

I. Summary and Discussion

A. Trends

This section will synthesize the statements made by the interviewees concerning the direction they see Rwanda heading. There will be a qualitative description of both positive and negative trends. Almost all the feedback stated things are going in a positive direction, which lends a distinctly positive tone to this section.

1. Positive Trends

Security in Rwanda is on the upswing. People are much safer than they were after the genocide and continue to feel more safe as the years go by. This is due in part to the Rwandan military action in the DRC weakening insurgent forces that destabilized Rwanda for many years.

Constructive social programs are on the increase. The goals of the *2020 Vision* report affirm this fact with goals of improving infrastructure at many levels including the legal system, ability to vote in open elections, clean water, electricity, and phone lines. This also includes improvement and development of the seven universities already extant in the country, as well as improving the science laboratories of KIST, and many more new and continuing educational programs, as mentioned above (including primary and secondary schools). Tom Baguma (8/10/06) described a five billion RWf (about 14.5 million USD) grant given toward teaching for the whole country. He sees this as an example of the president's sticking to his promises. Beatrice from Kibeho (8/30/06) also

said the *Gacaca* system works, which is bringing much improvement to the country. The prison system is improving as well.

There is less corruption in the country, particularly in comparison to others in the region. *Imihigo* and the zero-tolerance policy contribute to this trend. Freedom of press and speech are also improving. Rwanda continues to improve its infrastructure. The development in rural regions is a particularly necessary focus of the government. The government is fulfilling its promises, such as the addition and improvement of roads. The road going west from Kigali through Nyange is proof of this (Confidential, 8/22/06).

More general trends are described by Sarafina (8/30/06), who said there is more freedom for the average person now than there was during the Habyarimana regime. William Church said the average Rwandan does not understand the Western complaints. They see the country as going in a good direction, which is difficult to corroborate with the numerous Western voices to the contrary. Production is also on the increase, as the GDP is projected to be 6% this year (2007); this number matches the 2006 GDP and is up 0.2% from 2005 ([Mulisa](#), 5/22/07).

Another aspect of infrastructural improvements is a positive trend for the total development of Rwanda, though they might initially seem a negative trend. Some of these improvements will make life harder for the average Rwandan to make as much money as he or she could in the past. The women interviewed in Kibeho said people are not allowed to cut as many trees for fires for baking bricks. This leads to young people having a more difficult time affording their houses, which leads to their parents having to pay more resources to support them. In the long term, this will help the air quality, halt deforestation, and halt erosion, but initially the poor will see it as negative. The same

people said food was more available under present circumstances (several women in Kibeho, 8/30/06).

2. Negative Trends

The negative trends are a bit harder to pinpoint. As has been said, the government needs to continue to work on the application of their reforms. There are several examples of the government implementing a wholesale reform—the banning of the motorcycle taxis, for instance—which affects a significant segment of the society around Kigali including both producers and consumers. They have achieved their goals of safety and less pollution, but have failed when it comes to bringing everyone in the country along in a positive direction as a result of their reforms.

In the same vein, there need to be more governmental endeavors to help the whole population of the country. As it is, some improvements only benefit the urban dwellers. The government is well aware of this, but the finances are not always available to fully implement their goals.

The entire population of the country must also know the government is supporting them. Colin Waugh (2004, p. 147) describes a trend of Hutus feeling like they have less of a say because many of their background have been fired from governmental positions (the official interviews did not corroborate this; however, some informal conversations hinted that this could be an underlying perception). This is a lose-lose situation as the government has its policy of zero tolerance when it comes to corruption, as well as its anti-divisionism laws, which halt people from bringing ethnicity into any arguments (or gender, regional affiliation, or religious or political alignments for that matter), while it also has an intense need for the entire country to be unified.

What can they do when a corrupt official is also a Hutu? The statistics are also challenging because there are so many more Hutus than Tutsis in the country. This frustration has the potential of turning into divisive ideology, and individuals such as Paul Rusesabagina's political bent show how simple information can turn into major roadblocks for reconciliation and redevelopment. Their language must still be checked. This is a negative trend, but it is difficult to see a solution except for the passage of time and making sure the truth is told as the process of reconciliation continues. The government must also seek continual dialogue with Hutu voices in an effort to bring all parties' opinions and needs to the table.

