation can risk implying that only one definition of *the collective* exists. As Olick states, "One way around this is to resist the temptation to speak of one collective memory in favour of many different kinds of collective memory produced in different places in the society."[24] It must also be acknowledged that memory in all its manifestations is powerful and

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[19] Ibid., 333.

[20] Ibid., 341.

[21] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 54.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Alessandro Portelli (2003), among many others, asserts this argument in his study of Italian memory of the Fosse Ardeatine massacre during World War II. He studies the way in which memory can be manipulated and appropriated to produce widely held yet historically misleading narratives about past abuses.

[24] Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," 339.

significant. Olick further explains that understanding memory to be social and dynamic means remembering that it   "occurs in public and in private, at the tops of societies and at the bottoms, as reminiscence and as commemoration, as personal testimonial and as national narrative."[25] Keeping this in mind, the importance of engaging memory of past violence in its multiple manifestations and locations becomes more apparent.

Further, Edkins speaks to the notion of memory as a tool of the powerful, especially in the aftermath of major social disturbance, stating that, "many contemporary forms of memorialisation function to reinforce the idea of the nation,"[26] and "inscribe the national myth of the imagined community."[27] The cooptation of memory to facilitate grand historical narratives of the nation's past is a method employed by all states in times of peace and war. However, Alexandra Barahona de Brito argues that "we should see 'post-authoritarian' social memory-making … as qualitatively different from that which occurs in time of peace … as a disjuncture in the always ongoing process of social memory-making."[28] The view that memory in a time of war, or any form of social upheaval, is unique parallels Edkins' concept of 'trauma time' – when the contingencies and concealment of the social order and its authority are revealed and underlying relations of power rise to the surface.[29]

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[25] Ibid., 346.

[26] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, xiii.

[27] Ibid., 17.

[28] Alexandra Barahona de Brito, "Transitional Justice and Memory: Exploring Perspectives," *South European Society and Politics* 15, no. 3 (2010): 360.

[29] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 12. Edkins defines trauma time as a break in the perceived linear temporality of everyday social reality, when the social order within which one bases their understanding of themselves and the world around them falls apart, revealing the relations of power underlying this social reality. For further discussion of Edkin's concept of 'trauma time' and the connection between "trauma, violence and political community," see pages 12-19. There is also a wealth of literature on post-conflict trauma itself as a psychological, social, and cultural phenomenon which can render the individual unable to communicate its effects. For more discussion on trauma see: Nigel C. Hunt: *Memory, War and Trauma* (2010) and Jeffrey C. Alexander et. al: *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (2004).

For the purposes of this analysis, the role of institutions, predominantly the state apparatus, in defining the boundaries of memory of the past abuses, is central. Focusing on the way in which narratives and identities are reified through powerful institutions is especially important in revealing the memories and experiences which are subjugated in the process. As Olick explains, "Powerful institutions clearly value some histories more than others, provide narrative patterns and exemplars of how individuals can and should remember, and stimulate memory in ways and for reasons that have nothing to do with the individual or aggregate neurological records."[30]

The critical questions which must then be asked regarding the politics of memory and its relevance to transitional justice are: which group(s) have the power to propagate their narrative(s) of past abuses, in whose interest and to what ends are these narratives shaped, what elements of the political order do official discourses of the past seek to conceal, and what are the consequences of silencing and suppressing particular narratives?

As Edkins states, "those who would try to prevent survivors from speaking out are the powerful, those who have perhaps more at stake than most in concealing the contingency of forms of social and political organisation."[31] In the aftermath of mass atrocity, political elites have a vested interest in appropriating diverse experiences of the past in order to legitimize the present political and social order. As Alessandro Portelli asserts, "the public appropriation of the dead threatens to become an expropriation."[32] This statement prompts considerations of the proprietary nature of memory and discourse in post-conflict societies, begging the question: who does the past belong to? It is here where matters of memory and power most pivotally intersect in the post-conflict context.

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[30] Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," 342.

[31] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 5.

[32] Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome,* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003, 242.

The purpose of this discussion thus far has been to establish some of the key theoretical concepts guiding this analysis: that collective memory is a social process and product, that the past is constantly being reconstituted in the present, that memory is a contested space, and that these matters are all of significant importance for post-conflict societies. The next section will extend the discussion to the relationship between memory and historical narratives.

2.2. Historical Narratives

For the purposes of this analysis, I refer to history not in the academic sense, but rather to history as a social construction. Simon Turner speaks to the socially constructed nature of history in the context of his fieldwork with Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania: "History and its representations in exile - anywhere for that sake - are not merely a question of recounting facts from the past. Especially when we consider the history of nations, we are dealing with constructs; constructs that are creating a nation and a national history retrospectively."[33] Thus, I conceptualize the relationship between memory and history to be that particular memories of past violence are validated by certain groups, embedded in the collective psyche, and transformed into a wider story about the past which thus attains the status of history. Indeed, the collective memory which political elites espouse has the power to become the official version of the nation's history. Moreover, once the collective memory(s) of a particular group becomes consolidated into a far-reaching historical narrative, its ability to reify identities and grievances becomes even stronger.

Halbwachs depicted the contrast "between 'history' and 'memory' not as one between public and private, but as one based on the relevance of the past to the present: both history and collective memory are publicly available social facts."[34]

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[33] Simon Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile: The Politics of National History among Burundian Refugees," *Refuge* 17, no. 6 (1998): 23.

[34] Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," 335.

Historical narratives – whether they speak to the nation's wider past or the specific occurrences of and reasons for genocide – are informed and shaped by memory, and in turn work to validate some memories and silence others. The relationship between memory and history in this sense is also deeply connected to matters of survival and morality. Drawn from his fieldwork with Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Turner discusses the concept of 'mythico-histories': "They are a means to better understand the present. '[The Hutu history] represented not only a description of the past, nor even merely an evaluation of the past, but a subversive recasting and reinterpretation of it in fundamentally moral terms.'" [35] Thus, these narratives are neither accurately depicted as myth nor history, but a combination of both.

Memory and history, then, can be seen as mutually generative constructs. The coopting of these processes is especially significant for the state in the aftermath of mass atrocity. As Edkins states, after the traumatic experiences of genocide and ethnic conflict, the contingency of the social and moral order upon which the society was grounded is revealed, and the collapse of the former order gives way to a fleeting moment of possibility for change. Yet, in the process, the past is appropriated, memories validated and silenced, and history re-scripted to facilitate the bringing in of a new order. Edkins describes that "at such points, the symbolism and ideology that concealed the fragile and contingent nature of authority collapse altogether and there is a brief interregnum before the new order imposes a different form of concealment."[36] Edkins' illustration is especially useful in the context of historical memory in post-genocide Rwanda and Burundi, where contrasting approaches to post-conflict identity and governance both enable a concealment of power relations and a subjugation of

[35] Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile," 23. What makes these histories 'mythical' is not a measure of truth or falsity, but rather the fact that they are concerned with "order in a fundamental cosmological sense."

[36] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 13.

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competing narratives of the past.[37] An important question follows: what can it mean for a post-conflict society, where discourse on the past is highly politicized, to allow these subjugated memories and narratives to enter into the realm of public discourse? The benefits and dangers of such a move will be discussed in the next section.

2.3. Political Space and Deconstructing Identity: Why Memory Practices Matter for Post-Conflict Societies

I assert that transitional justice and memory studies intersect most significantly when matters of memory and historical narratives overlap with matters of political space. I employ the term 'political space' in this context to refer to the public space within which competing narratives can be engaged and contested and subjugated memories can be included in the discourse about the past and present. Further, 'political space' is a wider sense of intellectual, emotive, and social space within which ownership of one's traumatic past regained. What makes this space 'political' is its inherent relationship to power and the social processes of memory and identity formation. As Edkins states, "part of the fight for political change is a struggle for memory."[38]

Furthermore, collective memory and identity are mutually reproducing social forces. The creation of a narrative of past atrocities necessitates that the individual situate him/herself in that story, often in relation or opposition to the other. At the same time, one's perception of themselves, one's identity, and one's current position in society

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[37] In reference to subjugated narratives, Lémarchand (1994, xxx) explains that their silencing relegates them to what he calls "the underground theater of the oppressed – [often expressed through] rumours and gossip, folktales and 'manifs,'" and other "clandestine" forms of expression. This "underground theatre of the oppressed" is also discussed in detail by Fujii (2010, 232) in the context of her field work in rural Rwanda. She states that "the value of oral testimonies researchers collect in places that have recently suffered violence does not lie solely in the truthfulness of their content. It also lies in the meta-data that accompany the testimonies. By meta-data, [she means] the spoken and unspoken expressions about people's interior thoughts and feelings, which they do not always articulate in their stories or responses to interview questions."

[38] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 54.

also shapes their interpretation of the past. Buckley-Zistel asserts that "identities are constituted in a circular process between past, present and future as well as the experience of otherness."[39] It is within these collective representations that "parties to the conflict produce and reproduce their collective identities in either persistent antagonism or mutual acceptance."[40] Thus, the significance of political space in the aftermath of mass atrocity lies in its ability to democratize memory and narrative of the past[41] and transform divisive identities by deconstructing the discourses which reinforce them.

Although the official discourses on the past in Rwanda and Burundi are relatively accessible to outsiders, much more difficult to access is what James Scott refers to as the "'clandestine discourse of subordinate groups'" whose voices are only heard in "'those rare moments of electricity, when the hidden transcript is spoken directly and publicly in the teeth of power.'"[42] Drawing from Foucault's argument regarding the importance of uncovering subjugated knowledges, the silencing of competing discourses on the past is the very reason they are so important to the study of memory in post-conflict settings, as they can reveal otherwise concealed relations of power.

