

Rwandans in Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada: Interactions
and Relationships within the Diaspora

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
September 21, 2009

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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-58436-1
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-58436-1

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ABSTRACT

Life story interviews were conducted with six Rwandans as part of a study on interactions within the Rwandan diaspora in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada. The study is situated within an ethnic and diasporic conceptual and analytical framework. Research participants purport that this population is polarized along ethno-political lines rooted in the historic manipulation of ethnicity in Rwanda, which culminated in the 1994 genocide, and the post-genocide political situation in the country. At the same time, personal relationships are maintained across this ethno-political divide, which speaks to the nature of individual experience, the varied salience given to ethnicity at the personal level, and, most importantly, the presence of cross-cutting ties, even in the midst of conflict.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Professor Louise de la Gorgendière, Ken and my parents.

Thank you.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIRO	Commuant des Immigrants de la Région d'Ottawa-Gatineau
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement
RSSFC	Rwandan Social Services and Family Counselling
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front

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Figure 1 Regional Map of Rwanda

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I found that the community was divided between Hutu and Tutsi when I came here in 2002. I said, 'No, I cannot go either way, so I will stay in the middle. (Jean-Baptiste 04/07/2008)

Using data collected from life story interviews with six Rwandans, this study is an exploration of interactions in the Rwandan diaspora in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau. A conceptual and analytical framework related to diaspora and ethnicity is used within this examination. There are approximately 800 Rwandans residing in the region, the majority of whom arrived in the years since the 1994 genocide (Statistics Canada 2006). Research participants contend that this population is polarized along ethno-political lines resulting from the 1994 genocide and the post-genocide political situation in Rwanda, both of which are rooted in the historic divide between the Hutu and Tutsi of Rwanda. Yet at the individual level interactions occur across the wider ethno-political divide. The form and extent of individual interaction is situated in the level of salience given to ethnic identity against other forms of belonging at the individual level, individual positive and negative ethnically rooted experiences, and other related factors.

The focus of this study stems from a comment made by a non-Rwandan, who has a professional background and academic interest in the region, and a familiarity with the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau. The individual noted that the Rwandan community in the region is ethnically separated as a result of the 1994 genocide. In the course of life story interviews, individuals shared views on factors contributing to the community polarization in the region, and the genocide was noted as an antecedent. However, upon further analysis of the life story accounts, it became clear that the

genocide, while a component included within individual reasons for the divide, is not the sole antecedent, nor does it necessarily relate in such a clear-cut manner to individual relations in the diaspora. Therefore, one objective of this study is to examine individual views regarding the factors informing the community level interaction/non-interaction in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau. A second objective is to investigate interaction at an individual level, to determine if the polarization noted at the community level reflects relationships at the individual level. Finally, this study also examines the connection of diaspora populations to their homeland and the impact of this ongoing relationship.

Significance of Study

From an anthropological perspective, this study is first and foremost a study of people and of the human experience. Qualitative anthropological research approaches, such as the life story interview used in this study, delve into the workings of different cultures and the lives of individuals, focusing on “what people say and do, that is how people interpret the world” (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:18). This type of research does not necessarily seek out the absolute truth but, in seeking insight into the richness of human experience, life stories and other forms of qualitative research allow for the persistence of multiple meanings and interpretations (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:20; ten Have 2004:5). In doing so, the researcher is able to challenge preconceived ideas and/or others’ explanations as to why things are the way they seem (e.g., the contention that the Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau is polarized because of the 1994 genocide.). The result of this type of research and analysis is the production of complex descriptions

and multiple webs of meaning related to a particular human phenomena “in all its complexity and within particular situations and environments” (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:2).

There is an increase in academic research on Rwanda since the 1994 genocide. The works of Reyntjens (1994), Prunier (1995), Lemarchand (1995), Hintjens (1999), D. Newbury (2001), and Melvern (2006) are only a few examples. Their work focuses on antecedents to the genocide, including the role of the instrumental manipulation of ethnicity, and other related economic and political factors, and highlights that ethnicity in Rwanda is not primordial, as suggested by Pagés (1933), de Lacger (1939), Maquet (1954, 1961) and Kagame (1954, 1957), but rather a colonial construction based on popular racial theories of the time. Recent works by Meyerstein (2007) and Hintjens (2008) focus on the post- genocide reconciliation process and the challenges met by the state as it works to unite a population that continues to be ethnically and politically divided. However, there is little, if any, academic research on the impact of the socio-political situation in Rwanda on Rwandan diasporic populations around the globe.

Conflict and political and economic strife in home countries result in mass population movements and people leaving their place of origin to seek security and opportunity in other parts of the world. The work of Beinín (1992), Sanasarian (1995), Kazanjian (1996), and Stratton (1997) follow the movement of Jews, Armenians, and Iranians into new countries. These studies often focus on the nature of the diasporic condition, and the mediation that occurs between diasporic populations and the society of the new country of residence. At times, the diaspora community is unintentionally presented as a cohesive and homogenized collectivity of individuals that strives to

maintain its solidarity and cultural distinctiveness against the onslaught of the host society. However, Skrbis (1999:72-74), notes that this hides the complexity, fluidity and heterogeneity of diasporic populations. Diasporic groups may have internal differences and schisms based on religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, politics, gender, and/or other factors.

Research that focuses on diaspora from this perspective must necessarily examine the ongoing mediations and relationships *within* diasporic communities, and, while research is still limited in this area, there are some recent studies on internal relations within different South Asian diasporic populations in particular. Gayer's (1998) work involves a comparative analysis of community relations between South Asian populations in London and Paris. The edited volume by Bates (2001) includes numerous case studies on inter-ethnic relations among Asian diasporic groups in Fiji, Mauritius, East Africa, Trinidad, India and Pakistan. Mohammad-Arif and Moliner (2007) introduce a volume of the *South Asian Multidisciplinary Journal*, which includes work by the two editors focusing on relationships within diasporic populations from the same region. Fuglerud's 1999 study of Tamils in Norway also touches on internal schisms and relationships within this diasporic community. Each of these works highlights, to some degree, the continued impact of the homeland on internal diasporic relations.

More work is necessary in the area of inter-community relations in diaspora as internal conflict within countries, rather than conflicts between countries, is becoming a global reality. The Biafran War (1967-1970) in Nigeria over the secession of the southeastern regions; the decades long strife in Sudan between the Southern Arabs and Northern non-Arab government (1955-1972; 1983-2005); the periodic civil conflict in the

former Yugoslavia (1990-2001) between the Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Albanians; and, the Sri Lankan civil war (1983-2009) fought over the creation of an independent Tamil state, are only a few examples of internal conflicts around the globe. These conflicts are rooted in a variety of complex and interwoven antecedents – economics, resource control, politics, religion, and ethnicity. The potential global ramifications of civil strife become reality when populations fleeing from civil conflict end up in other parts of the world, transferring the animosities and divisions to the new countries of residence. In order to prevent a resurgence of conflict by diasporic groups who remain rooted in the happenings of their homelands, it is important to understand the causes of these tensions in order to mitigate them. Thus, the significance of this study is that it provides valuable insight into internal interactions in the Rwandan diasporic population in Ottawa-Gatineau. It identifies individual views on the factors that may produce schisms at one level, while also recognizing that, at other levels, there are cross-cutting ties that bring people together, despite the presence of these divisions. The results from this study may inform future direction for conflict resolution and/or community building activities by host societies and by diaspora populations, as well as prevention strategies.

Clarification of Terms

The terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘diaspora’ are used frequently throughout this thesis, with ‘diaspora’ and/or ‘diasporic’ often used in conjunction with ‘community’, ‘population’ and ‘group’. In addition, the terms ‘interaction’ and ‘relations/relationships’ are also used within different contexts. Therefore, a clarification of these terms is required.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a form of social organization that is based on real or perceived shared history and descent, and group membership is justified by the sharing of a common language, normative behaviour, rituals, values and myths (Eller 1999:10; Verkuyten 2005:74). As a form of social organization, ethnicity is relational. It is dependent on the nature of social interaction between groups, which serves to highlight difference and mark the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’. It is also ascriptive, meaning it is defined by insiders and outsiders who use certain diacritica to define the boundary between groups (Welsh 1996:481; Anthias 2001:629).

The constructed and/or instrumentalized nature of ethnicity is central to this study. Ethnicity, as a construction, speaks to the artificial nature of this type of social organization, one that is produced by particular actors. Ethnicity, therefore, is not primordial or given, but something that is created. Instrumentalized ethnicity focuses on its use as a political tool by those seeking to maintain or gain power and control; ethnicity is a means to an end and a tactic used for a particular purpose at a particular time (Barth 1994:12; Welsh 1996:485).

Diaspora

In Greek, the term diaspora translates as ‘a scattering of seeds’, and was first used in relation to the forced dispersal and exile of the Jews from Israel in biblical times. Historically, the term has been used to indicate the victimization and permanent displacement from the homeland (Dufoix 2008:4; Cohen 1997:1x, 177). More recent definitions, while paying homage to its historic meaning, include voluntary as well as forced migration, and indicate various political, cultural, economic and social antecedents

and forms of diaspora (see Cohen 1997; Skrbis 1999; Dufoix 2008). For the purposes of this thesis, a rather broad and inclusive definition is used, which includes voluntary and/or forced migration, the maintenance of a distinct ethno-national identity, permanent settlement in the host country, and an ongoing connection to the homeland.

Community, Population and Group

In this study, 'community' is used within its broadest sense, that is, a group of people living in relative proximity to one another (i.e., the same town, region, or specific geographic locale), and who share a common history. Therefore, the 'Rwandan diasporic community' refers to all individuals living in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau who identify with the Rwandan homeland. Similarly, the term 'population' describes the people of a specific geographic region, such as a country or town (e.g., the population of Ottawa or Canada). It also refers to the inhabitants of a geographic region distinguished in any way from the rest of the inhabitants, or a subset within a larger group (i.e., the Rwandan population in Ottawa-Gatineau). Finally, 'group' refers to a number of persons belonging to or classified as being similar, that is having some shared or common characteristics (i.e., the Rwandan diasporic group). Therefore, community, population and group are appropriate terms to be used in conjunction with the term diaspora in this thesis.

Interaction(s) and Relations/Relationship(s)

'Interaction' refers to action or interplay between people, that is, the nature of acts toward or with others. For the purposes of this study the term is used to connote that people might work together, cooperate or network with others, which occurs to varying degree (i.e., they interact/do not interact at community meetings on a regular/irregular basis). Alternately the term 'relationship' is used to indicate long term or established

connections between individuals rooted in a variety of shared or common interests, history, values, experiences or other factors (i.e., they have a relationship based on well-established family connections). Therefore, there is a difference between ‘interactions’ and ‘relationships’, with the latter representing a deeper level of personal connection between people.

Scope and Limitations

There are two strategic limitations used within the scope of the study determined by: 1) the desire to minimize potential harm to research subjects; and, 2) to limit the research group to those from the first generation of the diaspora. Due to ethical concerns and a desire to minimize harm to individuals who may have lived through the genocide in Rwanda, the interviews focused only on those who were 25 years old and above at the time of the interviews. Those less than 25 years of age at the time of the interview would have been 10 years or younger during the genocide, and, thus, potentially more vulnerable to emotional or psychological trauma as a result of participating in the research project.