The trend most difficult to measure is the need for reconciliation, which is increasing, according to Christophe Mbonyingabo Dusangire (CARSA Interview #1.5, 8/21/06). This need increases the longer *Gacaca* courts are functional. As these courts meet, more allegations come to light, which potentially lead to more people being implicated, indicating a greater need for reconciliation.

All things considered, Rwanda is moving in some excellent directions. It is not hard to see they are on the upswing in many ways. They need to continue in their pursuit of improving quality of life for everyone in their nation by means of capacity building, infrastructural development, and reconciliation. As they pursue these ends, they will continue to work toward the goals set forth in the *2020 Vision* report.

B. Recommendations for Further Research

Rwanda is in an incredibly heuristic season. It is changing so quickly that there could be new studies pursued on a weekly basis. The most interesting spheres will be those concerning the relationships between reconciliation and development.

Reconciliation will be a very elusive concept to define for purposes of study, but with the correct tools, this could provide some excellent data for countries who suffer in the future. Another important study could follow perceptions of justice for the average Rwandan, especially after the recent abolition of the death penalty. This study will be difficult to define and could be politically charged. Rwandan society will need to continue to be challenged to go out of their ways to pursue complete, comprehensive reconciliation, as displayed by organizations such as CARSA and the Rwandan Anglican Church's Bishop John Rucyahana, in order to see the whole country healed of its wounds.

As has been said, Andrew Rwingamba, commissioner general of Rwanda, gave the author *carte blanche* access to the files related to the trials of those accused of atrocities from the genocide until the present. With the number of reporters who refer to these allegations, it would behoove Rwanda as well as the world to peruse these files and compare notes between them and the other allegations. The Rwandans interviewed repeatedly said trials were accomplished without impunity, while news and human rights reporters, particularly on the international stage, often disagree, saying there was impunity. This topic needs to be thoroughly researched and then put to rest.

Another study could consider the interactions between human rights agencies and the different governments in the region. Studying various aspects of accountability in these realms could be valuable. The humanitarian aid morass that occurred in the DRC in 1994 is an example of what not to do. It does not seem possible that the UN could change its actions because it is so weighed down with politics and procedure; however, this does not remove the onus from them. They must have accountability in order to call them to a higher, less enmeshed functionality in the international milieu.

Another area for potential analysis has to do with different communities of faith in Rwanda, for instance, the spread of Islam and Protestantism in contrast to Catholicism's decline since the genocide. Some research could also be done concerning the religious beliefs of the RPF, as well as the ways that traditional, pre-colonial forms of worship developed into Catholicism during colonialism and into their present forms, which are often Protestant, or even belief systems that would be considered sects or cults by modern evangelical circles, such as Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses.

The final possibility for future research has to do with the use of land resources. The country has radical needs as the refugees and members of the diaspora return wanting their property back, which is now occupied by people who only have a claim to the land because of their presence on it. The scenario goes something like this: Refugees fled the country in 1960. Their neighbors occupy their land or gave it to their children. These same neighbors fled to the DRC at the end of the genocide, while the previous inhabitants returned from Uganda and Tanzania to find their land occupied. When the refugees return from the DRC, whose land is it? The incredible growth in population is another complicating factor. Both these sets of refugees could have much larger families than they left with initially as a result of natural birth or adoption of children orphaned by the genocide and the ensuing military actions. This is further complicated by the dependence the average Rwandan family has on agriculture for sustenance and income. Several organizations are pursuing this subject, which will include new governmental legislation. This will be a very interesting study in the near future.

C. *Summary & Statement of Conclusions*

1. Restatement of Research Question

The genocide almost destroyed Rwanda. Not a single portion of infrastructure remained when the RPF finally forced the *Interahamwe* out of the country. Rebuilding this nation continues and requires a significant amount of skill, finesse, passion, and commitment. Much has been written to discuss the rebuilding of the nation and criticize the present regime and their policies. I went to Rwanda intending to try to unify the different streams of questions that I had heard into one cohesive narrative.