Thus, in order to illustrate the relationship between subjugated memories and narratives, political space and ethnic identities in Rwanda and Burundi, Leebaw's argument for a re-politicization of transitional justice is essential. The depoliticization of transitional justice is premised on the notion that the types of crimes committed represent a "deviation from the shared norms or standards of a political community," and

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[39] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "In Between War and Peace," 3.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Erin Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings," *The Oral History Review* 38, no. 2 (2011): 287. Portelli (2003, 16) also asserts the significance of uncovering and understanding both dominant and subjugated narratives, because it bears great implications not only for historians and the establishment of 'fact,' but because such considerations become the foundation upon which national and local identities are reAs constituted.

[42] As cited in Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, xxx.

thus, these crimes should be judged at the level of the individual.[43] This individualistic focus is meant to legitimize transitional justice institutions and the "integrity of their investigations;" by focusing on the individual crimes and acts, politics and its myriad biases are believed to be removed from the process of judging past atrocities.[44]

However, as Leebaw explains, "depoliticization has also undermined the critical role of transitional justice as a challenge to denial, as a basis for exposing the systemic dimension of past wrongs, and as a basis for advancing an ongoing process of change."[45] By removing the judgment of past violence from its political and social context, the systemic nature of violence and its broader roots in societal structures are denied, leaving them unacknowledged and unchallenged.

Leebaw's focus on viewing transitional justice as a facilitator of change and progress is also integral to the present discussion of political space. She asks, "What is the relationship between the commitment to remember past abuses and the goal of advancing political reform to ensure their prevention in the future?"[46] I would further add, how does the *way* in which past abuses are remembered determine the possibility for political reform and social change? Leebaw's argument for the need to acknowledge stories of resistance alongside complicity parallels the argument for the need for space in which dialogue can be fostered, differing and competing narratives and experiences recognized, and the systemic nature of past violence further revealed. Further, the failure to acknowledge memory and experiences of victimization from all sides of past

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[43] Bronwyn Leebaw, *Judging State-Sponsored Violence, Imagining Political Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 5.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 4.

atrocities is indeed a form of *symbolic* and *structural* violence, the effects of which are even more concerning due to their clandestine nature.[47]

The failure to recognize the complex character of the categories of victim and perpetrator and the existence of a 'gray zone'[48] between the two can lead to the regeneration of divisive identities which prescribe simplistic definitions of good and evil, and us and them. Thus, I suggest that the opening of political space to competing narratives is crucial to the process of re-politicization. The bringing back of the political is essential, because, as Leebaw explains, "depoliticization does not transcend the politics of transitional justice, [it] rather functions to obfuscate and naturalize the way that politics operate in the process of judging the past."[49] Further, the re-politicization of the discourse on the past can allow parties to the conflict to deconstruct the identity of the enemy, by first seeing that such divisions are social constructions in and of themselves.[50] When discussing the demonization of the Shining Path rebels in Peru's internal war, Kimberly Theidon states that "understanding how the Senderistas were stripped of these human characteristics allows us to understand the processes by which they might regain them."[51] Re-humanizing the enemy and uncovering the power

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[47] Fiona Ross (2010, 91) also discusses the need for transitional justice mechanisms to engage critically with the *structures of violence* at work in times of war and peace. As she states in relation to female testimonies of abuse under apartheid in South Africa, "a hospitable mode of justice … needs to take account of *historical continuities in violence* and suffering, the complexities of language … and the different ways in which our understandings of the intersections of violence, silence and voice affect knowledge production and its uses."

[48] Primo Levi (1958, 85) conceptualizes this dilemma as the "gray zone," within which categorizations of victim and perpetrator are problematized by the existence of some who could fall into both categories. He defines the gray zone in relation to the German lager as "where the two camps of masters and servants both diverge and converge. This gray zone possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge."

[49] Leebaw, *Judging State-Sponsored Violence,* 15.

[50] To explore a somewhat different approach to transformation and identity, the possibilities of creating a shared public identity in ethnically divided societies through processes of social transformation or consociationalism are explored in detail by John Nagle and Mary Alice C. Clancy (2011).

[51] Kimberly Theidon, "Justice in Transition: The Micro-politics of Reconciliation in Post-War Peru," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 3 (2006): 442.

relations embedded in dominant narratives of the past are thus crucial steps in transforming and preventing a return to conflict.

With its importance in mind, a problematizing of the aforementioned solution – to reopen political space – is also necessary. The caveat is that creating political space in which something as personal and valuable as memory can be contested is in itself potentially harmful. Speaking in the context of veterans of World War I and Vietnam, Edkins warns that such a project "Historians who challenge established narratives of wars 'may threaten the personal composure that veterans have found through the legend.'"[52] The dangers of opening up discussion on the traumatic experiences of the past are often juxtaposed against the desire and need to give voice to silenced experiences and memories.

Further, the consequences of an enlarged political space can extend beyond the individual level and threaten the relative social and political stability of the present order. These considerations highlight some of the ethical concerns which researchers operating in these highly politicized settings must be aware of. Erin Jessee directly acknowledges this dilemma: "Regardless of how I might feel about the policies of the Rwandan [Government] at present, I had to ask myself what good could possibly come from the publishing of narratives that called into question the legitimacy of these institutions that, overall, were maintaining the peace in otherwise potentially volatile situations."[53]

A related concern is raised by Hirsh and Spitzer in their discussion of Holocaust memory and the consequences of extending space for dialogue in a politically charged atmosphere where the existence of denial of past atrocities is very much a reality. The problem is "how to defend this enlarged notion of truth without opening the door to

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[52] Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 29.
[53] Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 298.

revisionism and denial?"[54] Is it possible to create a space within which the injustice of pass atrocities can be remembered and respected and the diverse memories of this past also acknowledged? How can both denial and appropriation of the past be responded to effectively? As Hirsch and Spitzer acknowledge in their work, witness testimony of past abuses reveals the proprietary nature of memory in post-conflict societies and the ability of this appropriation to reify identity politics.

2.4. Conclusion

Ultimately, the failure to open political space in the aftermath of mass atrocity can perpetuate the dominance of an exclusive narrative of the past, subjugate alternate accounts, reify the divisive identities upon which these narratives are formed, and contribute to continued cycles of violence and marginalization. Thus, the relationship between collective memory, history and identity can manifest itself in multiple forms of symbolic and structural violence in the post-conflict period, increasing chances of renewed cycles of overt violence. In the next chapter, the processes discussed theoretically here will be applied to the cases of contemporary Rwanda and Burundi in order to illustrate the potential consequences of failing to openly engage diverse narratives of past violence.

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[54] Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "The Witness in the Archive: Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies," *Memory Studies* 2, no. 2 (2009): 162.

3.   Comparative Analysis: Dominant Historical Narratives in Rwanda and Burundi

"Central to the Hutu–Tutsi conflict lies the interplay between ethnic
realities and their subjective reconstruction (or manipulation) by political
entrepreneurs."
- Susanne Buckley-Zistel[55]

Framing the contested nature of memory and history in Rwanda and Burundi in the broadest sense, Lemarchand explains: "In the collective psyche of Hutu and Tutsi, two genocides compete for recognition – and for condemnation: the 1972 genocide of Hutu in Burundi and the 1994 genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda." [56] On both sides of ethnic lines, groups seek to highlight one of these respective events while silencing or denying memory of the other. Indeed, the histories of political and social culture, ethnicity, and conflict in Rwanda and Burundi are inextricably linked,[57] and a deep engagement of their shared history is warranted. In the interest of space, however, several broad historical generalizations /trends will be made explicit in order to situate this paper's analysis.

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[55] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Coexistence in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *The Journal of the International African Institute* 76, no. 2 (2006): 131.

[56] Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, xii.

[57] For instance, the violence which erupted in Burundi after the 1993 assassination of the democratically-elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadye, had undeniable influence on the Arusha Peace Process in Rwanda in 1994, and played effectively into the anti-Tutsi propaganda campaigns of the Hutu-extremist masterminds of the genocide. In relation to history, the post-independence (1962) periods of both former Belgian colonies diverged in some important respects. Whereas Rwanda experienced a revolution of the Hutu majority upon independence, abolishing the Tutsi-led monarchy, Burundi was spared such upheaval for the time being and thus remained largely under the government and military rule of the Tutsi elite.

First, much of the post-independence period was characterized by Hutu rule and Tutsi subjugation in Rwanda, and Tutsi rule and Hutu marginalization in Burundi. Whereas Rwanda experienced a revolution of the Hutu majority upon independence, abolishing the Tutsi-led monarchy, Burundi was spared such upheaval for the time being and thus remained largely under the government and military rule of the Tutsi elite. The dynamics of these relations, however, were indeed more complicated, as hierarchical divisions existed within groups as well.[58]

Second, both groups have experienced abuse and large scale loss of life at the hands of the other group in recent history, with upsurges of violence taking place from 1959-1962, 1972-1973 and 1990-1994 in Rwanda[59] and in 1965, 1972, 1988 and 1993-2005 in Burundi.[60] Recent ethnic conflict in Rwanda largely took the form of anti-Tutsi violence carried out by government forces and the Hutu masses, with anti-Hutu violence indeed taking place - especially by RPF forces during the civil war and following the

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[58] Villia Jefremovas (2000) explains that during President Juvenal Habyarimana's rule in Rwanda (1973-1994), political tensions within the Hutu majority also existed, as the majority of the Hutu political elite were drawn from his home region in the North. Further, Hutu-Tutsi relations during the beginning of his rule were described as amicable, with increased mobility for Tutsi from the South. This balance undeniably unravelled later in Habyarimana's rule, yet it is clear that blanket simplifications purporting constant ethnic divisions are inaccurate in portraying Rwandan history. Lemarchand (2009, 325) also explains that in Burundi, the Tutsi themselves were divided in two groups, "the lowly Tutsi-Hima, concentrated the south of the country, and the more prestigious and status-conscious Tutsi-Banyaruguru, found predominantly in the north."