The study focused on only those considered to be first generation members of the diaspora. This is because differences between the first and the second generations in diaspora have been found in research, especially in relation to identity and the strength/weakness of ties to the homeland (see for example Mahdi 1998; Qureshi 1999; Harte 2003). By limiting it only to the first generation, it reduces the chance of mixed generational results and provides only the views of those who came to Canada from their home country, rather than being born into the second generation of this particular diasporic population.

Unforeseen limitations of the study include the small number of life story interviews that were conducted; the relatively well-off status of the research participants; and, the unequal representation of Hutu and Tutsi in the study. It was extremely difficult to make initial contacts with Rwandans in the region, much less to find individuals willing to participate in the study. Therefore the study is limited to a small number of research participants. Secondly, while attempts were made to interview people from Rwanda with a variety of class and educational backgrounds, it appears that the research participants are generally from a small subset of relatively well-off, well-educated individuals in Rwandan society. Thus the opinions and views expressed by the small number of research participants may be atypical and not representative of the wider Rwandan diasporic population or of Rwandans in general. This must be taken into consideration within the context of the research findings and results.

In recognition of the fact that the genocide and ethnicity are sensitive topics for many Rwandans, direct questions about individual ethnic identity or the genocide were not asked within the scope of the life story interviews. Individuals were told at the onset of the interview that any discussion of their self identification with a specific ethnic group or of the genocide would be of their own volition. Therefore, some of the research participants chose not to reveal their ethnic identity. This made it difficult to ensure an equal representation of Hutu and Tutsi within the context of the study.

One final limitation relates to the lack of first hand exposure to actual manifestations of the purported ethno-political divide in the Rwandan diasporic community in the region. For instance, determining, through participant-observation, whether this divide is manifest in the creation of separate Hutu and Tutsi organizations

was beyond the scope of this thesis research. There are at least four Rwandan organizations in the region, two of which have information on the organization accessible to the public via websites (Humura; Rwandan Social Services and Family Counselling). It is extremely difficult to find information on the other two organizations (the Rwandan Association of Ottawa-Gatineau; Communauté des Immigrants de la Région d'Ottawa-Gatineau) and efforts to contact possible representatives of these organizations were unsuccessful. Therefore, the study relies solely on the individual views and opinions, gathered through the life stories, of the six research participants, which is recognized as a limitation within the study and the research findings.

Methodology

The inner world of others is initially seen as ambiguous. One of the ways these inner worlds can be made less ambiguous ... is through stories. (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:35)

The research methodology for this study consists of the review of relevant literature on Rwanda's socio-political history, theories of ethnicity and writings on diaspora, and the life story interview. The life story interview is a qualitative research method involving the gathering of information on the subjective essence of the individual life; it allows the researcher to understand how a single life is played out within the context of wider society. Individuals are asked as part of the interview, to provide a narrative of the entire lived life with relevant experiences emerging as part of the telling (Cruikshank 1992:1; Rosenthal 1993:62). These life stories represent an individual's reality by:

[Imitating] life and [presenting] an inner reality to the outside world; at the same time, however, they shape and construct the narrator's personality and reality. The story is one's identity, a story created, told, revised, and retold

throughout life. We know and discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others by the stories we tell. (Lieblich et al. 1998:7)

Unlike more structured interview methods, the life story interview depends on collaboration between the researcher and the research subject, and less on the initiation and control of the researcher (Atkinson 2001:123). The interview becomes the product of the mutual interaction between the listener and the speaker, in which the research subject controls the flow of the story and the choice of which memories or experiences to share (Rosenthal 1993:64; Ochberg 1994:114). It is, in effect, a social process.

There are implications when asking individuals to share experiences and events that occurred in the past. Hankiss (1981:203) notes that, "Human memory selects, emphasizes, rearranges and gives new colour to everything that happened in reality". Memory may become fragmented due to traumatic events, with moments lost to the narrator due to the 'pain of remembering' (Funkenstein 1993:24). The loss of memory may also be strategic, or what Buckley-Zistel (2006:131-32) defines as 'chosen amnesia', which is a conscious strategy to cope with certain events and experiences through their exclusion in present narratives. For instance, two of the research participants provided only surface details of their experiences during the genocide in Rwanda. This may be reflective of a 'chosen amnesia' and a desire to forget the events as a method of coping with their reality in the present.

Individual narrations about the past are also more often a product of present perspectives and have been shaped by events, experiences, relationships, and forms of knowledge and understanding that have happened since (Bar-On & Gilad 1994:86). The process of narrative reenactment is "not a return to the past. It is a revival of the past in the context of the present" (Widdershoven 1993:11). Bar-On and Gilad (1994:86)

propose that the narratives of Holocaust survivors may be distorted and influenced by what has happened meanwhile in their lives. Buckley-Zistel (2006:131) indicates that those who lived through the 1994 genocide in Rwanda will have different recollections of the event depending on their role in the event and their situation in the present. This must be taken into consideration within the scope of the life story accounts.

The narrative offered during the life history interview is but one version or construction of the life lived. Life stories are known for their discontinuity over time.

The story as a narrative text is:

like a single, frozen, still photograph of the dynamically changing identity. We read the story as a text, and interpret it as a static product, as if it reflects the inner existing identity, which is, in fact, constantly in flux. (Lieblich et al. 1998:8)

Individual stories change according to the context in which they are offered. Speakers drop old meanings and introduce new ones; stories are revised and changed, and different accounts are provided of the same event(s) (Linde 2000:4). The life story is a construction of the moment based on the influences present at the moment of telling. The life story interview method therefore recognizes the possibility of multiple truths, which is at odds with more quantitative and scientific methods that support a single truth. Truth can therefore be seen “in ways that go beyond standard notions of reliability and validity” (Roberts 2002:6).

Life story interviews, conducted with six Rwandans living in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada between April and July 2008, form the basis of this study. Research participants were identified using a modified snowball approach. This method is frequently used when conducting research within small populations or within groups that might be difficult to locate (Bernard 2000:179). The snowball approach is used in a

variety of studies ranging from research on female gang members (Peterson 2005), to vegetarianism in Britain (Beardsworth & Keil 1992). The approach, which begins with seeking out initial contacts who then provide other contacts, had to be modified somewhat in this study due to the sensitivity of one of the topics that might be raised (i.e., the genocide), and the potential for individual societal ramifications if unpopular or different views were expressed. Therefore, all efforts were made to ensure the anonymity of individuals in the study. Primary contacts were not informed if any of the contacts they provided participated in the study, and vice versa. In addition, pseudonyms are used to ensure greater anonymity.

Four men and two women between the ages of twenty-eight and sixty years participated in the study. Attempts were made to interview individuals from a variety of socio-economic, ethnic and educational backgrounds. However, due to the difficulty finding research participants, the study is limited to those who were willing to participate, and, as already noted, the majority of the participants appear to come from a somewhat privileged position. Length of participant residence in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau ranged from eight months to approximately 20 years. All but one of the participants came to Canada in the post-genocide era. Research participants came to Canada as refugee claimants, on student visas, or as landed immigrants after time spent in other countries.

As part of the interview process a letter of information outlining the study was prepared, as well as an oral consent script to be read to each of the potential participants.¹ With respect to the oral consent script, this was done in recognition that individuals may not have wanted their name and/or signature associated with any forms related to the study, especially if the potentially sensitive topics of the genocide or ethnicity were

¹ Please see Appendix I for the Letter of Information/Oral Consent form used in the study.

discussed. Oral consent indicated an individual's willingness to participate in the study, while ensuring the maximum level of anonymity. The letter of information was provided to each of the research participants prior to seeking oral consent and included the following paragraph, describing the methodology and general purpose of the study:

The primary purpose of this research project is to conduct life history interviews with Rwandan refugees and/or immigrants in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. In analyzing individual life stories, this study aims to provide insights into Rwandan refugees' memories, thoughts and understanding about their lives before, during, and after the Rwandan genocide. In particular, this study will examine the discourse (spoken words) used to relate these memories and the events, choices and actions of importance to each individual prior to, during and after the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

In addition, the letter of information indicated, as mentioned previously, that questions regarding individual ethnic identity and/or about the genocide would not be asked directly; discussions of either topic would be raised by the participant, not this researcher. The letter of information also indicated that individuals could withdraw from the study at any time in the interview process and that they had the right to refuse to answer any questions. Of note, this only happened with one participant who indicated she would not answer questions related to the post-genocide political situation in Rwanda.

Interviews took place at mutually agreed upon locations, which insured an adequate level of privacy and comfort. The length of the interviews varied; some lasted only a few hours and others took place over two sessions. General topics were raised as required to facilitate the sharing of the life story account (i.e., Tell me about your childhood.) and probing questions were asked for clarification purposes when needed.² Otherwise, the life stories were allowed to flow with minimal interruption, because, "After the initial request for a story, the main role of the narrative interviewer is to remain

² See Appendix II for sample of questions asked during interview process.

a listener, abstaining from interruptions, occasionally posing questions for clarification, and assisting the interviewee in continuing to tell his or her story” (Kvale & Brinkham 2008:155). All interviews were recorded, and notes were taken with the permission of the research participants. The research data were analyzed and coded according to major emergent themes or categories as well as noted divergences between accounts. The data collected from the life stories of the six research participants form the foundation of the thesis study and offer a glimpse into the lives of Rwandans living in Ottawa-Gatineau.

Organizational Outline

This thesis is presented in five chapters. This chapter details the research focus and background to the study, the purpose, significance and scope of the study, any limitations, and an explanation of the research methodology.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature, which includes ethnic and diaspora theory, as well as the socio-political history of Rwanda to provide context for the life story accounts that follow.

Chapter Three introduces the six life story accounts and provides an initial analysis of what is termed the ‘diasporic condition’. An examination of the social situation in Rwanda using data collected from the research participant’s life story accounts and academic literature ends this chapter.

Chapter Four, the second analysis chapter, presents the study’s findings based on the research participants’ views on community and individual inter-ethnic relations and interactions in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau using key concepts within theories of ethnicity and diaspora. This chapter begins with a brief background to the

Rwandan diasporic community in the region as a way to situate the discussions that follow.

Chapter Five provides a summary and discussion of the research and findings, readdresses the limitations and strengths of the study, provides suggestions for future research, and final conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO: RWANDA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY, DIASPORA AND ETHNICITY

Introduction

Diaspora research focuses primarily on the relationships and interactions between the diasporic group, the homeland and the host society. Minimal research has been done on interactions *within* diasporic populations (see Gayer 1998; Fuglerud 1999; Bates 2001; Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007). This study seeks to build on this limited research through the lens of the Rwandan diaspora in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada. The study of individual views on community interactions and individual relationships in this particular diaspora population indicates a dichotomy between the two levels of social interaction, with an ethno-political polarization at the community level and varying levels of interaction at the individual level.

The recognition of ethnicity as a critical element in both community and individual interaction in the diaspora is central to this study. In the context of Rwanda, ethnicity is a major factor in the historic creation of social divisions and cleavages. This study makes the connection between homeland and diaspora, with respect to the ethno-political factors informing the divide in each location, and reinforces research findings which indicate that situations in the homeland have an impact on diasporic populations.

The following sections represent the review of literature pertinent to this thesis study, namely, an overview of the socio-political history of Rwanda, and theories of diaspora and ethnicity. Chapter Two is organized into three specific sections: (a) Rwanda's socio-political history; (b) diaspora and related theory; and, (c) ethnic theory and related concepts.