Many of the described trends in-country are positive. I did not hear about autocratic tendencies in the government, but I did hear about some bad policy. I did not hear about beatings with impunity, but I did hear of some trials for soldiers who went too far during the struggle to bring security back to the country. I have attempted to be as transparent and descriptive as possible in an effort to bring out the relevant issues while responding to them with the words of Rwandans. I have discussed as many topics as possible. I am aware that I have not answered *every* question. I am also aware that as a result of the anti-divisionistic laws, I have not been able to assuredly say that I got answers from every section of society (including Hutu and Tutsi) on every issue.

This report is my attempt at bringing these narratives together. I fear that it will not make any Rwandan perfectly satisfied with all of my conclusions, but I also feel that I have done my best to bring out the various data points that I could report in a lucid and logical way. I also believe that this report reflects an up-to-the-minute description of the happenings in Rwanda, and it takes into account the various stages and complexities of

the developmental process Rwanda continues to undergo to truly emerge from its colonial heritage.

Did I answer my primary question? I believe I have satisfactorily shown the tensions involved when looking at the unique Rwandan story. I have utilized the literature along with my own data to answer questions concerning salient issues both in country as well as in the larger geopolitical stage. I will never be able to say without a doubt that I have told the whole story, integrating both Hutu and Tutsi, because I simply was not allowed to ask about people's backgrounds. I will say that I chose the most diverse, and random groups when I pursued my interviews and questions. I stand behind my choices not to pursue questions that could contribute toward disunity in the country. As I have stated above, this report might not be able to bring all of the players onto the dance floor together, but I hope they would all at least show up to the party. It is clear that every person in Rwanda will need to compromise some of their desires in favor of their nation's destiny. This is not a trivial statement. Many have died for the ideals carried by most Rwandans today. The dialogue around the issues must be engaged with justice, integrity, and compassion.

The form I have used seemed the best way to get all the details into a fairly concise document. The human rights allegations were complex to discuss. Some were very delicate in their implications. In one sense they represent the place most difficult to describe because I know anyone can get online and refute some of these arguments very easily. I will let the data and the interviews and the hope I saw on children's faces speak for themselves. Rwanda is by no means perfect, but she is definitely doing her best

amidst very difficult circumstances. I believe that with partnership in the West, they have a great chance to overcome one of the worst tragedies in recent history.¹

Rwandans need to be empowered to see that they can have some control over their destiny as a nation. They must not see the West that has already let them down in such significant ways, only bringing aid when it is politically correct or politically valuable. To reiterate a quote from Bishop John Rucyahana (8/26/06), “The hope of Rwanda will not be donated to us—we aren’t going to import or purchase it. It is we who will determine where we go or how we will go. Friends will help; if not we will go at our own pace.”

2. Method

I believe the methods I used were effective. I know I could have gained more had I the time to do full interviews including audio, video, and full transcription; however, this might not have been appropriate given the cultural milieu (many Rwandans were uncomfortable with being photographed or recorded). I believe I functioned in the best way possible by immersing myself thoroughly in the circumstances of the country and conducting interviews intentionally with both prearranged sources and random, on-the-street sources. This afforded me the ability to acquire the knowledge I needed to more effectively answer the research question. I was careful not to bring in the strife that comes from categorizing people as Hutu and Tutsi in accordance with the much-needed reconciliation in the nation. This choice was reflected in all my methods of questioning and interviewing.

¹ I chose the word “partnership” instead of aid or assistance intentionally: I did this to highlight the need for Rwanda to be allowed to find its way through, to plow the proverbial ground laid before it. Rwanda’s partners will need to walk alongside her at the same pace to the same ends without neocolonialistic intentions, but with wise advice, so further redevelopment can be reached.

I know I have given Rwanda more grace about its national struggles than many other contemporary voices. I believe this is a well-grounded stance to take given the present Rwandan circumstances. I also know I have spent more time listening to the average person talk about current issues than many other researchers. Several of my interviews were with less auspicious sources, but I believe they gave me insights I would not have been able to get any other way.