[59] Amnesty International, "Rwanda – Gacaca: A Question of Justice," December 17, 2002, http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR47/007/2002/en/b65d04e4-d769-11dd-b024-21932cd2170d/afr470072002en.pdf. For a more detailed analysis of Rwandan history, the 1994 genocide and the dynamics of post-independence ethnic conflict see: Fujii, *Killing Neighbours: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (2009); Mamdani, *When Neighbours Become Killers* (2001); Jessee "Rwandan Genocide Memorials" (2011); Buckley-Zistel "Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Coexistence in Post-Genocide Rwanda" (2006); and Des Forges "Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda" (1999).

[60] Daniel Sullivan, "The missing pillars: a look at the failure of peace in Burundi through the lens of Arend Lijphart's theory of consociational democracy," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2005): 77. For a more detailed analysis of Burundian history and the dynamics of post-independence ethnic conflict see: Sullivan, "The Missing Pillars" (2005); Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (1994) and "The Burundi Genocide" (2009); Daley, *Gender and Genocide in Burundi: The Search for Spaces of Peace in the Great Lakes Region* (2007); and Vandeginste, "Power-Sharing, Conflict and Transition in Burundi" (2009).

genocide - on a relatively smaller scale. Violence in Burundi has generally followed a pattern of Hutu uprisings or rebel attacks on the Tutsi population, "followed by the brutal reaction of the Tutsi military forces" on Hutu elite and civilians.[61] Further, underlying socio-economic power relations seem to have resurfaced and persisted in both modern day Rwanda and Burundi. Rwanda's post-1994 government is comprised largely of Tutsi returnees from Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi,[62] whereas government, military, and business in Burundi today continue to operate under significant influence from the Tutsi elite.[63]

Fourth, and of particular interest to this study, discourse on the past in both nations appears to be similarly politicized and restricted despite contrasting political arrangements and approaches to ethnicity. Upon initial observation, one may assume that the Burundian Government's recognition of ethnic identity and institutionalization of power sharing translates into open dialogue on the past, and Rwanda's denial of ethnicity and heavy handed leadership restricts such space. However, the subsequent sections aim to display how the dominant historical narratives employed in Rwanda and Burundi silence competing and alternative memories of the past and promulgate a particular interpretation of ethnic identity which conceals present relations of power. Thus, the larger question framing this analysis remains: how can both nations meet the challenge of openly remembering the past without refuelling ethnic tensions?

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Alison Brettle, "Eighteen years on: Remembering the Rwandan genocide," *Consultancy Africa Intelligence*, April 2, 2012, <http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=991:eighteen-years-on-remembering-the-rwandan-genocide-&catid=60:conflict-terrorism-discussion-papers&Itemid=265>.

[63] International Crisis Group, "Burundi: A Deepening Corruption Crisis," *Africa Report* no. 185, March 21, 2012, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/central-africa/burundi/185-burundi-la-crise-de-corruption.aspx>.

3.1. Dominant Memory Practices in Rwanda

"Our history is not the history of Hutus and Tutsis. It has been a history of
Rwandese, but Rwandese who have diverged within the society."
– Paul Kagame[64]

3.1.1. The Official Narrative Explored

In the post-1994 period, the Rwandan Government's official narrative of the
genocide, Rwanda's history, and the path to reconciliation is disseminated through an
array of mechanisms such as: public memorialization events and memorial sites, the
Gacaca courts,[65] ingando (public re-education camps),[66] a state and church led
campaign of promoting forgiveness, infrastructure projects whereby survivors and
perpetrators are encouraged (or forced) to work and live side by side, and a collection of
legal decrees denouncing genocide ideology and discussion or recognition of ethnicity.

Further, the official narrative emphasizes six central interpretations of the past: a
utopian vision of ethnic relations in pre-colonial Rwanda, the colonial invention of
ethnicity, the eradication of ethnicity in modern day Rwanda, the violent and corrupt
leadership of past (Hutu) political elites, the failure of the international community during
the genocide, and the saviour like role of the RPF in stopping the genocide and enabling

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[64] As quoted in John Rash, "Rwanda: Recovering. Restrained. Resilient," StarTribune, December
17, 2011,
<http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/135764593.html?page=all&prepage=2&c
=y#continue>.

[65] The Gacaca courts are a "neo-traditional" justice mechanism adopted by the government in
2001 in order to speed up the prosecution of accused génocidaires. The courts wrapped up
their work in June 2012, having tried close to two million individuals over the past decade.
The courts were controversial and often criticized by human rights organizations, yet the
government portrayed them as a process whereby Rwandans could be reconciled through
"truth-telling and forgiveness" (Thomson, 2011, 445).

[66] Ingando are public re-education camps which released (Hutu) prisoners must attend before
returning to their home communities. Attendees are required to stay from several weeks to
several months to be taught about Rwandan history, government policies, and reconciliation.
The camps are important tools in the dissemination of the official narrative (Thomson, 2011,
444).

Rwanda's redemption and progress since.[67] These representations thus inform a set of official principles and approaches to 'national unity and reconciliation' enforced by the state. Although this analysis aims to speak to all elements of the official narrative, a focus will be placed on the way in which past and present ethnic relations are interpreted.

It is important to note that while some genuinely agree with or are convinced by the official narrative, not all Rwandan Tutsi necessarily subscribe to the government discourse regarding the past and present reconciliation measures. As Jesse explains, the silence of rural Tutsi regarding political matters is "often misinterpreted as unconditional support for the RPF and its policies."[68] Thus, competing narratives not only exist amongst Hutu and Twa Rwandans whose experiences are most explicitly denied by the official discourse, but also non-elite Tutsi who feel marginalized or wronged by the government in some form or another.[69]

First, as Rachel Ibreck effectively portrays, in Rwanda, "The post-genocide state has a dominant role in setting limits on whose lives are to be remembered publicly and how."[70] The standard memorial banners which are displayed at the over 200 sites of genocide throughout the country display two familiar words: "Jenocide" and "Abatutsi," from the complete phrase which reads: "Kwibuka Jenocide Yakorewe Abatusti" – Remember The Genocide Of The Tutsi.[71] Despite the fact that many moderate Hutus

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[67] Erin Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials: The Politics of Remembering the "1994
   Genocides of the Tutsis," (October 2011), draft, 2.

[68] Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials," 1.

[69] Rachel Ibreck, "The politics of mourning: Survivor contributions to memorials in post-genocide
   Rwanda," *Memory Studies* 3, no. 4 (2010): 331. In her study of survivor contributions to
   genocide memorials, Ibreck seeks to uncover the nuances of survivor sentiments toward the
   RPF-dominated government and its official memory practices.

[70] Ibid., 330.

[71] Kigali Memorial Centre, "Other Rwanda Genocide Memorials,"
   <http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/centre/other.html>. As Jessee (2011, 3) puts it,
   visiting genocide memorial sites seems to be a "rite of passage of sorts through which new
   arrivals to the nation [demonstrate] remorse for the failure of the international community to
   prevent the mass atrocities."

and Rwandans of mixed ethnicity were also killed from April to July of 1994, the events are now officially referred to by the Rwandan Government as the Genocide of the Tutsi, what some observers refer to as the "Tutsification" of the collective memory of past atrocities.[72]

The banner goes on to read: "Dushyigikire Ukuri, Twiheshe Agaciro" – By Supporting The Truth and Our Self Dignity.[73] The Foucauldian relationship between truth and power is evident upon a close reading of this statement, one of many symbols of state-led memorialization. The official narrative assumes the status of truth and history, and explicitly elevates this truth to a matter of dignity and self-preservation – that is, the preservation of the Tutsi experience. As a result, the narrative delegitimizes and silences "the lived experiences of Rwandans from all sides of the conflict."[74]

The focus of the RPF narrative solely on Tutsi victimization is also evident in official memorialization publications such as the Kigali Memorial Centre's (KGMC) online exhibits. A section of the history overview explains that:

> "Propaganda was an important tool used to encourage the Hutu majority
> to turn against their Tutsi neighbours, to isolate political moderates, to
> create a sense of pan-Hutu solidarity and, finally, to participate in
> organised violence against the Tutsi."[75]

Indeed, these portrayals are not historically false - it is undeniable that the 1994 genocide targeted the Tutsi minority and that the extremist-Hutu propaganda played an important role in inciting Hutu Rwandans to follow through with the plan. However, I argue that denying other victims recognition and portraying the Hutu mass as a uniform entity of actors silences the memories and experiences of non-Tutsi Rwandans who

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[72] Brettle (2012) notes the paradoxical nature of this decision considering the Rwandan
    Government's official ban on the use of ethnic labels.
[73] Kigali Memorial Centre, "Other Rwanda Genocide Memorials."
[74] Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials," 2.
[75] Kigali Memorial Centre, "Propaganda,"
    <http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/genocide/rwanda/propaganda.html>.

resisted participation in the genocidal terror. As Susan Thomson explains, implicit in the official narrative are "two broad simplifications: all Tutsi (whether they were in Rwanda during the genocide or not) are innocent victims or 'survivors;' and all Hutu (whether they participated in genocide or not) are guilty perpetrators."[76]

Second, another crucial element of this narrative is a romanticism regarding Rwanda's history of ethnic relations, one which seeks to deny the existence of ethnicity in Rwanda today and reduce past ethnic divisions to a mere side-effect of the manipulation of colonial and political elites. The denial of any possible foundation for past ethnic divisions, such as legitimate grievances over access to political participation, economic opportunities, education and other social benefits, de-historicizes and decontextualizes the complex interaction of motivations, interests, and power dynamics implicated in the eruption of violence in 1994.

The RPF narrative teaches that pre-colonial Rwanda was peaceful and prosperous under the rule of the Tutsi monarchy, which the Belgians disrupted by introducing the concept of ethnicity, initially favouring the Tutsi, and thus fuelling "resentment and violent ethnocentrism among the Hutu masses."[77] The KGMC website begins its section on the history of the genocide with the statement:

"We are one people. We speak one language. We have one history."[78]

The next section describes the impact of colonization on Rwandan society:

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[76] Susan Thomson, "Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-Genocide Reconciliation," *African Affairs* 110 (2011): 443.