Rwanda: A Socio-Political History

The study rejects the conventional socio-political model of pre-colonial Rwanda presented by Pagés (1933), de Lacger (1939), and Maquet (1954, 1961), which assumed that ethnic and racial delineations in the society were primordial givens and that Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda have always been distinct. So, too, is Maquet's 'premise of inequality' in which societal differentiations between the Hutu and Tutsi in pre-colonial times were accepted and taken for granted by the two groups (Maquet 1961; Hintjens 1999: 246). Rather, this study follows the writings of C. Newbury (1988), D. Newbury (1997, 2001), Prunier (1995), Destexhe (1995) and Straus (2006), which indicate that racial or ethnic identification were not original factors determining social organization in the region in which 85 per cent of the population was Hutu and 15 per cent was Tutsi.³ Instead, the terms Hutu and Tutsi denoted economic orientations of farming and animal husbandry. The two groups were, in fact, a "single cultural community of Kinyarwanda speakers" that shared the same geographic locale, customs, religious practices and beliefs (Mamdani 2001:72). There was intermarriage and an individual's identity could shift between Hutu and Tutsi in a lifetime (Uvin 1997:92; Gourevtich 1998:47). Therefore, the study recognizes that Hutu and Tutsi as racialized 'ethnic' groups were originally ascribed and constructed by non-Rwandan outsiders (the colonizers).⁴

Clan (*ubwoko*), lineage or neighbourhood affiliations were the most important forms of social categorization in the region, with membership consisting of both Hutu and Tutsi (D. Newbury 2001:273; Straus 2006:20). Polarization and a more defined delineation between the two groups began to occur in the late 1860s, as power became

³ Twa, the third recognized ethnic group in the country make up less than one per cent of the population

⁴ For the rest of the paper the term 'ethnic' will be used without quotation marks for simplification purposes.

centralized under a monarchical Tutsi ruler and court. Yet it was not until the arrival of the colonial powers that the socio-political polarization of the two groups was solidified and the terms Hutu and Tutsi took on particular ethno-racial meaning (Hintjens 2008:15).

Previously ruled by Germany (1897-1919), Rwanda was placed under a Belgian protectorate in 1919 by a League of Nation's mandate. While German presence did not last long, it did introduce and establish the mainstay of the colonial political system, that is, a system of quasi indirect rule. Indirect rule was created with the assumption that African societies were already ethnically divided. Mamdani (1996:24) notes that, "Everywhere the local apparatus of the colonial state was organized on an ethnic or religious basis". In Rwanda, this meant using Tutsi rulers and chiefs to administer the country.

The colonial reformation of Rwandan society saw the assignment of ethnic identity based on colonial racial ideologies in which physical characteristics designated mental and moral capabilities (Uvin 1997:104). Tutsi, perceived to be taller, with more refined features and lighter skin than their Hutu counterparts were called 'black skinned Caucasians', while the Hutu were relegated to an inferior and more primitive 'Negroid' categorization (Melvern 2004:4). This categorization was reified with the introduction of ethnic identity cards in 1933. Children were given an ethno-racial identity based on patrilineal descent, regardless of the mother's background (Hintjens 1999:249). These cards made a person's ethnicity immutable.

From the early colonial era and into the 1950s, Tutsi retained political and social dominance in the country. Tutsi accessed the best educational and employment opportunities, including those within the colonial service, while Hutu were afforded fewer

opportunities and access to resources. However, in the years leading up to independence, a small group of Hutu emerged that had been educated within Church run institutions (Hintjens 1999:254; Uvin 1997:96). There was a democratic and anti-racist resurgence in the world order in the wake of WWII, largely because of the Holocaust and the racial policies of the Third Reich. In addition, a new type of priesthood emerged in the Catholic Church comprised of individuals from far humbler origins than their predecessors.

Members of this *petit clergé* identified more readily with the subjugated and downtrodden, and, as a result, the Rwandan Hutu were encouraged and supported by the Catholic clergy as they sought to re-establish themselves in Rwandan society (Mamdani 2001:113). By 1959 the colonial powers, largely influenced by the Catholic Church, shifted their support from the Tutsi to the Hutu of Rwanda. The racial ideologies first introduced by the colonizers, were, by this time, embedded and internalized by many within both populations and the first large scale attack against Tutsi by members of the Hutu elite occurred in 1959 (Hintjens 2001:30). Between 20,000 and 100,000 Tutsi were killed and approximately 150,000 fled the country. Those left behind began the slow slide to secondary status and eventual exclusion from much of political life (Melvern 2004:6-7).

Rwanda gained official independence in 1962. Under the leadership of the Hutu president Grégoire Kayibanda, the country became one of Hutu domination and power from the highest level right down to the local districts. Targeted attacks occurred against Tutsi in 1963 and 1972, and many Tutsi fled to the relative safety of the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo)

(Hintjens 2001:32; Melvern 2004:8-9).⁵ A military coup d'état led by Juvenal Habyarimana (a Hutu) ended Kayibanda's political rule in 1973. The country became a one party state with Habyarimana and the *Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le Developpement* (MRND). While Habyarimana originally introduced unification policies, his intention was to further separate Tutsi from any social or political roles (Lemarchand 2002:6). Strict quotas were established in the educational system at the secondary and higher levels, as well as in government service, which limited the presence of Tutsi to 10 per cent (Melvern 2004:12; Hintjens 1999:247; Uvin 1997:100; Straus 2006:190-191).

It should be noted that the societal divide, reinforced first by Kayibanda and then by Habyarimana, also had a regional component. Kayibanda was from the south, and this region of the country benefited the most during his years in power. Under Habyarimana, who, along with the *Akazu* (his inner circle), was from the north, the majority of economic and political opportunities went to Hutu from the northern region of the country (Melvern 2004:12).⁶

By 1989 an economic crisis linked to a global fall in coffee prices sent the country into an economic tailspin, and Tutsi were relegated to a position of unwilling tolerance by Hutu power holders (Fujii 2004:101; Prunier 1995:123). Opposition to Habyarimana's government arose, as well as calls for power sharing and the right of return for the thousands of Tutsi refugees living outside of Rwanda's borders who had fled previous bouts of anti-Tutsi violence (Uvin 1997:106). The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel army comprised of the children of Tutsi (and Hutu) refugees, seized the opportunity presented by the political climate and the instability caused by the economic crisis to

⁵ There are estimates that at least half of the Tutsi population of Rwanda was living in exile by the mid 1960s.

⁶ See Figure I for map detailing the regions of Rwanda.

invade the country in October 1990 (Fujii 2004:110; Uvin 1997:108; Staub 2006:870). Their initial invasion attempt failed. In response, Habyarimana's government rounded up anyone suspected of collusion with the RPF and thousands were imprisoned and killed (Straus 2006:192).

The civil war officially ended on August 4, 1993 when a peace agreement was negotiated and agreed to by the RPF and the Rwandan government in Arusha, Tanzania. Provisions under the agreement included: a new parliamentary governmental system rather than a presidential one; the merging of the government and RPF forces; the return of all refugees; the end of ethnic identity cards; and, the punishment of those from both groups who were involved in human rights abuses during the war (Lemarchand 1995:90). On the surface it appeared that the Arusha Accords were being implemented. However, violence continued in different regions of the country (Straus 2006:31; Hintjens 1999:259).

Newspapers and radio programs began to promote anti-Tutsi propaganda and the eradication of the Tutsi invaders (the RPF and all Tutsi) as the Hutu stronghold on power was threatened by increasing and persistent calls for power-sharing with the Tutsi led RPF and other moderate political groups (Fujii 2004:103). The purpose of the anti-Tutsi propaganda "served as a mask or pseudo-justification for the more fundamental goal of regime survival under conditions of sharp socioeconomic crisis and growing political opposition" (Hintjens 1999:242). This propaganda, which effectively made Tutsi the scapegoats for all the ills of the country, continued in the lead up to the genocide in 1994.

The genocide in Rwanda began a little after 8:20pm on April 6, 1994 with the downing of the presidential plane and the death of Habyarimana. The president's

assassination, according to Straus (2006:8), “ruptured Rwanda’s political order and created a temporary gap in authority”. Approximately 800,000 individuals (600,000 Tutsi and 200,000 Hutu) were killed during the 100 day genocidal period (Lemarchand 1998:4; Zorbas 2004:31). The majority of the killing was on the part of the Hutu extremist government and the *Interahamwe* (those who work together), a Hutu paramilitary group formed to carry out the eradication of the Tutsi. However, the RPF was also responsible for thousands of deaths as part of retaliatory actions against the Hutu population in both Rwanda and in neighbouring countries during and in the years following the genocide (Zorbas 2004:32-34; Meyerstein 2007:472).

Fifteen years later, the genocide continues to have an impact on the country. Thousands of individuals imprisoned for suspected crimes of genocide wait to be formally charged and tried by the courts. Political, economic, social and judicial infrastructures and institutions destroyed during the genocide remain only partially operational (Meyerstein 2007:472-473). The current government of Rwanda, led by the Tutsi President Paul Kagame⁷, the former leader of the RPF, gives the appearance of working towards national reconciliation. As part of this process, ethnicity has been taken out of political and public discourse and replaced by *Banyarwanda* (the people of Rwanda). This includes ending the issuing of ethnic identity cards and the establishment of *ingando* solidarity camps, which teach the government approved version of Rwandan history and focus on the promotion of a national identity (Hintjens 2001:47-49; Hintjens 2008:15-16).

⁷ The first post-genocide election was held in 2003 and Kagame won 95 per cent of the vote. However, as opposition parties were banned until after the election the overwhelming number of votes for Kagame cannot be considered fair or representative of the wider population. The country is considered to be a one-party state.

Despite the government's suppression of ethnicity, there are indications that, rather than being erased from individual or group consciousness, ethnicity has simply gone underground. Buckley-Zistel (2006:131) notes that ethnic identity in Rwanda is even more important in the post-genocide era than it was in the lead up to the actual event. The reasons for this relate back to the government's attempts to promote national unity and reconciliation while granting immunity to members of the RPF, and, perhaps unwittingly, promoting the perpetuation of the victim/innocent/good (Tutsi) vs. perpetrator/guilty/evil (Hutu) identities stemming from the genocide (Hintjens 2008:24-32).

The current government of Rwanda has not punished members of the RPF who took part in retaliatory killings against members of the Hutu population during and after the genocide. It has allowed suspected Hutu *génocidaires* to be tried in criminal courts while not addressing those crimes initiated by the RPF during the same time periods. For instance, in 1997 and 1998, government military actions were conducted in the northwestern part of the country in which supposed Hutu extremists were killed while trying to re-enter the country (Mgbako 2005:205). Innocent individuals died in the process but no charges have been laid against those allegedly responsible. What the government has failed to realize, in their refusal to punish members of the RPF, is that such immunity can create antagonisms and resentment among the Hutu population in particular, that may result in future violence or retaliation (Pottiers 2002:157-59; Reyntjens 2004:204).

The terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' have been erased from official political discourse in post-genocide Rwanda. Ethnicity and ethnic identity have been delegitimized and

deemed illegal. The only politically sanctioned categories of social identity allowed have been taken from the new official government reading of the genocide, which identifies those who are survivors (Tutsi), and suspected *génocidaires* (Hutu), with no middle ground. There can be no Hutu victims (even those deemed moderate) just as there can be no Tutsi perpetrators (this relates back to the government's lack of punishment of the RPF). By promoting the dichotomized victim-perpetrator identities, the government is reinforcing the ethnic ideology they are trying to eradicate. This, in turn, limits the inclusiveness of national Rwandan citizenship (*Banyarwanda*) (Hintjens 2008:14-32). The constant reminder of the genocide through these categorizations, and the ongoing immunity of the RPF, minimizes the opportunity for national reconciliation or the development of a national identity embraced equally by all Rwandans.