3. Findings

The findings were mostly as I expected them to be. I knew what I would hear in Rwanda would be incredibly different from what I would hear outside the country, if for no other reason than the anti-divisionism laws. I want to reemphasize this in order to remind the reader how different these two contexts are. There are many voices speaking from both ends. I also know that a Rwandan is looking for a person who has been there with them, not a person who sits at a distance and throws stones at their glass house. It seems important that all these pieces come together to best understand the country. We need not let the mistakes of the country go without a reckoning, but we also need to give them enough space to rebuild.

One difficulty in my research was my inability to access key documents on the Internet. I am not sure the cause—if this is due to some lack on my part in research skills, that some of these documents were only available in *Kinyarwanda*, that these documents were omitted from the online corpus for some reason, or that the government did not have the money to keep such resources continuously available online (i.e., lacking the server space or the infrastructure). If the latter is true, this would be a growth area for

the government, both in the realm of accountability as well as education of those both in and outside the country as to where the country is going.

The major difference was the number of RPF atrocities reported by Western media and some human rights agencies versus those the interviewees told me about. Very few atrocities were mentioned by the interviewees. I know people would avoid causing the government or national leadership to lose face, especially in front of a foreigner, and this could be a contributing factor to this inconsistency. It is possible that people had somehow not heard of them, though this is doubtful in a culture that relies so heavily on the spoken word. It could also be that somehow the atrocities were not deemed as important to discuss with the author. Another reason is that there simply were not as many atrocities committed as the opposing sources have said.

4. Conclusions

As promised, I have told a story. This story has included glimmers of hope and shadows of despair. It is clear that the country of Rwanda is trying to find its way to a better existence for its whole population regardless of their background. The nation is seeking both justice and compassion and trying to do it all in a way that is sustainable while building capacity and rebuilding infrastructure. There are plans in the works that have already increased education and access to clean water since the genocide. The courts are full and the prisons are the emptiest they have been since 1994. The streets are safe, as well as the Rwandan interior. Investors and tourists are returning, and corruption is declining. Privatization is occurring in contrast to deceased President Habyarimana's policies of nationalized business. All of this helps to describe the country as one of the most favorable investment environments in the region:

International Finance Corporation (IFC) Director of Sub-Saharan Africa Thierry Tanoh lauded recent business regulation reform in Rwanda and strongly encouraged further improvements to promote a better business environment.

“Rwanda was identified among 155 countries surveyed in its 2006 report as one of the world’s top business climate reformers. (Great Lakes Center for Strategic Studies, 2006, December 21)

There are challenges too: implementation of policy and reforms, increasing the income, savings accounts, and capacities of the average Rwandan. Getting people to the point financially where they can weather a storm of unforeseeable hardship. Helping the people to diversify their agricultural endeavors for their own benefit as well as that of the environment of the country. Increasing the white-collar and middle-class job potential. Changing the minds of the people from one of ethnic seclusion to one of inclusion, which will mean living out reconciliation in publicly applicable ways. I believe this last point will lead to the realization of the rest. If people are truly reconciled, as was described in the interviews with CARSA—the kind of full-circle reconciliation where both parties acknowledge their failings and humbly seek the other’s forgiveness—then Rwanda will become a world leader in reconciliation as a lifestyle. Numerous nations and agencies would have much to gain from them in such a context.

At the end of the day, Rwanda needs advocates who are willing to challenge strong dissenting voices who want to see the country fail, who may be willing to bring back genocidal ideology and identity politics to do so. Instead, these advocates must seek to bring reconciliation and wholeness to the heart of its people once again. They must also walk the tightrope of the Rwandan social framework, must be able to focus on the

population as Rwandans while being distinctly aware that some of these individuals may not yet be able to place their Rwandan identity before their identities as Hutu or Tutsi or Twa. The culture, laws, and geopolitical circumstances must all be carefully weighed as decisions are made and policies implemented. These leaders must also remember that eventually there will need to be a narrative that embraces someone as utterly Rwandan while being simultaneously Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, or a mixture of any of these three. This will be a very complicated undertaking for years to come.

As with any government, Rwanda needs to be challenged and held accountable, and this must be balanced with the awareness of what can realistically be accomplished. Is it right to want every prison to be held to European standards? Is it realistic at this juncture? It is right to challenge the government when they make a sweeping policy change, as they did when banning the motorcycle taxis from the center of Kigali, but it also must be weighed against the implications of not making such a change. So many of these issues go back to the ways poverty affects a society.