[77] Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials," 5. Jessee observed this element of the narrative (and others which are subsequently discussed) while interviewing staff and observing history displays at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre.

[78] Kigali Memorial Centre, "Our Rwanda," <http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/genocide/rwanda.html>. In 2010, the KGMC launched an online version of some of its archives and displays for those unable to visit. The memorial centre is also beginning to post survivor testimonies on the website.

"The categories Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were socio-economic classifications within the clans, which could change with personal circumstances. Under colonial rule, the distinctions were made racial."[79]

The true nature of ethnic identity and relations in pre-colonial Rwanda is still a much debated matter amongst historians and anthropologists, yet the official narrative often fails to acknowledge that power dynamics accompanied these socio-economic categories under the feudal Tutsi-monarchy which ruled Rwanda prior to and during European colonization.[80] Though the prior existence of social stratification is acknowledged, the closing statement of this section of the KGMC website reinforces the belief that such categories did not produce any social tension until colonial interference:

"We had lived in peace for many centuries, but now the divide between us had begun."[81]

According to Thomson's critique, the implication of this representation of the past is that all Hutu must be re-educated about Rwanda's true history, because it was a Hutu-powered ideology of divisionism which incited the population to genocide and the "Hutu people are blamed for allowing themselves to be manipulated by the genocide ideology."[82]

The KGMC display of Rwandan history goes on to argue that after the 1959 Hutu Revolution, the Tutsi population was punished by the Hutu leadership because of its

[79] Kigali Memorial Centre, "Colonial Times," <http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/genocide/rwanda/roots.html>.

[80] Villia Jefremovas, "Contested Identities: Power and the Fictions of Ethnicity, Ethnography and History in Rwanda," *Anthropologica* 39, no. ½ (1997), 93. Jefremovas explores in detail the debate regarding concepts of statehood and ethnicity in pre-colonial Rwanda, she argues that these concepts have been transformed rather than created by colonial and post-colonial governments to justify "policies of exclusion, inclusion and claims to legitimacy." Pages 93-95 offer a more detailed depiction of pre-colonial politics and the dynamics of power under the Rwandan kingdoms operating from the 14th or 15th centuries onwards.

[81] Kigali Memorial Centre, "Colonial Times."

[82] Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials," 7.

perceived collaboration with the colonial administration.[83] It is evident to Jessee, after thoroughly absorbing the narrative provided at the KGMC, that one of the central messages being imparted is the "shame which is cast upon not only the Hutu extremists who were responsible for orchestrating … the genocide, but on the Hutu majority as a whole for having failed to prevent the massacre of their neighbors."[84]

Although this categorization takes place subtly and implicitly, as such outright labeling would contradict the RPF's polices regarding ethnic divisionism, its effect is evident. By referring to the events of 1994 as the Genocide of the Tutsi, reserving public recognition for Tutsi survivors and victims, romanticizing pre-colonial ethnic relations, and banning any discussion of ethnicity, the government effectively conceals the fact that memory of the genocide "is being used to dominate and define identities,"[85] by assuming that those who carried out the genocide represent a "monolithic whole" of the Hutu mass.

It is important to note here that the years of Hutu rule which followed independence also strongly relied on legitimizing power through a particular interpretation of Rwandan history, one which strategically highlighted Hutu oppression under years of Tutsi monarchy. As Newbury states, "political leaders of both ethnic groups have 'reinvented' Rwanda for their own purposes."[86]

Another important theme which Jessee highlights in her study of the narrative presented at the KGMC is the message that in order for Rwandans to live in harmony again, "Rwanda requires strong leadership that is committed to unity and reconciliation … To this end, the RPF is presented as the champion of the Rwandan people," having

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[83] Ibid., 5.

[84] Ibid., 7.

[85] Brettle, "Eighteen years on: Remembering the Rwandan genocide."

[86] As cited in Jefremovas, "Contested Identities," 93. Jefremovas (2000, 302) also explains that several political and economic factors effecting Rwanda in 1994 made it possible for "extremists to demonise the old Tutsi regime (1898-1959), to manipulate public fears about the RPF invasion and war, to incite fears about democratisation and to discredit the peace agreements."

overwhelmed the Hutu extremists and brought peace to Rwanda.[87] This particular framing of the RPF is compounded by consistent government rhetoric regarding its successes in reconciling Rwandans.

An "Insight" piece published in *The New Times* (one of Rwanda's largest daily newspapers), which although not state-owned is evidently servile to the current regime,[88] depicts a Rwandan father telling his son about Rwanda's peaceful pre-colonial history.[89] Following the telling of the story, the author states:

> "What the present government has been trying to fix in the people's minds right from its inception, is its stated commitment to national unity … [I]n the new, post-Genocide Rwanda … [t]he ethnic classification has disappeared. Rwandans are again what they once were: simply Rwandans."[90]

As Buckley-Zistel observed in her extensive field work with rural Rwandans, the idealization of past ethnic relations is also adopted as "a conscious strategy to cope with living in proximity to 'killers' or 'traitors.'"[91] The effect such 'chosen amnesia' can have on ethnic relations today is important, to frame the events of 1994 as a sudden upsurge of anti-Tutsi violence carried out by the Hutu masses contributes to the demonization of one group and prevents a critical engagement of the reasons behind past ethnic

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[87] Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials," 7.

[88] The Economist, "President Paul Kagame under scrutiny," August 5, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/16750119>.

[89] The author seems to characterize the beginning of Belgian colonialism with a favouring of the Bahutu (as the category is referred to traditionally in Kinyarwanda) and (through a coalition of the colonial powers, the church and the Bahutu) a campaign of victimization of the Batutsi minority. The author then acknowledges that with the arrival of a new Catholic Bishop, the power relations were turned around. This account seems to contradict the majority of depictions which state that Belgian colonists sought to uphold the Tutsi monarchy from the beginning of their rule, although this began to change later in the colonial period as Hutu opposition grew stronger.

[90] Victor J. Visathan, "The hatching of Genocide – A father to son talk," *The New Times*, April 23, 2012, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/index.php?a=52762&i=14971>.

[91] Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget," 132. Buckley-Zistel explains that her interviewees consistently acknowledged the event of the genocide while ignoring any discussion of its roots in past ethnic tensions.

divisions. Thus, some Rwandans see official memory practices as a "kind of denial of history."[92] In the words of Denise Kajeniri, a Tutsi university student, the official narrative instructs Rwandans to "pretend and move on."[93]

Moreover, the official narrative also places significant emphasis on the eradication of ethnic identity in post-genocide Rwanda. With the removal of the genocidal extremist-Hutu regime, the imposition of justice for those responsible for the crimes, and the establishment of a new system of governance under the RPF, the discourse asserts that ethnic divisions have been remedied and ethnic identities abolished. As will be displayed in the next section, there is concern that these declarations obscure the reality of ethnic relations in Rwanda today and fail to deconstruct the elements of these identities which enabled tension and conflict to evolve in the first place.

3.1.2.   Eradicating Ethnicity and Genocide Ideology Laws

As evidence of its salience and force, many elements of the official narrative are in fact enshrined in the Rwandan Constitution, which was officially adopted in 2003 as the transition period came to a close. Four particularly relevant articles of the preamble read as follows:

> …We the people of Rwanda,
>
> 1° In the wake of the genocide that was organised and supervised by **unworthy leaders** and other perpetrators and that decimated more than a million sons and daughters of Rwanda
>
> 2° Resolved to fight the **ideology of genocide** and all its manifestations and to eradicate ethnic, regional and any other form of divisions

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[92] Josh Kron, "For Rwandan Students, Ethnic Tensions Lurk," *The New York Times*, May 16, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/17/world/africa/17rwanda.html?_r=2>.

[93] Ibid.

7° Considering that we enjoy the privilege of having one country, a common language, a common culture and a long **shared history** which ought to lead to a common vision of our destiny

8° Considering that it is necessary to draw from our centuries-old history the **positive values which characterized our ancestors** that must be the basis for the existence and flourishing of our Nation.[94]
(Author's emphasis)

Furthermore, the significant emphasis which is placed on the prevention of genocide ideology, negationism and divisionism is also visible throughout various sections of the constitution. Chapter II, Article 9 commits Rwanda to the following fundamental principles (among others):

1° fighting the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations;

2° eradication of ethnic, regional and other divisions and promotion of national unity[95]

Title II, Chapter 1, Article 13 goes on to enforce that:

Revisionism, negationism and trivialisation of genocide are punishable by the law.[96]

The kinds of discourse which constitute revisionism, negationism and trivialisation of genocide, however, are vague in Rwandan law, a concerning and revealing characteristic of this legal provision and its use in silencing opposition.[97] Furthermore, Title VIII, Chapter III, Article 178 states that one of the central objectives of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission is:

[94] The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, 2003,
    <http://www.rwandahope.com/constitution.pdf>, 2.

[95] Ibid., 4.

[96] Ibid., 5.

[97] As Thomson (2011, 442) explains, the ban against genocide ideology in actuality means a ban against any discussion which could be perceived as anti-Tutsi, while genocide negationism really means "questioning that only Tutsi died in 1994."

6° denouncing and fighting against acts, writings and utterances which are intended to promote any kind of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia[98].

Again, the determination of which acts, writings, and utterances would be considered discriminatory or intolerant is left up to the discretion of state officials. The United Nations and multiple human rights organizations have expressed concern regarding the Rwandan Government's application of these genocide ideology laws and its related record of arbitrary arrests, interrogations, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings.[99]

In the period leading up to the 2010 national elections, the use of genocide ideology laws to silence critics and opposition heightened to an even more concerning level. The government shut down two independent newspapers that had published criticisms of the RPF and detained its editors and arrested two Hutu opposition candidates under the auspices of the genocide ideology laws, one for divisionism and one for espousing genocide ideology.[100] In Rwanda today, "to raise questions about the RPF atrocities against Hutus, or draw attention to the moderate Hutus who were killed, is equated under the law with denying or diminishing the genocide."[101] Thus, seeking to expand political space for discussions of the past is perceived by authorities as an attempt to legitimize those who deny the genocide and open the possibility for extremists to reignite ethnic hatred and violence.