The socio-political story of Rwanda is complex and fraught with ethnic undertones and the construction of specific social categories based on colonial racial theories. The ethno-racial categories were internalized by the Hutu and Tutsi populations to the point that cleavages were created. The genocide of 1994 was the result of the manipulation of these ascribed (self or other) identities by powerful leaders who were set to maintain their hold on power. Ethnicity is still very much present in Rwandan society, despite its suppression as part of national reconciliation by a government who believes itself to be the very antithesis of past ethno-racially charged governments. However, it has been relegated to the private sphere for fear of reprisal by the government. Rwanda's troubled past and present not only affect Rwandan society but those living in diaspora as well. The next section of this chapter looks generally at the concept of diaspora, its

definition and characteristics, as well as the impact of situations and events in the homeland on diaspora communities in the host country.

Diaspora

[Diasporas reflect] distinct trans-state social and political entities; they result from voluntary or imposed migration to one or more host countries; the members of these entities permanently reside in host countries; ...; they evince a specific ethnic identity; they create and maintain relatively well developed community organizations; they demonstrate solidarity with other members of the community; and consequently cultural and social coherence; ... [and] they maintain discernable cultural, social, political and economic exchanges with the homeland. (Sheffer 2003:83)

At its most basic diaspora means the dispersal of people from a natal territory; it connotes displacement. It is used to indicate the movement and organization of populations in new countries (Dufoix 2008:1; Sarafan 1991:83). While early definitions linked the term to religious and/or forced exile and victimization, Cohen (1997), Skrbis (1999) and Dufoix (2008) understand modern diaspora to be the outcome of a variety of political, social, cultural and economic factors that may result in individuals choosing to leave as much as being forced to leave a homeland.

It is a term applied to “an ever broadening set of cases: essentially to any and every nameable population category that to some extent is dispersed in space” (Brubaker 2005:3). Diaspora, to Sarafan (1991:83), applies to

... expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities tout court – in much the same way that ‘ghetto’ has come to designate all kinds of crowded, constricted, and disprivileged urban environments, and ‘holocaust’ has come to be applied to all forms of mass murder.

Critics like Tölölyan show concern over the liberal nature of this type of definition, feeling that it is “in danger of becoming a promiscuously capacious category” (Tölölyan

1996:8). However, this study follows Sarafan (1991), Cohen (1997) and Skrbis (1999) who consider a wider meaning of diaspora to be more prudent due to the many forms and variety of modern migration, rather than the more limited historic definition of forced dispersal and victimization.

Notwithstanding the varied nature and meanings of diaspora, two primary interconnected elements can be surmised from the definitions provided above: connections to the homeland, and the role of identity. According to Brubaker, “some subset or combination of these, variously weighted, underlies most definitions and discussions of the phenomenon” (2005:5). Connection to the place of origin and the complexity of the diasporic identity are key concepts within this thesis.

Connection to the homeland

Homeland can represent a geographic locale defined by physical borders; something intangible to which an individual is emotionally attached, or it can be invested with a moral meaning. Whatever its representation, the ongoing connection or orientation to the homeland (emotional, political, and economic) is an important element of the diasporic experience. As indicated by Dufoix (2008:97), “The acquisition of a new nationality still leaves intact the pull of the country of origin.”

This study identifies factors that inform the maintenance or weakening of the homeland connection. R. Cohen (1997:105) and Smith (1998:2) note that the level and intensity of people’s connection to their homeland can be dependent on temporal and spatial factors. Geographic distance as well as the length of time in the host country may influence the depth of connection to the place of origin, despite the ability of people to connect across time and space. The level of inclusion or exclusion in the host country

also informs the ongoing connection with the homeland as anti-migrant policies, racism and prejudice found in the host country often reinforce connections with the homeland. Koser and Lutz (1998:5) argue that “racist nationalism... is centrally concerned with the notion of defending home, space, and territory against ‘the other’, a category which has come to include immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities”.

While geographic distance is a factor in the strength of ongoing connections to the homeland, it is important to note that physical distance, in the age of globalization, has been lessened due to communication technology (i.e., Internet, television, and mass media) and the speed of travel from one place to the other also encourages transnational interaction and the connection to the place of origin (Ember et al. 2004:57; van Amersfoort 2004:366-367; Danforth 1995:80; Haller & Landolt 2005:1183). “The speed of communication ... [is] increasingly capable of forging and sustaining social relations that link societies of origin and settlement” (Demmers 2002:88) and connections that were impossible to maintain in the past are now easily done. Leave-taking from the place of origin must no longer mean all ties are permanently severed.

The homeland, for members of the diaspora, is nostalgically remembered, romantically idealized within recollections situated within the past, which often gloss over or minimize the economic or conflict-based (i.e., political, religious, ethnic) antecedents which resulted in the leave-taking from the country of birth. ‘Home’ becomes imbued with an “emotional, almost reverential dimension” (Conner 1986:16) as the place towards which all thoughts, feeling and hopes are directed. Sarafan (1991:83-84), however, indicates that nostalgia recollections and romantic portrayals of the homeland are more so reflections of the imagination than reality, often excluding the

harsh reality of war, conflict, and economic and social strife. While the homeland remains in a fixed state in memory, in reality it has changed with time and circumstance. Part of the nostalgic remembering is a dream of returning to the idealized and romanticized version of homeland in the future. However, this does not always come to pass.

Long distance nationalism

A manifestation of the ongoing links to the homeland is long distance nationalism. Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003:762), describes long distance nationalism as the, “various forms of direct cross border participation in the politics of the country of origin by both migrants and refugees (such as voting and other support to political parties, participating in debates in the press)”. It is defined as the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (Basch et al. 1994:34). According to Dufoix (2008:93) and Ostergaard-Nielsen (2001:262) long distance nationalism can take the form of support for the government of the homeland or opposition to what is considered an illegitimate or authoritarian political regime. Ember et al. (2004:574-577) agree and list participation and regime change as two of four political stances within long-distance nationalism. In the former members of the diaspora participate through involvement in legitimate political parties in the home country, or through monetary support. In the latter it is generally the party in power in the homeland with which there is a quarrel. Those in the diaspora often speak out in opposition through newspapers, the media, and through the sending of money and weapons to the homeland. Regardless of the intent, for all purposes long-distance nationalism is a non-responsible one.

His political participation is directed towards an imagined homeland which he does not intend to use, where he pays no taxes, where he will not be brought before the courts, and where he does not vote; in effect a politics without responsibility and accountability. (Anderson 1992:11)

Individuals in the diaspora often navigate within a dual loyalty- simultaneously a participating member or citizen of the host country while remaining involved in the social, economic, or political happenings in the home country to varying degrees through the practice of long distance nationalism. Dual loyalty and connection to the homeland also have an impact on the formation of the diasporic identity.

Identity in the diaspora

There are two key components to collective identity formation in diaspora: the role of the 'Other', and the local context in the host country. With respect to the latter, local context within the host country plays a role in diasporic identity formation and maintenance (Haller & Landolt 2005:1183). Migrant identities are formed within the basis of the political and cultural situation in the host society (Cohen 2004:90). The combination of "historical processes, political ideologies and state policies regarding immigration, [shape] specific national contexts and particular ways of dealing with immigration [and] immigrants" (Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007:8). Multi-cultural, racist, ethnocentric and xenophobic government policies, as well as societal perceptions about migrants, either enable or force immigrants to define themselves in ethno-national terms (Deemers 2002:94). Thus, the formation of collective identity within the diaspora is most often tied to the context within which people find themselves in the host society.

Migration tends to produce and reinforce perceptions of belonging and separateness, and, as such, identity formation is part of a dual process in which the similarities of those who belong are reinforced, while the differences with those who do

not (the 'Other') are also delineated (Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007:3). According to Hall (1996:345), "[The] creation of bounded groups requires there to be a perceived sense of difference to other out groups". Perceived or real differences in relation to culture, language, religious beliefs and/or normative practices may assist in the division between 'us' and 'them' and the creation of national boundaries of difference (Gayer 1998:4).

Part of the diasporic identity and connection to the homeland is manifested in the formation of community organizations. As mentioned above, this often stems from feelings of insecurity, marginality, and a desire to be with those who are familiar (Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007:2). The creation of community organizations (clubs, political parties, schools, religious institutions, sporting teams and community papers) reinforces the connection between members of a national diaspora group. Organizations are formed over practical concerns related to housing or employment; for the expression and transmission of cultural values; for social solidarity and emotional support, or for protection against possible discrimination and hostility from the host society (Djuric 2003:114; Skrbis 1999:59, 67). In addition, the organization of the diaspora community also reinforces and supports the maintenance of cultural diacritica; those markers (values, signs and symbols, traditions, customs) which assist in the differentiation between 'us' and 'them' in the new country of origin (Dufoix 2008:73).

Diaspora appears to "crystallize identity and solidarity among its members" (Levy 2000:138) and indicate homogeneity, a collective 'we' rather than multiple heterogeneous 'I's. However, rarely do diasporic communities show "anything approaching cultural, political or ideological homogeneity" (Skrbis 1999:62). This is despite the formation of strong community associations or institutions and surface veneers of uniformity.

Diasporas are prone to conflict, antagonisms and divisiveness (Skrbis 1999:72). Migrant populations are stratified and divided by class, economic and political rivalries, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, ideology, occupation, legal immigration status, duration and location of settlement, different experiences of adaptation to the host society, as well as a variety of other life experiences . Therefore, the diaspora as a united and cohesive social organization is no more than what Anderson (1992) calls an 'imagined community'. As indicated by Hall (1990:235), "the diaspora experience ... is defined, not by essence of purity, but by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a concept of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference; by hybridity."

Situated within the concept of identity in the diaspora, is the concept of hybridity (Hall 1992; Anthias 2002) or in simplest form, the idea that individuals within diaspora are operating within a dual, mixed identity. Hall promotes, what is called 'cultures of hybridity', which are cultural identities that embrace old and new, and encompass different traditions. The emergence of these particular hybrid cultures is closely associated with diaspora and migration, as migrants may simultaneously identify with the homeland and with the new country of residence (Hall 1992:310-314). However, Anthias (2002:500) challenges this assumption by indicating that the concept of hybridity or the migrant identity indicates a staticity or permanence. As indicated above, there are a myriad of other identities and/or positionalities, through which individuals must negotiate their way. These positions or identities are produced and reproduced in situational and contextual manners (Anthias 2002: 502; Cohen 1997:129), and inform interactions within the host society as well as within the diaspora. With respect to social interaction within

the diasporic community, the homeland, and the events and occurrences that happen within its boundaries have an impact.

Interrelationships within the Diaspora

Only a handful of studies (Gayer 1998; Fuglerud 1999; Bates 2001; Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007) have been conducted on internal relations within diaspora groups from which this study builds. Skrbis (1999) also touches briefly on issues within diasporic communities in his study of long distance nationalism in Croatians and Yugoslavians in Australia. These studies found that events in the country of origin (political, ethnic, religious or economic conflicts/crisis, etc.) greatly affect interaction within and between diaspora groups in host societies. The diasporic experience, as indicated above, may influence nationalistic sentiments, which are demonstrated through the ongoing monitoring of events in the homeland and an awareness of the political, economic and social developments in the country of origin. This can result in the transfer of religious, regional, political, resource based or ethnic conflicts in the homeland to the diaspora, where they are internalized and often reinvented within the particular diasporic context (Dufoix 2008:93).