The same questions must be asked about reconciliation. There are some who have called the *Gacaca* system retributive. If retribution is promoted in terms of protection, deterrence, restitution, and restoration, is it justified? There are others who call it sacred or the best solution for a worst-case scenario. No country has ever had such a large percentage of its total population implicated in such a way. This situation necessitates flexibility to allow the government to fix the problem. More broadly, I would also request an attitude of assistance rather than superiority when it comes to foreign aid. Realistic requests must be made of Rwanda when strings are attached: “African governments have often had to slash their health budgets in order to conform to IFI (International Financial

Institutions [such as IMF {International Monetary fund} and World Bank]) conditionalities, which has made it very hard for them to adequately finance the healthcare which is evidently needed” (Nugent, 2004, p. 363). Aid agencies need to take these types of issues into consideration by learning to take the demographics of their recipients into mind as they seek solutions.

Can a country change? Look at South Africa, not perfect by any means, definitely not developing in a Western way, but also *not* erupting into racial or ethnic warfare again. The elections were calm and peaceful when Nelson Mandela was elected president. Can’t we give Rwanda a chance to develop in a similar way?

The role of an advocate must be occupied by an idealist, they can hold onto their ideals even through adversity. This is the role of the human rights agencies and some lawyers and reporters. A leader must have high ideals and be held to incredibly high standards; however, it is also important for a leader to be pragmatic. I cannot think of a true idealist successfully running a country, but I can definitely think of several idealists who have changed the world. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is one; William Wilberforce is another. These men challenged unjust systems, and both eventually saw their ideals realized. They further coupled their hopes with their expectations which causes an idealist to see his ideals realized. Nelson Mandela is another example, and possibly an exception to my hypothesis. It is interesting that he stepped down at the height of his popularity to allow President Mbeki to take the reins of the country.

In comparison, Paul Kagame is a pragmatist. He sees how things need to be done, and he is willing to make them happen that way. His goals are clear as set out by the *2020 Vision* document, and he has the drive to see these goals accomplished. It will be key for

him to build a more robust civil society that can contradict him. His goals say he is doing this, but this is probably his second most difficult leadership task after national reconciliation. He will need to foster leaders who can follow him as leaders after his administration, while also encouraging a strong civil society.

His solutions will not look Western; they will look Rwandan. Thus far, his process has not been as the international community has wanted it in certain cases. But his results are quite good, especially considering the initial circumstances: a country in shambles and no functional social or infrastructural systems. Things have begun to stabilize, and many people have begun to hope.

Some have implied that democracy is the answer to all the world's ills. The initial expectations of the US in Iraq, and the development of Lebanon, Palestine, eastern and central Europe should challenge this belief, or at least the timeline in which democracy can be attained. The first question that must be asked is whether a government should be a democracy. If democracy is the best course of action, as it has been deemed for Rwanda, then the next question to ask is what should the process be to arrive at this end. Many other questions must also be taken into account: How long should it take? Who will bring the country leadership and under what circumstances, especially if they have never had a strong democratic bent? How liberal should the democracy be? Can we use the example of Malaysia or South Korea as they emerged from redevelopment after World War II? They experienced significant shifts and some decline in their individual rights before becoming what they are today, yet the end result was still democracy (Waugh, 2004, p. 163). Could there be a gray area, neither authoritarian rule nor a true democracy? And most importantly, how does this lead a people to gain the freedoms they

need so every member in society can attain life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? All this must occur through a process of reconciliation, necessitated by the genocide.

In his biography, Nelson Mandela (1994) talks about his passion for freedom that can only come through the aforementioned full-circle reconciliation:

It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity. (p. 624)

Let us hope that amidst all of the questions, Rwanda will emerge from the recent tragedies with a profound understanding of destiny while being leaders in development, commerce infrastructure, vision, and reconciliation. To reiterate the words of Bishop John Rucyahana (8/26/06), "the hope of Rwanda will not be donated to us—we aren't going to import or purchase it. It is we who will determine where we go or how we will go. Friends will help; if not, we will go at our own pace."