Despite the official discourse regarding the eradication of ethnicity and the progress of national reconciliation, Jessee and other researchers have observed that there remains "a powerful reservoir of ethnic tension that is difficult to ignore, yet rarely

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[98] The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, 47.

[99] As Thomson (2011) explains, the genocide ideology laws are most often "arbitrarily applied to anyone who makes public statements that the government perceives as critical," even if those statements do not constitute any form of genocide denial or divisionism.

[100] Richard Grant, "Paul Kagame: Rwanda's redeemer or ruthless dictator?" The Telegraph, July 22, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/rwanda/7900680/Paul-Kagame-Rwandas-redeemer-or-ruthless-dictator.html>.

[101] Ibid.

discussed."[102] The RPF invoked fear of a resurgence of violence is in many respects warranted. However, one must also question whether the ruling regime does itself continue to practice ethnic politics under the concealment of the official narrative and the rhetoric of its national unity and reconciliation policies. As a result, "the very divisionism the government aims to eradicate is instead promoted and allowed to fester in private."[103]

Although inherent in the official narrative is a claim regarding the RPF's success in promoting reconciliation amongst Rwandans, constant reminders of the destruction of the genocide are also important in legitimizing the regime's hold on power. As Jessee notes, one of the many themes visible in the narrative presented at the KGMC is "the potential dangers of a multi-party system."[104] The use of memorialization practices to convince the Rwandan population of the hazards of plurality work to legitimate the current government's authoritarian policies and conceal the status quo of ethnic power dynamics it perpetuates.[105] Further, as will be discussed in the next section, the power of the official discourse in Rwanda is not only symbolic in its effects.

3.1.3.   Material Manifestations of the Official Discourse: Post-Genocide Justice

Foucault's emphasis on the material effects of discourse is particularly relevant to this discussion, as it is evident that the official narrative's representations of the past have very 'real' implications for the societal structures operating in Rwanda. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which was established in 1994, is not mandated to investigate crimes committed by RPF forces between 1990 and 1994, or

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[102] Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 298.

[103] Brettle, "Eighteen years on: Remembering the Rwandan genocide."

[104] Jessee, "Rwandan Genocide Memorials," 7.

[105] Edkins' discussion of the relationship between memory and power and its role in masking the inherent contingencies of the present social and political order is closely applicable here.

the period following its entry into power.[106] According to an Organization of African Unity Report on the Rwandan Genocide, RPF human rights violations "during the armed conflict and ensuing months … range from the tens of thousands to 100, 000 civilian casualties."[107]

Moreover, international criticism regarding the RPF's actions in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in the months and years following the genocide has increased recently, criticism which the Rwandan Government continues to condemn as immoral.[108] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report[109] in October 2010 documenting the most serious violations of human rights committed in the DRC by all armed forces (Congolese and foreign) between 1993 and 2003.[110]

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[106] The ICTR is mandated to "judge persons who 'planned, instigated, ordered, committed or otherwise aided and abetted' genocidal crimes within their jurisdiction between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994'" (Amnesty International, 2002). Relations between the Rwandan Government and ICTR administration and prosecutors have been strained since its establishment. The Rwandan Government voted against United Nations Security Council resolution 955, which established the court, arguing (among other concerns) that the tribunal also prosecute "projects for extermination" which were carried out from the beginning of the period of armed conflict (October 1990-April 1994). The tribunal is now slated to complete all of its work by 2014. For more information regarding the ICTR's work see: http://www.unictr.org/

[107] Amnesty International, "Rwanda – Gacaca: A Question of Justice."

[108] Writer and scholar, Manthia Diawara, argues that Kagame has created a "state of exceptionalism" for Rwanda in the Great Lakes Region, fervently silencing criticism by constantly referring to the failure of the international community to respond to the genocide and the role of the RPF in 'liberating Rwanda.' Diawara also argues that the international community's tendency to celebrate any signs of 'progress' in 'Africa' leads donors to refrain from criticizing Rwandan policies, when the current government has made such strides in development. This notion of "exceptionalism" is useful when considering the proprietary nature of memory and discourse in contemporary Rwanda. To hear more of Diawara's argument, see the video "Global Africa: Alfredo Jaar."

[109] *DRC: Mapping human rights violations 1993-2003.* To read the full report, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/RDCProjetMapping.aspx>.

[110] UN News Centre, "DR Congo: UN releases most extensive report to date on war massacres, rapes," October 1, 2010, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?Cr1=congo&NewsID=36306&Cr=democratic>.

The Rwandan Government reacted particularly strongly to the report because of claims that the RPF (among other foreign armed forces) is responsible for committing "war crimes and crimes against humanity, including possibly genocide, against tens of thousands of Hutu who fled Rwanda after the Civil War."[111] Amongst those Rwandans who fled across the border, there were indeed génocidaires, members of the Forces Armées Rwandaises (Rwandan Government Forces- referred to as ex-FAR post 1994) and Hutu militias (Interahamwe), as well as innocent civilians fearing RPF reprisals. It has been well documented that the RPF's pursuit of members of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe was characterized by "systematic and widespread attacks on Rwandan Hutu refugees and civilians."[112]

The RPF's ardent denial of these claims displays important elements of the official discourse; particularly the assertion that the RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army – the armed wing of the RPF) did not commit any crimes during the civil war, genocide or its post-1994 rule.[113] This discourse is visible at points throughout a document produced by the Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in response to the Draft UN Mapping Report on the DRC. The document opens by stating that Rwanda finds the entire Draft Mapping Report "unacceptable," after which a list of concerns is provided, the first of which states:

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[111] Muscara, "Rwanda: Genocide Ideology and Sectarianism Laws Silencing Critics?" *Inter Press Service News Agency*, August 2010. <http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=52678>.

[112] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Info Note 6: Involvement of Neighbouring States," *UN Mapping Report: Democratic Republic of the Congo 1993-2003*, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/ZR/FS-6_Neighbouring_States_FINAL.pdf>. In addition to the pursuit of génocidaires, the RPF launched attacks into the Eastern DRC in response to attempted incursions into Rwanda by ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces based in the refugee camps, a point which the RPF highlights in its justification of its use of force. It is also important to note that these events took place within the wider context of two Congolese civil wars and the participation of multiple regional actors including Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Angola. Also, many of the attacks carried out on Hutu refugee camps were orchestrated by a coalition of Rwandan forces, Ugandan forces, and the AFDL (Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la liberation du Congo), a Rwandan supported Congolese rebel group, composed in part by Banyamulenge (Congolese of Rwandan Tutsi origin).

[113] As well as the claim that when the RPA did use force throughout these periods, it was only in justified self-defense or for the security of the Rwandan people.

The manipulation of UN processes by organizations and individuals—both inside and outside the UN—for purposes of rewriting history, improperly apportioning blame for the genocide that occurred in Rwanda, and [reigniting] the conflict in Rwanda and the region.[114]

By denouncing any international criticism regarding RPF actions, the government seeks to reaffirm its identity as the force which liberated Rwandans from genocidal forces, evident in the way in the document refers to the RPF's mission in Rwanda as "the war to stop the genocide"[115] as opposed to acknowledging the wider context and the RPF's role in instigating the civil war in October of 1990.

By depicting Rwanda under the rule of the RPF, as a "nation rehabilitated from the scourge of genocide," (as stated by a senior representative of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission), the official narrative legitimizes its present policies, promotes a fear of what the alternative to RPF rule would be and silences critics by accusing them of working against reconciliation in Rwanda and challenging the integrity of Rwandan solutions.[116] Maintaining this theme, at the ceremony to mark the official closure of the Gacaca courts, President Kagame stated:

"[This] is a celebration of the **restoration of unity and trus**t among Rwandans, and reaffirmation of our ability to find **our own answers** to seemingly intractable questions."[117]
(Author's emphasis)

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[114] Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, "Official Government of Rwanda Comments on the Draft UN Mapping Report on the DRC," September 20, 2010, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/ZR/DRC_Report_Comments_Rwanda.pdf>, 3.

[115] Ibid., 7.

[116] As quoted in Susan Thomson, "Getting Close to Rwandans since the Genocide: Studying Everyday Life in Highly Politicized Research Settings," *African Studies Review* 53, no. 3 (2010), 22.

[117] Paul Kagame, June 18, 2012, as quoted in "Legacy of Gacaca will be with us for generations to come," The Journey Continues, <http://www.paulkagame.com/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=689%3Alegacy-of-gacaca-will-be-with-us-for-generations-to-come&catid=36%3Anews&Itemid=71&lang=en>.

However, many continue to question whether the Rwandan Government's post-genocide policies have in fact restored "unity and trust" amongst *all* Rwandans, or whether the deliberate "glossing over [of] significant social complexities" is instead meant to justify and maintain the current system of power relations."[118] However, the government continues to argue that only Rwandans can judge how they must recover from and remember the past. In a statement directed towards questions from the press regarding his human rights record, President Kagame asks:

> "Should there really be people, other people, making choices for Rwandans? ... Are we being judged in some textbook theory or something? ... We are who we are, we are not going to be changed by prejudice. Not going to have choices made for us."[119]

His striking questions speak to one of the central values of transitional justice: the importance of encouraging *local* approaches to justice and reconciliation. However, maintaining a critical perspective and acute attention to the workings of power through discourse on the past, it is important to question how Kagame and the RPF conceptualize the 'we' of Rwandans and Rwandan identity. Such statements appear to be a part of a larger effort to silence competing voices within Rwanda, which despite government rhetoric on unity and reconciliation, do indeed exist. The subsequent section will display how similar processes of concealment are underway in Burundi.

[118] Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget," 133.
[119] Rash, "Rwanda: Recovering. Restrained. Resilient."