Local context within the host society also informs the bonding or separation of ethnic groups in the diaspora, just as it does the maintenance of ethnonational identity (Gayer 2007:16). Settlement in a multicultural society has implications on relationships within diaspora populations as it tends to recreate and reinforce cleavages, because where groups settle allow ethno-national identities to remain salient. At the same time, countries that have xenophobic or exclusionary policies may also cause people to remain connected with the national identity of the homeland because they feel left out from the

society of the host country (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2001:263). Countries that promote free speech and freedom of expression also may inform these inter-community relationships in diaspora because individuals can speak for or against situations at home in ways that they might not previously have been able to do. According to Gayer (2007:16), views, whether related to the political regime of the homeland or religious, ethnic or other national events or situations, can create or reinforce tensions in the diaspora community in the host country, particularly if they are oppositional ones. Diaspora groups, therefore, not only ground their particular identity in constructions of the external 'Other' and the difference between the diaspora group and the wider host society, but these boundaries can also be constructed internally between different groups (ethnic, political, religious, socio-economic, gender, etc.) within the diasporic community as a result of situations in the homeland.

Ethnic identification, as noted above, can become a point of contention and conflict within diaspora communities when it is carried over from the homeland. Ethnicity and diaspora are in fact two closely inter-related concepts, and are often spoken of in conjunction as part of discussions of migration and settlement in new societies. The final section of this chapter examines ethnic theory and concepts in more detail, with a specific focus on constructivist and instrumental nature of ethnicity, and the role of ethnicity in nation-building processes and societal divisions.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity indicates a sense of collective belonging resulting from a real or perceived common descent and shared history. Shared culture, language, religion, rituals,

patterns of normative behaviour, history or collective myths defines and justifies this common origin (Cohen 1974:1x; Weber 1968:389). As a form of social organization, interaction is a key aspect of ethnicity as ethnicity is first and foremost relational; it is dependent on the nature of interaction and contact with other groups (Williams 1989:404,414). Barth (1994:12-13) and Verkuyten (2005:82) indicate that contact between groups serves to highlight difference; it defines belonging and otherness, and produces a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them'. These differences are established and reinforced through the creation and maintenance of what Barth calls boundaries (1969:15), which are defined by Sanders (2002:327) as the patterns of social interaction which produce, reinforce and continuously recreate 'in group' and 'out group' status. Ronald Cohen (1978) challenges the implied staticity of Barth's original notion of boundaries to see boundaries as neither fixed nor permanent, but rather as fluid through time and circumstance. Boundaries are then "multiple and overlapping sets of ascriptive loyalties that make for multiple identities" (Cohen 1978:387). Skrbis (1999:63) agrees with R. Cohen and indicates that "boundaries of ethnic communities are neither totally fixed nor completely loose but subject to ever changing situational factors".

Two key components of ethnicity are indicated above and are important to the study: ascription and situationalism. Ethnicity has an ascriptive quality because it is defined by insiders and outsiders who use a small number of diacritica (distinguishing markers) to define the boundary between groups (Barth 1994:16). Barth (1994:13) notes that the construction of these boundaries are not always "about strangers, but adjacent and familiar 'others' ... [which] lead[s] more often to questions of how 'we' are distinct from 'them' rather than to a hegemonic and unilateral view of 'the other'". In addition,

ethnicity is given salience at different times, to different degrees and according to particular sets of circumstances. It is therefore situational, with the level of exclusion/inclusion determined by the context in which individuals and groups find themselves (Cohen 1978:388; Williams 1989:417). Different situations “provide different categorizations of relevance” (Anthias 2002:496). This is addressed further below in relation to the instrumental and constructed nature of ethnicity.

Primordial, Constructed and Instrumental Ethnicity

Early primordialist accounts treated ethnicity as an inherent, immutable and unchangeable given; one which is assigned at birth (see, for example Geertz 1973). Constructivist and instrumentalist accounts challenge the primordialist view, focusing on the artificial and socially constructed nature of the identity. This is because, according to Barth (1994:12, my emphasis), “Ethnic groups and their features are *produced* under particular interactional, historical, economic and political circumstances, they are highly situational, not primordial”. Constructivist accounts of ethnicity, which focus on the historic forces that have formed this identity, indicate the relative recent nature of the phenomena and emphasize its formation in relation to particular social contexts. The creation of ethnic groups out of different indigenous societies during the colonial era as part of the colonial strategy of divide and rule is an example of such constructivism. The colonizers emphasized cleavages in order to divide local populations; a divided society could not rise up to challenge the legitimacy of the colonial rule (Lake & Rothschild 1996:21). Instrumentalist views, including those of Abner Cohen (1974), deem ethnicity to be a political invention, one that it used as part of struggles for power and resources between opposing groups. Ethnicity when used this way is a means to an end; it is a tool

(Welsh 1996:485). As part of this process, competing elites or ethnic entrepreneurs instrumentally “draw upon, employ and even fabricate myths, symbols and other elements of indigenous society in order to fashion a rhetoric that will mobilize populations in pursuit of collective and individual advantages” (Welsh 1996:480). The constructed and instrumental natures of ethnicity are necessary factors in the discussion of Rwanda’s socio-political history, the genocide, and its impact on diasporic relations.

Multi-level influences on the formation of ethnic identity

Multifaceted and interwoven micro, median and macro level processes inform the creation of ethnic identities. At the micro level are the individual social interactions and personal experiences that serve to influence and produce individual conception (and acceptance or rejection) of ethnic identity. Individuals are born within a particular group and are socialized to the values, beliefs, traditions, attitudes, behaviours and cultural practices of the particular group. At this level, family, as well as other social actors and agents, can be said to be an important arena in which ethnic identity is shaped (Barth 1994:22-23). Median level processes are those related to the formation and mobilization of ethnic collectivities, often under the aegis of ethnic entrepreneurs, and for specific purposes. According to Barth, “This is the field of entrepreneurship, leadership and rhetoric, here stereotypes are established and collectivities are set in motion” (1994:21). This is the level at which the instrumental use of ethnicity can be articulated. Finally, macro level processes are those at the state, nation and/or global level which interact with and inform median level collectivities. This level involves the imposition of policies and ideologies, of rights and impediments, and control of the production and dissemination of information. Macro level processes can inform median level processes and median level

processes can affect the micro-level (Barth 1994:22). The salience given to ethnic identity at the group and individual levels is greatly dependent on how this identity is articulated by actors at the micro, median and macro levels.

Conflict, cleavages and cross-cutting ties

It is most often at the median and micro levels that societal conflicts situated within ethnic claims are created, reinforced and actualized. Ethnicity has a role in the politics of stratification and conflict when it is instrumentally used to gain access to resources, opportunity and power at the expense of the subjugated 'Other'. Differential power results in inequality of opportunity and access, with the dominant majority maintaining power while the ethnic minority group, which has minimal power, is "subjected to disabilities in the form of prejudice and discrimination, segregation and persecution ... at the hands of the other group ... the majority" (Vincent 1974:49).

While ethnic cleavages can cause conflicts, there are also ties that bind individuals from different ethnic groups together. These connections, or cross-cutting ties are created as a result of shared common identities, areas of interest, and/or membership in different communities (e.g., religious groups, community organizations, clan membership, national or regional identities, etc.), which create overlapping categories of sameness in the midst of ethnic divides (Schlee 2008:49). Cross-cutting ties create allegiances and cohesion where antagonisms are present and can inhibit ethnic mobilization or violence. According to Gluckman (1956:4), cross-cutting ties result in "societies [that] are organized into a series of groups and relationships [so] that people who are friends on one basis are enemies in another". Therefore an opponent in one context can be an ally in another. In the process of nation building, a national identity can

build bridges between opposing ethnic groups, just as it can also create cleavages if the foundation of the state is based on ethnicity, with some (in-groups) having rights while others (out-groups) do not. Nationalism therefore has the potential to promote social cohesion or social fracture. The role of ethnicity in nation-building is discussed further below.

Ethnicity, nationhood and nation-building

Nationhood links the political and the national; it is an amalgamation of government, territory and population and encourages the production and maintenance of a singular overarching national identity. The concept of nation or nationhood is not rooted in the physical but it rather has a symbolic value situated in notions of solidarity and unity (Friedman 1996:3). In contemporary nationalism, Brown (2000:50- 88) notes that there are two forms of nationalism; civic nationalism and ethno-nationalism. Civic nationalism has as its foundations in liberal and democratic ideologies, a shared territorial homeland, and a commitment to state and civil society institutions by all citizens regardless of ethno-cultural affiliations or backgrounds. Ethno-nationalism, on the other hand, is rooted in a belief in shared history and a common ancestry justified through similarities of religion, language or phenotype. In states in which ethnicity is the fundamental basis of nationhood, this results in policies that promote the collective rights of the recognized ethno-national group, while second class citizens are made up of those who do not have the ethnic heritage of the dominant group. This is linked to Foucault who posits that different government orders use different apparatus or forms of rule as a means to control its subjects (1991:87-104). Ethnicity is often used by authoritarian regimes in nation-building as a means of control. In this usage, Verdery (1994:45-46) describes nation-

building as a press towards inclusion and exclusion; it is a process that “both normalizes and renders deviant”. Other groups can either choose to be absorbed by the dominant group or come into conflict with the state (Friedman 1996:3; Verdery 1994:45).

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter introduced concepts of diaspora and ethnicity pertinent to this study, as well as a brief overview of the socio-political history of Rwanda. Hutu and Tutsi as ‘ethnic’ groups in Rwanda are not primordial givens but are colonial social constructions situated within the popular racial theories of the time, which separated the world into moral and intellectual categories based on phenotypical characteristics. These identities were constructed to support the colonial mandate which was to create societal cleavages; divided societies do not rise up to challenge those in power. In the post-colonial era and in the lead up to the genocide, these identities were instrumentally manipulated by the government and used as political tools within the process of power maintenance and control. The 1994 genocide was the culmination of decades of manipulation on the part of the colonial powers and the post-independence power holders, who sought to divide the Hutu and Tutsi into two distinct social categories with different rights within the state. In the post-genocide era, ethnicity has been erased from political discourse as the government seeks to promote unity through the creation of a national (*Banyarwanda*) identity. However, ethnicity remains highly salient at the median and macro level due to the government’s refusal to take responsibility for RPF actions during and after the genocide, and the ongoing moral connotation afforded to Tutsi and Hutu ethnic identities.

Ethnicity and diaspora are two interrelated concepts. Sheffer (2003:83), whose definition of diaspora started the section on ethnicity in this chapter, notes that diaspora has a particular ethnic quality. Diasporic populations are spoken of within the context of ethnicity, and it is often ethnic groups that are forced to leave their homeland due to internal conflict or strife between competing ethnic groups within the state. In addition, as with ethnic groups, the identity of diasporic populations is rooted within the concept of the 'Other' and the identification of insiders and outsiders through the creation of boundaries that are formed using specific diacritica.