3.2. Dominant and Competing Historical Narratives in Burundi

> "The right to tell [the] national history is a highly contested domain in Burundi. All parties to the conflict are eager to tell 'the truth' about what actually has happened and is happening in their country."
> - Simon Turner[120]

Discussing official memory practices in Burundi requires a somewhat different approach than that used to analyze the Rwandan case. Although the Arusha Peace Process was never brought to fruition in Rwanda, Burundi's experience with its own peace process centered in Arusha came to a rather different conclusion. With no decisive victory for any of the armed groups involved in the civil war from 1993-2005, years of complex and difficult negotiations followed which aimed to incorporate all main political and rebel movements, culminating in the establishment of a transitional power-sharing government and national elections in 2005. As a result, the past decade in Burundi has been defined by attempts to maintain a consociational power-sharing system which institutionalizes a formal recognition of ethnicity and enforces a pluralist political system.[121]

However, as this section will display, the surface level opening of political space in Burundi has not been accompanied by a critical engagement of the past. In Burundi,

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[120] Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile," 23.

[121] Consociationalism is a governing structure and conflict resolution mechanism specifically designed for ethnically, religiously or linguistically divided societies. Arend Lijphart was one of the first scholars to conceptualize and study this form of power-sharing. He defines consociationalism as "government by elite cartel to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy" ("Consociational Democracy," 1969). There are four pillars to the consociational approach: a grand coalition of elites from all concerned segments of society, segmental autonomy, minority overrepresentation, and a minority veto. Consociationalism involves the institutionalization of different ethnic/religious/linguistic identities. For more on consociationalism in Burundi see: Lemarchand: "Consociationalism and Power Sharing in Africa" (2007); Sullivan: "The missing pillars" (2005); and Vandeginste: "Power-Sharing, Conflict and Transition in Burundi" (2009).

the failure to deal with the past publically and critically has resulted in a different kind of relationship between memory, identity and power, one equally as concerning for matters of transitional justice in Burundi today. As Romana Schweiger states, "A first step towards reconciliation in Burundi needs to be an acknowledgement of the past. However, no generally accepted version of Burundian history exists."[122] The fact that the Government of Burundi has now visibly committed to establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) adds an important dimension to this discussion. Burundian elites seem to have adopted all of the necessary political reforms to accommodate an enlarged political space for competing narratives of the past. Yet, as memory practices in Burundi today are more closely examined, it becomes apparent that a blanket of silence continues to be imposed upon past abuses committed by elements of both Hutu and Tutsi groups. [123]

3.2.1.   The Evolution of Dominant Narratives amongst the Burundian Hutu and Tutsi

Before discussing the particular character of the politics of memory in Burundi at the present time, it is important to situate the broader workings of memory and identity which have persisted throughout Burundi's post-independence period. To begin, Jefremovas explains that the politics of memory has "taken a cruel twist in Burundi, where Tutsi elites have taken the deplorable killings of Tutsi which followed the

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[122] Romana Schweiger, "Late Justice for Burundi," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 55 (2006): 654.

[123] Since the 2010 national elections - in which President Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD (Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Force de Défense de la Démocratie) political party was re-elected with a three-quarters majority in the national assembly – the government has been increasingly clamping down on opposition parties, media, and the general population with numerous reports of arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. The election and post-election period have been defined by pervasiveness impunity, corruption and intolerance for criticism, despite Burundi's multi-party system. For more information on the state of human rights in Burundi in the past year see: Amnesty International, Annual Report 2012: http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/burundi/report-2012. Also, for a local perspective on the human rights situation in Burundi, see a report published by Iteka, a Burundian human rights organization: <http://www.ligue-iteka.africa-web.org/IMG/pdf/Rapport_ODP_2007_.pdf.>.

assassination of the President in October 1993 and turned them into a history of the persecution of the Burundian Tutsi."[124] What goes severely unacknowledged in this narrative is the resulting killing of many Hutu civilians by the Tutsi dominated military in the aftermath of massacres directed at the Tutsi population, a sequence of events which was ignited when President Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected and first Hutu president of Burundi, was assassinated just three months after he entered office.

Furthermore, arguably the most pervasive gap in the historical narratives of Burundi's past is the failure to acknowledge and investigate the systematic killing of an estimated 150,000-200,000 Hutu civilians by the Tutsi-led government and army in 1972, a "planned annihilation" which started with the targeting of Hutu intellectuals and spread to the civilian population.[125] The outbreak of genocidal violence in 1972 was spurred by a Hutu insurgency in the south which killed between 2000-3000 Tutsis within its first week alone. As Lemarchand states, "the 1972 genocide [of the Hutu] has been obliterated from Burundi's official memory," while the events following the assassination of the President in 1993 remain the only genocide officially acknowledged.[126]

Lemarchand provides valuable insight into the way in which historical narratives amongst groups of Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi have reconstructed ethnic identity in terms of morality, survival and politics. Each group's experience of marginalization, subjugation and violence is a crucial element in the process of identity formation and reformation. For Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, especially in the post-independence period, "memories of martyrdom [emerged] as a central feature of the social construction of identity."[127] By framing the killings of one's group as a sign of their historic position as victims in Burundi's conflict, an acknowledgement of the victimization of others and the

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[124] Jefremovas, "Treacherous Waters," 306.

[125] René Lemarchand, "The Burundi Genocide," in *Century of Genocide*, ed. Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons, New York: Routledge, 1997, 324.

[126] Ibid. Jefremovas (2000, 306) explains that in a White Paper to the United Nations in 1973, the Burundian Government referred to the events of 1972 as a genocide of the Tutsi, failing to acknowledge the significant number of Hutu killed.

[127] Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, xxvii.

complex reasons behind ethnic tensions is denied, allowing for a de-historicizing of past violence.

For example, Lemarchand explains that in the collective psyche of Burundian Tutsi, generally speaking, the massacres of Tutsi which followed Ndadaye's assassination in 1993 are perceived as a previously calculated plot by FRODEBU (Front pour la démocratie du Burundi) 'cadres'[128] aimed at effectively removing the Tutsi threat. This interpretation of the events of 1993 completely undermines the important contextual factors and motives at work. For Burundian Hutus, Ndadaye's election was a pivotal moment in their narrative of struggle and marginalization, it carried with it great hope for a shifting of power dynamics in the country. Thus, rather than a previously orchestrated plan, Lemarchand argues that anti-Tutsi violence was caused by a "spontaneous outburst of popular anger fuelled by memories of 1972."[129] By not viewing the events as such, the crucial link between the assassination, its meaning for Hutu, and the subsequent killings fails to be acknowledged, thus reinforcing the myth of the ever-present Hutu threat in the collective Tutsi memory. Moreover, in the collective Hutu memory, what is omitted is the way in which the 1993 elections - and the subsequent institutional and land reforms which Ndadaye quickly pursued - revived deep Tutsi fears of oppression and destruction under a Hutu majority.[130]

Viewing the killings of both Tutsi and Hutu following Ndadaye's assassination as isolated events contributes to the transformation of a "mythological construction" into a

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[128] FRODEBU was the Hutu-dominated party which Ndadaye belonged to, one of the two main political parties in Burundi at the time. In the 2005 election, Frodebu placed second and became the main opposition party to the ruling CNDD-FDD. Its counterpart, UPRONA (Union pour le progress national), continues to operate as a Tutsi-dominated party which has had significant influence in Burundian politics since independence. Dominated largely by the Tutsi-Hima from the south, Uprona maintained exclusive rule from 1966-1993 (Uvin, 1999, 256).

[129] Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, xvi. However, Uvin (1999, 262) states that it is still unclear whether anti-Tutsi violence following the assassination was in fact spontaneous or planned.

[130] Ibid.

"real historical framework."[131] Lived experiences of violence validate the mythico-histories operating amongst different groups in Burundian society. Furthermore, the intersection of these processes with power mechanisms is central to this analysis. As Jefremovas describes, when referring to both Burundi and Rwanda, "different interpretations of ethnicity and statehood have been used to create and justify policies of exclusion and inclusion, and claims to legitimacy, from the colonial period to the present day,"[132] while Peter Uvin adds that particularly in post-independence Burundi, "state control became the sole vehicle for Tutsi to retain their privileges, while conversely it was the sole means of rapid social advancement for Hutu."[133]

Also significant is the way the dominant historical narratives of the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi have approached ethnicity throughout the post-independence period. Turner explains that in 1972, the state-led official narrative on ethnicity closely resembled present day Rwanda in that "all ethnicity was denied discursive existence by the Tutsi dominated Burundian Government … Those who mentioned ethnicity were not only guilty of tribalism … they were also [seen as] traitors of the nation."[134] Seeing as the general Hutu approach was to emphasize ethnic identity in order to legitimize their narratives of oppression, for much of the post-independence period (especially 1966-1993) the struggle over power was manifested in a struggle over the interpretation of ethnic identity, and by extension a struggle over history.

Lemarchand explains the dynamic this produced: "For the Hutu, resurrecting a fictitious past [gave] their collective self-awareness as an oppressed majority a powerful primordial appeal; for the Tutsi, on the other hand, investing the past with an assumption of unadulterated harmony and equality between groups [allowed] them to claim that

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[131] Gerard Prunier, as cited in Peter Uvin, "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Mass Violence," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 3 (1999): 266. In Prunier's original statement he is speaking of the effects of the 1959 Hutu Revolution on the solidification of ethnic identities in Rwanda, yet his framing of violence as an effective stimulant for the transformation of myths to historical framework of groups is very relevant to this discussion.

[132] Jefremovas, "Treacherous Waters," 298.

[133] Uvin, "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda," 256.

[134] Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile," 24.