Using these two analytical concepts, the following two chapters examine the reality of diaspora for Rwandans living in Ottawa-Gatineau, including the ongoing negotiation between homeland and host country in the diasporic context, and the nature of the social divide in Rwandan society in Chapter Three. This sets the stage for the discussion in Chapter Four, which narrows in focus to look at community and individual interaction within the Rwandan diaspora in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau.

CHAPTER THREE: LIFE STORY ACCOUNTS, THE 'DIASPORIC CONDITION' AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN RWANDA

Introduction

Research on Rwanda has increased since the 1994 genocide. However, there is a gap in research focusing on the Rwandan diaspora and, in particular, how events in Rwanda have affected internal interactions within the diaspora in different parts of the world today. The examination of interactions within the diaspora necessitates an understanding of what it means to *be* in diaspora, that is, of the *diasporic condition*. The diasporic condition involves the ongoing negotiation between the past and the present; the place of origin and the new host country. This negotiation takes place in the midst of various other identities and positionalities which are in a constant state of flux. The examination of interactions also requires an understanding of the homeland, for the events that happen within its borders are often carried into the diaspora. As noted by Gayer (2007:16), in order to understand what is happening in the diaspora, it is imperative to consider the historical antecedents of social interaction within the homeland.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief description of the life story method used in this study. The second section introduces the life story accounts of the six Rwandans. This is followed by an examination of the diasporic condition and of the status of social interactions in Rwanda from the perspective of the six research participants. The latter sections serve as the starting point for the discussion, in Chapter Four, on the factors that appear to promote or discourage community and individual relations in the diaspora.

The Life Story Interview

The life story interview, as a research methodology, provides a micro level view into a society. Researchers are able to gain access to the “ways individuals understand and interpret their place in the world” (Anthias 2002:298), and thus can move beyond generalizations about a culture or society to see the potential variations that may occur on an individual basis. The initial indication that there are divisions within the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau due to the genocide and related factors came from someone outside the community. The life story approach, therefore, is the ideal method for this study, as it provides insights from actual members of the diaspora who are negotiating their own way within this particular history. It must be noted that while the life story approach was used as a research methodology, only partial life stories were collected from some of the individuals. For instance, one of the participants focused more on sharing a particular ethno-political platform, rather than providing numerous details about his personal life. Therefore, it is most likely that experiences and events are missing from the accounts. Regardless, the data collected from these accounts is still relevant to this study and the term ‘life story’ will continue to be used throughout.

As indicated in Chapter One, each of the potential research participants received a letter of information outlining the research methodology and the general nature of the study. Individuals were informed that initial questions regarding their ethnic background or about the genocide would not be asked; it was their choice to share and/or discuss this in the course of the life story interview. Individuals gave their oral consent, as requested by this researcher, rather than written consent regarding their participation in the study. This was in recognition of the fact that some individuals would prefer to have no formal

documentation of their participation in a study that might include sensitive topics or unpopular opinions. All of the participants lived in different areas of Ottawa-Gatineau at the time of the field research. Participants reflect a wide range in age; two participants are in their 20s, one in her 30s, two in their 40s, and one is close to 60 years of age. Individual life stories cover numerous topics: including childhood and family life; school experiences; ethnic and political awareness; experiences and understanding of the genocide; life in Canada, and present knowledge of, and involvement in, the home country. As indicated in the introductory chapter, for the most part, the individual life history accounts were participant driven. General topics were introduced by the researcher (e.g., ‘Tell me about your childhood’) as a point of departure when needed, and the accounts were then allowed to flow with minimal interruption, with the exception of questions for clarification purposes or to probe into a specific topic once introduced by the participant.

The life stories of six individuals, four men (Philippe, Ignace, Jean-Baptiste, and Thomas) and two women (Immaculée and Agathe), are presented in this chapter with direct quotations from the life accounts shared in reference to the specific thematic areas and discussions presented in this chapter and the next.⁸ The presentation of the life stories is organized according to the study participants’ level of exposure to the genocide of 1994. The genocide can be viewed as the culmination of the political manipulation of ethnicity in Rwanda and still figures centrally in the lives of many Rwandans 15 years later. This is indicated by Buckley-Zistel (2006: 136) who states the genocide is “omnipresent in Rwanda ... [T]he individual and collective *raison d’être* of the nation and its people is built around the genocide”. The ordering of the life stories by level of

⁸ The names of the six individuals have been changed to provide anonymity.

exposure (direct/personal or indirect/second-hand) allows for insight into how, and if, this event affects individual ideas surrounding community polarization and, in particular, individual inter-ethnic relations amongst the Rwanda diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau. It is important to note that this is not a psychology thesis; issues pertaining to the psychological trauma caused by the genocide are outside of the scope of this study.

Life Story Accounts: Six Rwandans in Diaspora

The life stories of six Rwandans living in Ottawa-Gatineau are presented below. They are ordered according to level of exposure (direct/personal or indirect/second-hand) to the 1994 genocide with Philippe having the most personal experience with the genocide and Immaculée the least. In between are four other life stories that touch on the genocide to varying degrees.

Philippe⁹

Philippe was a single male in his late twenties at the time of the interview. He was born in 1980 to Rwandan parents who were studying at a Quebec University. He therefore holds dual Rwandan and Canadian citizenship. He identified himself as having a Tutsi ethnic background.

Philippe was four years old when he his family returned to Rwanda from Canada in 1984. After living in Kigali for a short time, they eventually settled in Butare where his father worked at the national university. Early memories of his return to Rwanda revolved around difficulties related to language, as Philippe did not speak Kinyarwanda, and he recalled asking his parents when they would return to Canada. He remembered his

⁹ Qualitative data provided from interview field notes dated May 7, 2008 and May 27, 2008.

first day at school in Rwanda as being quite frightening. However, he eventually started to enjoy school and being with his friends.

Philippe's father was imprisoned for six months in 1991 for allegedly being a collaborator [with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)] because he would not sign a letter denouncing the RPF. Philippe's father became more politically active upon his release from prison and joined the liberal party (PL), called the Tutsi party, even though the majority of members were Hutu. Philippe became a politician's son and tried to become informed about the political situation in the country. Philippe took part in protests and demonstrations against the government in the years leading up to the genocide. This was against the wishes of his parents, who did not want him to be involved in politics.

The genocide in Butare started on the evening of April 19th, 1994 and intensified on the 20th-22nd. On the 27th of April, Philippe's parents, and his brothers and sister, along with other people who were staying at his house (a total of 22 people) were killed by the *Interahamwe*. The man who led the attack against Philippe's family was his father's best friend, a Hutu. Philippe was not killed because he was outside when the *Interahamwe* came and he escaped over a wall.

Philippe and a cousin, who had also managed to escape, were hidden by a Hutu man. The man also hid four Tutsi girls. In mid-May the militia came and captured his cousin and the four Tutsi girls. Philippe was in the outdoor washroom at the time and remained hiding there until everyone had left. He learned later that his cousin and the Tutsi girls were stoned to death.

The Hutu man allowed Philippe to remain hiding at his home for the money that Philippe had been given by his mother. The man eventually left Butare to fight against

the advancing RPF and Philippe was left alone in the house for weeks with little food or water. He hid in the man's house until the RPF came to Butare in early July. Members of the RPF came to the house and took him to the home of a moderate Hutu doctor. The man had been a friend of Philippe's family. He gave Philippe a place to stay in his home along with other survivors of the genocide.

Philippe was later recruited by the RPF, but, just before joining, a family friend convinced him to go to Burundi to see his extended family. His mother's sister, who was living in Belgium at the time, came to Burundi in late 1994 and took him back to Rwanda and then to Belgium for a short time. He was in boarding school in Uganda from 1994-2000 and frequently made trips back to Rwanda to visit his aunt, who had since moved there for work. With the support of his aunt he returned to Canada in 2001 to attend university. He graduated with a degree in 2005, and at the time of the interview, worked in Ottawa. Philippe returned to Rwanda in 2006 and 2007 to visit.

*Agathe*¹⁰

Agathe was born in Paris, France, in 1965 to Rwandan parents who had been sponsored by the Rwandan government to study at a French university. At the time of the interview she was 43 years old, and had been living in Canada for 10 years with her husband and three children. She did not indicate her ethnic background.

Agathe's parents returned to Rwanda with her when she was about one year old and settled in Kigali in 1966. She lived in Kigali with her parents and four younger siblings until 1973 when she was approximately seven or eight years old. Her father was

¹⁰ Qualitative data provided from interview field notes dated May 11, 2008.

taken away during the political coup d'état that year, and her mother was ordered to return to live in her husband's family village.¹¹ She never saw her father again.

Life in the village was relatively hard in the beginning, because the government denied Agathe's mother the right to seek employment to support the family. It was not until 1977 or 1978 that her mother was given permission to teach at one of the schools. Her family was eventually told by the government that they could leave the village sometime in the mid 1980s, but chose to remain.

Agathe completed primary school in the village and then went to a boarding school run by Rwandan nuns for her secondary school education. She had to leave school due to illness and, after an absence of three years, she returned. She graduated in 1987, and after one year at the national university in Butare, Agathe moved to Kigali and started working for a bank in 1989. She met her husband, who was a doctor, in Kigali and they married in 1992.

Agathe, her husband, and their baby daughter were living in Kigali when the genocide started. Their home was located close to where the RPF military had been stationed during the peace negotiations. The RPF were able to evacuate Agathe and her family from their home, and took them to a nearby stadium that was under the protection of the RPF. They stayed in the stadium for two or three weeks before being evacuated to Uganda by the RPF. Agathe and her daughter eventually went to Nairobi, Kenya, to stay with a relative while her husband worked in one of the refugee camps along the Rwandan-Ugandan border.

¹¹ Agathe actually indicated that her father had been taken away during the political coup d'état in 1972 but as there was no political coup d'état occurred that year it is most likely she is referring to the one that occurred in 1973 during which Major General Juvenal Habyarimana ousted President Kayibanda and instigated a military regime. Many high level Hutu officials, as well as prominent Tutsi, were killed during the event (Straus 2006:188-90).

She returned to Kigali in November 1994 to what she described as a dead city. “A lot of houses were burned down, and when we got to our own house there was nothing there. Everything had been stolen. We had to start over again”. While all of her siblings survived the genocide, her mother was killed. Agathe and her husband stayed in Rwanda until December 1998 when they came to Canada and applied for refugee status. They first settled in Montreal where there was a large Rwandan community, and then they moved to the region of Ottawa-Gatineau. It was a hard decision for Agathe and her family to leave Rwanda and come to Canada. “We had to begin again [for a second time]. We had to get used to a new culture, another city. Sometimes I think it was the right decision, other times I do not”.

*Jean-Baptiste*¹²

Jean-Baptiste was in his late 50s or early 60s at the time of the interview and was married with two children. He was born to Rwandan parents outside of Rwanda, in Bukavu, a town in the eastern Congo.¹³ As he has Rwandan parents, he considers himself Rwandan, rather than Congolese. He made it clear that he has a Hutu father and a Tutsi mother.

Jean-Baptiste first went to Rwanda when he was 13 years old. He attended school in Rwanda starting in the 1960s and attended the national university at Butare in the 1970s. He then went to a university in Quebec for a graduate degree under the program of cooperation between the Canadian and Rwandan governments. He returned to Rwanda and worked as a librarian at the national university in the late 1970s. He left his job at the

¹² Qualitative data taken from interview field notes dated June 24, 2008 and July 4, 2008.

¹³ Jean-Baptiste did not go into detail as to why he was not born in Rwanda.

university in the early 1980s. He found work in Kigali after he left the university and remained there until the genocide in 1994.

According to Jean-Baptiste, he left his house on the second day of the genocide (April 7th) and fled to a nearby hotel. He was evacuated from the hotel on April 12th by the Belgians and was taken to Belgium. He spent approximately eight years in Belgium before immigrating to Canada, in 2002, with his wife and two daughters.

Thomas¹⁴

Thomas was an unmarried university student in his late twenties at the time of the interview. He had been in Canada for less than a year, and at the time of the interview did have plans to return to Rwanda at some point in the future. He indicated he was Tutsi.

Thomas was born in Uganda in the early 1980s to Rwandan parents who had fled bouts of ethnic violence. He did not go to Rwanda until after the genocide, as did many Tutsi refugees. Thomas remembered being teased at school in Uganda for being Rwandan. His family had to pay school fees because they were considered foreigners. Thomas remembered, as a child, his father singing songs about Rwanda - their homeland.

Thomas went to Rwanda for the first time in 1997. He and his family had to start from scratch. He tried to get into school when he first arrived but was unsuccessful. Instead he was sent to a solidarity camp, which, according to Thomas, was part of the government's move towards reconciliation. "It was about patriotism. We were taught about Rwanda." Thomas was at the camp for two months and he and the others followed a daily structured routine which included exercise and mandatory drills. At the camp,

¹⁴ Qualitative data taken from interview field notes dated April 21, 2008 and April 25, 2008.

people were taught to defend the country against anything. They were taught to “Let no one come.”

Thomas went back to finish his final year of secondary school in 1998. He entered university in 1999. He took one year of mandatory French before starting his full university studies.¹⁵ University was difficult as “there were not enough instructors, because many had been killed during the war or had left the country as a result of the war. It was makeshift. We would have two week courses and then the exam.” It took him five years to complete his degree.

After university Thomas was employed by a government charitable organization established to support women and children, genocide survivors, youth and those suffering from HIV/AIDS. He was employed by this organization until he was given the opportunity to come to Canada for his current graduate studies.

*Ignace*¹⁶

Ignace was in his early 40s at the time of the interview. He is married, and has children. He came to Canada in 1990 on a Rwandan government sponsored scholarship to do a graduate degree. At the time of the interview he belonged to an organization of Rwandans in Ottawa-Gatineau that “invites people who are outside of the events to try and understand other voices [those who see the genocide as more than just Tutsi victimization].” Ignace did not share his ethnic identity.

Ignace was born in what he described as an autonomous region located in northern Rwanda. He is the youngest of six children (five boys, and one girl). Neither of his

¹⁵ The official languages of Rwanda at the time of his return were Kinyarwanda and French. As the child of refugees, his education in Uganda was in English. In order to be able to take classes at university, where the majority of instruction was in French, Thomas had to improve his French language skills.

¹⁶ Qualitative data from interview field notes dated July 5, 2008.

parents went to school but all of his siblings had some level of education. Ignace enjoyed school as a child. He went to the national university in Butare to take an undergraduate degree in Math after completing secondary school. Once he completed his degree he started working for a Canadian non-governmental organization that was implementing a development project in Rwanda. As there were so few individuals in the country with that area of expertise, the Rwandan government sent him to Canada in 1990 to do a graduate degree, which he completed in 1993.

Rather than returning to Rwanda, he found a way to stay in Canada. He knew from the radio, newspapers and information from other Rwandans that the political situation in the country was worsening. The genocide began just a few months after he was granted permission to stay in Canada. He “definitely thanked God that [he] was able to stay [in Canada] and not go back.” His family, living in the northern region, was not affected by the genocide. However, his parents were killed in 1998. There were reports of Hutu extremists trying to come back into Rwanda from Congo. The government at the time sent in soldiers to prevent them, and as a result many Hutu living in the region were killed for being potential collaborators.

*Immaculée*¹⁷

Immaculée was born in the city of Kigali in 1969. She came to Canada in 1998 as a refugee claimant and first settled in Montreal. At the time of the interview she was 39 years old and had only recently moved from Montreal to the Gatineau region. She and her husband, also a Rwandan, have two small children. She did not indicate her ethnic background.

¹⁷ Qualitative data taken from interview field notes dated June 18, 2008.

Immaculée describes herself as an atypical Rwandan because of her father's position in the government as a *fonctionnaire*¹⁸ in both pre- and post-independence Rwanda. As a child she and her family spent six years in a European country, because her father was sent there to study by the Rwandan government. She was ten years old when they returned to Rwanda in 1979, and she remembered her initial desire to go back to Europe as she no longer had any connection to or memory of Rwanda. Once she became more familiar with the Rwandan way of life she felt more at home.

Immaculée remembered playing with her neighbours as a child and enjoying school. After secondary school, Immaculée was offered a scholarship to go to a European University.¹⁹ She left for university in 1988, and visited her parents in Rwanda periodically until 1993. Immaculée went back to Rwanda for the last time in July or August 1993. By that point there was no security at all so she did not return.

She stayed in Europe until 1998 to complete her studies. The organization that had sponsored her studies had done so with the stipulation that she must return to Rwanda upon completion. She felt at the time that there would be no personal security for her in Rwanda so she refused. By this time her parents and siblings were also living outside of the country, having left after the genocide. Immaculée said that many people left after the genocide for security reasons. "Many people who had been refugees since 1959 returned to Rwanda, because they were supporters of the RPF government. Those who left Rwanda were those who had lived in Rwanda before the war."

Immaculée chose to come to Canada because it is known as a country that accepts immigrants. She originally settled in Montreal where there is a large Rwandan

¹⁸ A civil servant or government bureaucrat.

¹⁹ Immaculée indicated it was common for Rwandans to get scholarships to universities in Canada, France, Belgium, Germany, China and Russia at the time.

community. While Immaculée's husband has returned to Rwanda, she has remained in Canada and does not believe she will return to Rwanda anytime in the near future. She indicated that she does not feel she would be safe there. Immaculée refused to discuss the current government or anything to do with the political situation in Rwanda.

The six life stories shared above are each unique to the individual. The life stories are told by people of different gender, age, ethnicity, place of birth and length of time living in Canada, and those with differing experiences in relation to Rwanda. At the same time there are general similarities that emerge such as level of education, socio-economic status in Rwanda, and time spent living outside of the country. The next section of this chapter examines the diasporic condition through the eyes of the six Rwandans participating in this study. Their thoughts reveal the ongoing struggle between homeland and host country as they experience the ongoing challenge of living in the diaspora.

Rwandans in Ottawa-Gatineau: The Diasporic Condition

The nature of the diasporic condition is complex. Diasporic groups are positioned at the crossroads of “the society of migration, the homeland, and the migrant group” as well as within a whole range of “other attributions and claims of difference and identity constructing group belonging” (Anthias 2002:500) such as gender, race, religion, social status, and ethnicity. Some of these identities may gain salience while others become subsumed as part of the migration process (Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007:4). To be a part of a diaspora means negotiating one's way through and within these various positions. Rwandans living in diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau are, at different times and to different degrees, members of the diaspora, the Rwandan homeland, and Canada as the

new country of residence, as well as a whole range of other identities, which denote sameness or difference. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss these other positions in great detail, they are no less relevant to the ongoing negotiation that occurs.

All but one of the research participants identify him/herself as Rwandan-Canadian or Canadian-Rwandan; one individual being born in Canada (Philippe), and five currently holding both Rwandan and Canadian citizenship (Philippe, Ignace, Jean-Baptiste, Agathe, Immaculee). This is in line with findings within cross-cultural studies that indicate that national or ethnic identities are not just singular givens, but can have a dual nature, or be constituted by hyphenated identities (Verkuyten 2005:158). Only Thomas, as the most recent member of the diaspora, does not claim a Canadian national identity.

Of note, despite Thomas, Jean-Baptiste, and Agathe being born outside of Rwanda, none claim the national identity from their country of birth. Thomas, in particular, was very aware of his 'foreignness' while living in Uganda, which is made explicit in his reference to having to pay school fees as a non-Ugandan. This made it less likely that Thomas would identify with a Ugandan national identity, but would rather cleave to that of his parents, who were both Rwandan and who sang to him as a child of his Rwandan home. For Thomas, the maintenance of his Rwandan identity rather than his Ugandan one is what Portes (1999:465) calls a 'reactionary identity'. National identity adoption is less likely to occur in societies that offer limited integration, as the migrant group is constantly reminded that they do not belong due to ethnocentric policies and practices, racism and prejudice (Mohammad-Arif & Moliner 2007:5; Vollman et al. 2007:174-176).

In Canada, a country long considered a cultural mosaic, cultural, national or ethnic identity maintenance is promoted rather than suppressed. Immigrants are encouraged to integrate while, at the same, there is a widespread acceptance of diversity.

Multiculturalism encourages the maintenance of public ethnicity (Vollman et al. 2007:176). This is indicated by Jean-Baptiste who states, “Of course I am legally Canadian, and what I like about being Canadian is [that] Canadians allow me to be Rwandan, and this is really important to me” (04/07/2008). However, there is fluidity to these positionalities and a situational nature to the use of Canadian and Rwandan national identities (Anthias 2002:493,496). In addition, individual reasons for maintaining or adopting a specific national identity, or aspects of that identity, are varied.

With respect to the situational nature of national identity adoption, Immaculée identifies herself as Rwandan-Canadian, but also indicated that she does, at times, choose one identity over the other: “It depends on who is asking. If a Canadian asks me, I say I am Rwandan. If I am outside of Canada I say I am Canadian; I am a Canadian citizen” (18/06/2008). As with ethnic identity, national identities in the diaspora are “fluid across time and social contexts, sometimes even to the point of [national] switching” (Sanders 2002: 328). Immaculée did not elaborate on the reasons behind this self-ascribed national identity differentiation other than that it largely depends on the situation she is experiencing when called upon to identify herself.

Perceived national or cultural values come to the forefront when discussing what it means to be Canadian and/or Rwandan, with clear differentiations being made between Canadian and Rwandan values. Values are considered an aspect of nationhood through which individuals feel connected and a national bond is created (Smith 1990:16). In the

case of members of diaspora, these values also provide a sense of connection to the homeland. According to Jean-Baptiste, “Canadian values are different. I consider myself to have Rwandan values” (04/07/2008). A particular dichotomy is revealed between Canadian individualism and the Rwandan sense of community and family, both cultural diacritica that are very much associated with being Rwandan for some of the research participants. In this instance, a conflicting value is used to define the difference and produce a boundary between Rwandan and Canadian culture and identity (Barth 1969).

Jean-Baptiste indicates that:

Being Rwandan or having a Rwandan background makes me understand better the value of friendship because I find Canadians so individualistic. Friendships are not the same here. It is also the same with families. I cannot create [the Rwandan] type of ‘familiness’ here in Canada. I think there is a type of emptiness in that aspect of being Canadian. I find the [notion] of the family here in the West is really poor. Here the family means the husband, wife and children ... It is a kind of association of people who are interested in being together for a short time ... To me a family is not that. It is extended. Family includes even friends. (04/07/2008)

Immaculée feels the same way, as she indicates that:

The difference here is that you are feeling alone and in Rwanda there are always many people in the home – cousins, friends, neighbours. If you need someone or need help, you were always sure to get it. It is not like here where you are an individual. (18/06/2008)

Thomas, who has been in Canada for the shortest length of time, also noted this difference between the two societies:

People here are so individualistic. I was telling my [non-Rwandan] friends that I went to the United States on March Break and [Rwandans there] were hugging me and I felt weird. I had spent the last three months not hugging anyone. Here you shake someone’s hand, and at home it takes ten minutes to greet someone. It is a huggy-huggy culture in Rwanda. People hug and kiss each other all the time. (21/04/2008)

In all three cases a symbolic value has been attached to the communal nature of Rwandan society, and is used to assert the distinctiveness between perceived Canadian national identity and Rwandan national identity (Cohen 2004:96).