Burundi [was a] … healthy society, only periodically perturbed by malcontents and 'selfish' politicians."[135] The strategic use of discourse on behalf of both groups is as evident here as it is in the Rwandan case. For most of Burundi's post-independence period, the Tutsi elite's power over social and political institutions allowed them to delegitimize Hutu who claimed injustice by accusing them of tribalism or divisionism. If the 1972 Genocide were to be discussed, it was "euphemistically referred to as 'events' that resulted from the actions of unspecified 'extremists,'" resembling the kind of enforced silence and embedded categorization explicitly at work in Rwanda today.[136]

The implications of this approach are evident; to deny ethnicity in 1972 was to deny the Hutu experience of victimization and subjugation– a move which served to further consolidate ethnic identity throughout the nation and especially amongst Hutu refugees in neighbouring countries. In Burundian refugees camps in Tanzania in the 1980s, the Palipehutu (Parti pour la Libération de Peuple Hutu) movement was established and gained a strong following amongst residents.[137] As an example of the way in which political movements formed in exile reinterpreted Burundian history in response to the ruling regime's policies of denial, their lived experiences of victimization and the hardships of life in the camp, Turner cites a book written by Palipehutu's leader which espouses the group's ideology:

> "We urgently demand that the Hutus of Burundi who read this book teach their children the **exact truth** about their subjugation. The goal of this document is to remove the misunderstandings and falsifications of Burundian history that have been encouraged by certain corrupt members of the blood-soaked Tutsi regime."*[138]*
> (Author's emphasis)

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[135] Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, xxix.

[136] Uvin, "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda," 259.

[137] Palipehutu started as a political movement in 1980, its armed wing the FNL (Forces Nationales de Libération) fought in the civil war. The party has since splintered, with the most dominant faction (Palipehutu-FNL) joining Burundian politics in 2008 when it was the last significant rebel movement to put down arms.

[138] Remy Gahutu, as quoted in Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile," 25.

This passage is a strong example of how different politically motivated formations of collective memory have provided the foundation for a reproduction of oppositional identities. Thus, in summarizing these dynamics, "if ethnicity among Hutu can be described as a 'consciously crafted ideological creation,' among Tutsi the denial of ethnicity can be conceptualized in similar terms."[139] Understanding the way in which past ethnic relations have been remembered by the dominant parties of each group is important in uncovering the effects of the dominant discourse today. Thus, the next section will first describe how the democratization process in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s shifted the discourse on ethnicity in both groups. It will then explain how the consociational institutionalization of ethnicity has continued the appropriation of the past yet through a different kind of relationship between memory, history and power.

3.2.2. Eradicating Ethnicity through Consociationalism: A Shifting Discourse

"The old demons aren't dead, but at least they're sleeping."[140]

In the late 1980s, in response to increased international pressure for an end to ethnic violence, the Burundian Government under Pierre Buyoya slowly began to make political reforms and hesitantly accepted the need to consider the existence of "what it called 'diverse component parts of the Burundian population.'"[141] Buyoya legalized the formation of political parties, leading up to multi-party elections in 1993. However, although the government had "admitted to the idea of 'component parts' … political parties were strictly not allowed to use ethnicity in their programs."[142] Thus, through the

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[139] Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*, xxix

[140] Kris Berwouts, "Burundi: 'The Old Demons Aren't Dead, But At Least They're Sleeping – 50 years of independence," *African Arguments*, June 1, 2012, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206011105.html>.

[141] Turner, "Representing the Past in Exile," 26.

[142] Ibid. Palipehutu was never legalized as a political party, thus many of its followers provided their support to FRODEBU instead. FRODEBU approached its politics in a less overtly ideological manner considering the shifting dynamics of Burundian politics.

reluctant recognition of a plurality of identities amongst Burundi's population, ethnicity and the ability to politicize it became ambiguous. Evidently Hutu dominated parties crafted their discourse carefully to avoid being delegitimized. Discourse shifted amongst these groups, "democracy and human rights had become the code words that replaced liberation and unity."[143] Turner suggests that there seemed to be an ambivalence in regards to ethnicity amongst the refugee population in the Lukole camp in which he conducted his fieldwork in the late 1990s (compared to the sentiments Liisa Malkki found when working in the camps in the 1980s, when Palipehutu was a dominant force), its importance became more and more unclear as its effects became more concealed.

This process deepened in Burundi as recognition of ethnicity became central to the peace process and resulting power-sharing governing mechanisms. Thus, the 2005 post-transition Burundian Constitution outlined many provisions relating to the recognition and accommodation of Burundi's different ethnic groups. The preamble stipulates (among other provisions) that:

> Considering the necessity of reestablishing a **pluralist** democratic order and the Rule of Law…
>
> Whereas the realization of this objective requires the guarantee of the following constitutional and legal principles:
>
> The inclusion of **minority political parties** in the system of good governance.
>
> The protection of minority ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the system of good governance.
>
> Reaffirming our commitment to constructing a political order and a system of government **inspired by the realities of our country** and founded on the principles of … pluralism … tolerance, and cooperation among the

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[143] Ibid. As Turner explains, this shift also seemed to be the result of a growing awareness among political opposition movements of the language more favourable to the palate of the international community.

various ethnic groups in our society…[144]
(Author's emphasis)

Further, ethnic quotas for all levels of government are outlined in a number of articles, including Article 129:

> Participation in government is open to all ethnic groups. The ethnic composition of Ministers and Deputy Ministers will be at the most 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsi. At least 30% must be women[145].

The same quota design is subsequently stipulated for the administration and national assembly, with an additional requirement that the national assembly also consist of three Twa representatives. Title VIII, Article 208 stipulates that the judiciary also be structured to represent the "composition of the entire population." Further, in regards to the make-up of the armed forces, Title X, Article 257 states:

> Given the need to ensure ethnic balance and prevent acts of genocide and coups d'état, no more than 50% of the Defense and Security Forces may be constituted by members of one particular ethnic group for a period to be determined by the Senate[146].

It would initially seem that the official approach to ethnicity and national unity is explicit in the government's structure and policies as outlined by the constitution. Ethnicity is not silenced or denied existence as it is in Rwanda, members of both dominant ethnic groups are guaranteed representation in government, and the path to national unity is conceptualized in the recognition of Burundi's diversity. According to the consociational model, the accommodation of different ethnic groups and the institutionalized protection of the minority will reduce the fears and tensions both groups have embedded in their oppositional narratives.

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[144] La Constitution De La Republique Du Burundi, March 18, 2005, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4c2df0942.pdf>, 2-3. As the original document is only accessible in French, the author is responsible for the English translation provided here and in subsequent citations of articles of the Burundian Constitution.
[145] Ibid., 30.
[146] Ibid., 63.

Stef Vandeginste argues that the consociational engineering of ethnicity has thus far significantly reduced ethnopolitical tension and that the major divide no longer falls along ethnic lines.[147] The composition of Burundi's political elite is indeed much more complex today, the ruling CNDD-FDD (Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Force de Défense de la Démocratie) is comprised of both Hutu and Tutsi, although it has its roots as the largest Hutu rebel group to participate in the civil war and peace process. Moreover, UPRONA remains Tutsi-dominated and is still a salient political force of opposition. Thus, when one considers the nature of power dynamics in Burundi today - that "the formerly Tutsi-dominated state apparatus is now controlled by an ex-rebel movement that aims to consolidate the transfer of power to the Hutu majority" [148] – it is evident that ethnic identity has not lost all of its salience, but has rather become a concealed and underlying force as in Rwanda. Although these ideas and interpretations of contemporary Burundi seem contradictory, what they display is that the relationship between memory, identity and power in Burundi is complex: a plural system can validate ethnic identity without actually deconstructing its meanings and effects on present relations of power.

As Kris Berwouts explains, after the adoption of the 2005 Constitution and formal recognition of ethnicity, "Both inside and outside Burundi, the ethnic factor rapidly disappeared in the media [and] public opinion … as the ultimate source or cause of the problems and violence the country faced since independence. When you asked about it, the general response was: "The old demons aren't dead, but at least they're sleeping."[149] The shift in discourse on ethnicity has indeed lifted the silence and denial of ethnic relations which pervaded Burundian politics for decades, yet whether this recognition has contributed to the deconstruction of ethnic identities and a lifting of silence on all

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[147] Stef Vandeginste, "Burundi's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: How to Shed Light on the Past While Standing in the Dark Shadow of Politics," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 2 (2012): 2. Lemarchand argues that Burundi is in fact the closest an African state has come in adopting the consociational approach (Vandeginste, 2009).

[148] International Crisis Group, "Burundi: A Deepening Corruption Crisis."

[149] Berwouts, "Burundi: 'The Old Demons Aren't Dead, But At Least They're Sleeping' – 50 Years of Independence."

aspects of the past is a very different question. As Uvin states, "the absence of ethnicity is as important a political marker as its presence."[150] The failure to couple the formal recognition of ethnicity in Burundi with a critical engagement of those historical factors, events and power dynamics which rendered these ethnic categories fault lines of conflict in the first place is concerning.

The nature of the Burundian state and the power relations which define it have become even more complex over the past decade, "while the 1993-2003 civil war has not threatened the Tutsi political and economic domination, it has increased corruption and favoured the rise of an ethnically diverse oligarchy."[151] In Burundi today, although the dominant narratives of Tutsi elite remain powerful, the counter narratives of Hutu elite present a salient challenge, while both continue to subjugate voices and experiences of everyday Burundians.

3.2.3.   Transitional Justice in Burundi Today: The TRC as a Tool to Appropriate the Past rather than Democratize it?

As Schweiger states, "A national dialogue on the history of Burundi is a major step in the reconciliation process. A peaceful future for Burundi is difficult to imagine when a country has never adequately dealt with its past."[152] Indeed, until recently, none of Burundi's post-conflict governments have taken concerted action to hold perpetrators accountable for past abuses, establish memorialization activities for victims, pursue reparations for survivors, or engage the population in a discussion about the past. Although it has taken over a decade for the transitional justice mechanisms outlined in the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement to be implemented, in January 2012, the Burundian Government announced its commitment to establishing and commencing the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission within the same year. The TRC is mandated to collect testimonies about crimes committed from independence

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[150] Uvin, "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda," 267.
[151] International Crisis Group, "Burundi: A Deepening Corruption Crisis."
[152] Schweiger, "Late Justice for Burundi," 655.

in 1962 to the signing of the peace agreement in 2000 - arguably one of its most important attributes if it is pursued fully in this manner. Negotiations between the Government of Burundi and UN authorities held in 2006 and 2007 regarding the design of the proposed international tribunal which would follow the completion of the TRC failed because of UN requirements that the court act independently of the Burundian Government and the TRC, a stipulation which the current regime found problematic.[153]

Furthermore, in the most recent report regarding the implementation of the TRC released by the government's Technical Committee, it is proposed that the Commission be composed of eleven Burundian members and no international members, despite the original UN recommendation to include foreign commissioners.[154] As Vandeginste argues, recent actions by the ruling party to consolidate power and constrain opposition leads to serious concerns about the ability of a TRC to shed light on Burundi's past if it is controlled by the dominant party.

Indeed, Vandeginste suggests that the decision to begin implementing the TRC only now is a politically calculated move by the CNDD-FDD, which raises concerns about how it will use the mechanism to its benefit. "In combination with the outcome of the 2010 elections [which concentrated power in the dominant party], the downsizing of international involvement in Burundi's domestic affairs has rendered the launching of the TRC more attractive to the government, which can now comfortably claim the driver's seat."[155] Although the mandate of the TRC seems to fulfil the pressing need for an opening of political space within which "the historical, institutional and structural factors that led to massive human rights violations," can be critically considered, there is reason

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[153] Vandeginste, "Burundi's Truth and Reconciliation Commission," 3. The relationship which will be established between the TRC and proposed tribunal also remains vague; although the facts investigated by the Commission will be "legally qualified" the tribunal will not be bound by them. Also, the TRC is not mandated to grant or recommend amnesties.
[154] Ibid., 10.
[155] Ibid., 7.

to think that the dominant party may use the TRC to target political opposition and by extension co-opt this necessary dialogue on the past.[156]

Human right groups in Burundi have also expressed concern over the ability of the TRC to operate as a democratizing mechanism in the current political climate. Three of these organizations jointly published a letter recently stating the need for a rapid implementation of both a TRC and tribunal and the importance of UN involvement in these processes:

> "The involvement of various political and military actors in the crimes of the past has considerably weakened the will of successive policymakers to initiate a search for truth and accountability … When, in a context like that of Burundi, citizens have a dichotomous understanding of history and view [proposed] solutions in many respects as irreconcilable … [We are] anxious to make heard the voice of the voiceless."[157]

Indeed, as the letter states, one of the central reasons justice and accountability have been evaded by post-conflict regimes in Burundi is because many of the current political elite would themselves be implicated in responsibility for past crimes.[158] As Vandeginste explains, this reality provides a variety of opportunities to the CNDD-FDD to co-opt the process and frame Burundi's history of ethnic conflict in a manner which legitimizes its hold on power and excludes its past abuses from the crimes considered. However, considering the current dynamics of political power and the persistent influence of

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[156] Ibid., 8. The full mandate of the TRC as proposed by the Technical Committee can be found in the "Rapport Des Consultations Nationales Sur La Mise En Place Des Mecanismes De Justice De Transition Au Burundi:" <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/BI/RapportConsultationsBurundi.pdf.>. Additional responsibilities of the TRC will be to map, protect and prepare exhumations of mass grave sites and publish names of victims and rescuers of different cycles of ethnic violence.

[157] Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l"Homme: Iteka, "Mémorandum Ligue ITEKA, OAG et FORSC pour la mise en place des mécanismes de justice et vérité au Burundi," <http://www.ligue-iteka.africa-web.org/article.php3?id_article=1052>. The author is responsible for the English translation of this text.

[158] This is arguably one of the dangers of consociational arrangements in the aftermath of ethnic conflict; the granting of power to political elites of former belligerent groups can effectively provide immunity to those responsible for massive human rights violations.

UPRONA and Tutsi elite, the government could also be persuaded to prevent the investigation or discussion of particular crimes its political counterparts would rather continue to conceal. Opposition parties, such as UPRONA, may have reason to "fear one-sided truth telling," unless the "CNDD-FDD leadership prefers [to maintain] the ethnopolitical status quo, even if it means no light is shed on the assassination of Ndadaye and on the massacres committed by the former (UPRONA-controlled) government forces."[159] By using the TRC to shift power dynamics in its favour, the government and other political elites in Burundi have the ability to co-opt this crucial mechanism of democratizing history; after all, "their [elite] interests converge in having as little truth and accountability as possible."[160]

Furthermore, the greatest concern regarding the ability of transitional justice mechanisms to genuinely open political space in Burundi is that victims and witnesses may be discouraged from participating.[161] Thus, despite the formal recognition of ethnic differences and the official commencement of transitional justice mechanisms, the dominant narratives of the past which have been continually reproduced by both groups throughout the colonial and post-independence periods may very likely continue to manifest through present political power dynamics. The final chapter will further discuss the consequences of dominant memory practices in Rwanda and Burundi and what this comparison reveals about the relationship between memory and power in the aftermath of mass atrocity.

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[159] Vandeginste, "Burundi's Truth and Reconciliation Commission," 6. Since its rise to power, the CNDD-FDD has in fact never publicly demanded for the identification of those responsible for Ndadaye's assassination, suggesting that the political dynamics feared in the workings of the TRC are already underway in the post-transition governments.

[160] Ibid., 5.

[161] As Vandeginste (2012, 10) explains: "political control over [the TRC's] composition it likely to affect the kind of cases brought to its attention and selected for further hearings and investigations."

4. Conclusion: The Consequences of Dominant Memory Practices in Rwanda and Burundi

In investigating the nature of dominant memory practices in Rwanda and Burundi today, this analysis has sought to uncover the relationship between memory, identity and power in the aftermath of mass atrocity. Although the ruling regimes in Rwanda and Burundi have taken contrasting approaches to ethnicity and governance in the post-conflict period, this case study has displayed that processes of concealing underlying power relations through the silencing of alternate narratives of the past are under way in both societies.

The consequences of the Rwandan Government's official narrative of past atrocities are two-fold. Buckley-Zistel effectively summarizes the first of these concerning dynamics: "In present memory, some aspects – most notably past tensions between Hutu and Tutsi – are eclipsed from the discourse. This form of chosen amnesia … although now perhaps essential for local coexistence, bears the danger of not challenging the social cleavages that rendered the genocide possible in the first place, and so obstructing their transformation in the future."[162] By promulgating a narrative which simplifies the complexities of genocide and the categories associated with it, the Rwandan Government risks reproducing ethnic identities in a relationship of validation and subjugation, rather than eradicating their significance. Second, by appropriating the past, determining whose experiences are to be remembered and mourned, limiting the political space within which alternate memories can be engaged and recasting the narrative of the state as the collective memory of the nation, the Rwandan Government

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[162] Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget," 131.

continues to mask the imbalanced power relations upon which the current order is based.

Further, the concealing of the relationship between power, memory and identity in Burundi has indeed taken a different form than in Rwanda, yet its consequences are equally concerning. First, the consociational accommodation of ethnic identity was not coupled with an effort to uncover the deeply social construction of these identities. Second, the failure to compliment the recognition of ethnicity with an opening of political space and dialogue on the past obscures the critical relationship between ethnic identity and the memories in which its meanings are embedded, enabling its continued reconstruction given the ripe political context. Thus, the present dominant approach to memory and identity in Burundi continues to conceal how these social forces are implicated in relations of power. As Uvin effectively portrays, "Transitions like Burundi's are moments of uncertainty … the old has not just totally disappeared: those power relations, expectations, values, and networks are still there,"[163] and thus, they need to be dealt with.

Ibreck importantly reminds us that the government's ability to shape the memory of a population is inherently limited.[164] This echoes Olick's assertion that collective memory takes place in multiple locations and formations, and that each of these manifestations of the past is politically and socially significant. Despite the dominance of elite-generated narratives of the past, subjugated narratives continue to persist and transform below the surface; the failure to acknowledge this reality risks reifying the identities and sentiments within which those collective memories are embedded. Uncovering and giving voice to subjugated narratives is central to transforming conflict

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[163] Peter Uvin, *Life after Violence: A People's Story of Burundi*, London: Zed Books, 2009, 77.
[164] Ibreck, "The politics of mourning," 331.

as it enables the validation of the experiences of victims from all sides.[165] Furthermore, the centrality of political space to deconstructing and transforming divisive identities lies in its ability to open up multiples sites of discourse in "which difference is not suppressed but appreciated. Its emancipatory potential is to challenge prevailing structures of inclusion and exclusion … Deconstruction enables analysts and people affected to challenge the prevailing exclusion inherent in hegemonic regimes and structures."[166] Thus, opening political space within which competing memories of past violence can be shared is inherently connected to the ability to overcome both structural and overt violence, and is thus of critical importance for matters of conflict resolution and transitional justice.

The Rwandan and Burundian governments are both currently at a critical juncture which could determine whether their futures will be defined by stability or reoccurring violence. The Rwandan Government has recently expressed a willingness to undergo a constitutional review of the 2008 genocide ideology laws and the Burundian Government is still in the process of determining the structure and nature of the TRC and subsequent transitional justice efforts. Both decisions are critically linked to the opening or further restricting of political space and the validation or continued subjugation of diverse memories of past violence. Indeed, both cases are exemplary of the need for post-conflict approaches which appreciate the inherent complexity of mass violence and enable *all* survivors to do the same.

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[165] In her interviews with Rwandan women who had lost husbands after 1994, Fujii (2010, 235) came to realize that "what was paramount for these women was their own victimization which had occurred after the genocide … it was as if acknowledging the violence perpetrated against other victims took away from their own status as victims." Only after first inquiring about these women's experiences as victims of violence after the genocide did they came to acknowledge that others had been targeted at an earlier time.

[166] Buckley-Zistel, "In Between War and Peace," 7.

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