Rwandan values and other cultural diacritica such as language and belief systems are factors which continue to link individuals to their homeland, and, as indicated above, the often serve to distinguish one national identity from the other (Cohen 2004:90,96).

This is the case for Philippe, who, despite being born in Canada, considers himself Rwandan before Canadian,

I was Canadian before I was Rwandan. Yet I am Rwandan-Canadian because I was raised there [Rwanda] and I have Rwandan blood. I speak Kinyarwanda and most of my beliefs are Rwandan. I think even Rwandans who were born here, second generations who have never been to Rwanda, would still identify themselves as Canadian-Rwandan. That is how we were raised. (07/05/2008)

However, at the same time, culture, including national values, can adapt and change over time, according to the environment and the temporal context, as is often the case in diaspora and in all societies (Barth 1969:14, 38; Barth 1994:25). Acculturation is the process by which changes in culture occur due to contact between cultures. At the individual level, this is often seen in shifting attitudes and behaviours or in the engagement in activities that are part of the host society (Vollman et al. 2007:175).

Immaculée has adopted what she considers to be the Canadian value of time management, while rejecting the more laid back attitude of Rwandans, because she feels it allows for more productivity in the Canadian context. This is in line with A. Cohen (1982:5) who indicates that values or qualities can take on a negative or positive characteristic in which the national value is “either strengthened and sustained, or ... deserted” depending on the context within the host society. She has chosen to adapt to a perceived national

characteristic of her new country of residence. Acculturation does not mean the total rejection of the national identity and values of the homeland; rather it is a combination of cultural maintenance and contact (Verkuyten 2005:157). The individuals, who continue to identify themselves as Rwandan in their rejection of the Canadian value of individualism, may one day also acculturate and adopt or adapt this value and/or others they encounter as Canadians.

Guilt and a sense of responsibility for the events that transpired in Rwanda were revealed as other factors tying the individual to the homeland. As stated by

Jean-Baptiste:

I am still Rwandan ... because I believe what happened was bad and should not have happened. [We] forgot something. [We] forgot to be Rwandan. [We] were taught to be Hutu and Tutsi and not Rwandan, and that is why it happened. (24/06/2008)

Jean-Baptiste's statement reflects an individual responsibility for the genocide for allowing ethnic identity to overtake a collective national Rwandan identity. He maintains his Rwandan identity to make a definitive statement against ethnic distinctions and the cleavages these can emphasize. Jean-Baptiste comes from a unique perspective; he is both Hutu and Tutsi. Belonging to neither group exclusively, he sits on the periphery of both. This dual ethnicity allows for an understanding of the reality of these identities in ways that others, defined by one single ethnic identity cannot. Verkuyten (2005:169-172) notes that individuals of mixed ethnic background often decide to reject both, rather than one over the other, and instead can choose to use a more unifying identity, that is, a national identity. This was found with respect to other Rwandans of mixed ethnic heritage, who said they felt Rwandan first because they were never able to be wholly defined by a singular ethnic identity (Hintjens 2008:31).

Alternately, Agathe, while identifying herself as Canadian-Rwandan, is uncomfortable with her Rwandan nationality and appears to want to reject it.

I am a Canadian citizen ... I still hold my Rwandan citizenship as well. To be Rwandan means, I do not think of it. I do not use a passport from Rwanda and I do not think I will ever go back there. Maybe one day, but right now I am not ready. (11/05/2008)

Agathe's next statement brings the previous comment into more focus,

Being a Canadian, becoming a citizen was a big day for me. You feel free, you have a country now. You have protections. You know if you are somewhere else you will be evacuated [if there is danger]. It feels great to have a place where you feel you belong. [Yet] I still see Rwanda in the back of my head. (11/05/2008)

The word 'belong' is very telling. Agathe did not feel she belonged in Rwandan society. Agathe felt what it meant to be an outsider when she and her mother were forced by the government to move to her father's village upon his disappearance. The experience of being an outsider, of being "disconnected, ostracized or rejected by one's national group is painfully desolating", according to Mack (1983:54) and, in response, Agathe chooses to identify with Canada, the nation in which she feels accepted. Her reference to the protections provided to a Canadian citizen indicates that she did not feel protected in Rwanda. Certainly her experiences during the genocide, and her evacuation by the RPF, rather than the official government, may have something to do with these feelings. When her country was in crisis she was unable to turn to the state or state institutions for security and protection, because the state itself was the instigator of the violence.

Finally, despite initial comments to the contrary, there is a sense of longing to return one day to Rwanda coupled with feelings of nostalgia for the life remembered prior to the genocide. The former is indicated in the statements above about the continued presence of 'home' in Agathe's mind, and her desire to return at some point in the future.

The latter is reflected in another comment by Agathe when she suggests that, “People before the genocide were close and open. We talked to everyone and we went to everyone’s place. I liked the way we lived; our life was easy” (11/05/2008). Jean-Baptiste, despite never planning on returning permanently (he does visit), also feels a sense of longing, “Sometimes ... I become very nostalgic and I think Rwandans had a good life when I see Rwandan proverbs, or read books about Rwanda, or hear the language” (04/07/2008).

One of the markers of the diasporic condition is the desire to return to the homeland, but the homeland of memory is often no more than a social construction (Cohen 1997:106). The Rwanda of Agathe’s recollection, the utopian society in which everyone ‘got along’ before the genocide may not have existed according to some of the writing on Rwanda’s socio-political history. While there are indications of intermarriage and people from both ethnic groups living side by side and interacting, there were also reoccurring bouts of ethnic violence (1959, 1962-64, 1973, 1990-1994) (Straus 2006:177-198). These bouts of ethnic violence tended to occur during times of political crisis and resulted in the targeted slaying of Tutsi. Rwandan society was therefore not as idyllic as Agathe recalls. Certainly the genocide was not a spontaneous blip in a perfect society, but the result of tensions emerging from the historical construction of separate ethnic groups, and the manipulation of these identities by a small authoritarian political elite who wished to remain in power. Ethnicity was used as a form of population control as part of the authoritarian government’s exercise of power. The government sought to shape the behaviour of Rwandan society according to government sanctioned norms and practices

so that society fell in line with the desires of the state, that is, to divide the population and maintain a Hutu stronghold on power (Foucault 1991:10-12).

Diaspora is the physical leave-taking of the place of origin; it does not entail the severance of all ties or connections to the homeland. This is indicated by Lie, who states, “[It can] no longer [be] assumed that immigrants make a sharp break from their homeland ... The sojourn itself is neither unidirectional nor final” (1995:304). It is also a physical, social and cultural integration into the new country of residence. Individuals in the diaspora are constantly experiencing the tensions between these two positionalities or identities, as well as those of gender, race, religion, social status, and ethnicity. Within different situational, temporal and spatial contexts, individuals have to negotiate a sense of meaning when faced with opposing cultural norms or values, competing loyalties, and feelings of belonging and otherness. In addition, members of the diaspora must come to terms with the fact that the nostalgic memory of home, to which they hope to return, may no longer exist, if it ever did. Nonetheless, individuals in the diaspora remain linked to the homeland, and the events and happenings at home continue to have an influence on/in the diaspora.

The ethno-political and social situation in Rwanda is discussed in the next section. The research participants suggest that the community in Rwanda is faced with an ethno-political divide in the country.

Social Relations in the Rwandan Homeland

There are references throughout the life story accounts indicating cleavages between the Hutu and Tutsi populations in Rwanda leading up to the genocide, or, at the

very least, divisive policies and programs introduced by the government. These include the ethnic quota system and ethnic roll call, which were part of macro level processes in which the state sought to define and reinforce distinctive ethnic identities at the macro/collective level (Barth 1994:26-27). There are two differing views on social relations in Rwanda prior to the genocide. The first is that the Hutu and Tutsi populations were divided and the ongoing outbreaks of anti-Tutsi violence between 1962 and 1993 are evidence of the divisions and animosity between the Hutu and Tutsi. Grégoire Kayibanda, the first president of Rwanda (1961-1973), described the country in the post-independence era as:

two nations within a single state ... two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy, who are ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets. (cited in Meredith 2005:486-487)

Of course, a divided country was an integral part of Kayibanda's political mandate, so he may have been touting the official party line in the quote above, as much as speaking of the real situation in the country. The second is that, while there was widespread belief by that time that the Hutu and Tutsi represented different ethnic categories, this did not entail a necessary hatred or animosity between the two groups on the ground (Straus 2006:173). The targeted attacks against the Tutsi leading up to the genocide were not spontaneous outbursts of anti-Tutsi sentiment, but the result of political crisis. Tutsis were the politically sanctioned scapegoats. A stance that supports the presence of cleavages between the Hutu and Tutsi, but not to the degree they were to become in the post-genocide era, offers a middle ground to the two arguments. Regardless of the degree, there were government attempts to promote and enforce divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi of Rwanda. According to Jean-Baptiste, "To justify discrimination you would have

10 per cent Tutsi and 90 per cent Hutu in jobs and in schools, and it was the government that decided who was Tutsi and who was Hutu” (24/06/2008). Other programs and policies mentioned within the life story accounts include the imposition of an ethnic roll call in school and the ethnic identity card, both of which were put in place to reinforce the division between Hutu and Tutsi (Uvin 1997:100). In addition, the history taught in schools, according to Jean-Baptiste, was often more ethnic or racial propaganda than fact (24/06/2008). Gourevitch (1998:57-58) touches on the role of Rwandan schools in creating and reinforcing divisions when he states, “With every school child reared in the doctrine of racial superiority and inferiority [and difference], the idea of a collective national identity was steadily laid to waste, and on either side of the Hutu-Tutsi divide there developed mutually exclusionary discourses based on the competing claims of entitlement and injury”.

Polarization in post-genocide is also occurring. This is despite, or even because of, government policies to suppress ethnicity as part of national reconciliation. There are indications that the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi is even more rigid than before (Zorbas 2004:42; Tiemessen 2004:65). Tiemessen (2004:65) notes that, “Despite the government’s insistence that ethnic divisions are a thing of the past, there is nothing to indicate that local communities accept this policy as anything more than naïve political rhetoric”. Mgbako agrees with Tiemessen and states, “[There are] still many [in Rwanda] who speak of bitterness, a simmering, a country at times waiting to explode” (2005:224). Rwandans know that ethnicity still exists, even if the government attempts to deny its presence. This will be addressed further below.

The Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, according to Jean-Baptiste, are still divided, but the division has gone underground for fear of punishment by the government.

The people in Rwanda have two faces. There is one that shows you that everything is good, but in the night when they are with family, people start to cry and speak of their unhappiness because of what has happened.
(24/07/2008)

In post-genocide Rwanda, victims and perpetrators exist within the same political and social spaces. They live beside one another and interact on a daily basis. Government policies have resulted in these tensions being privatized, which may turn public in destructive and divisive ways in the future.

Ignace provides similar views.

[The government is] trying to take ethnicity out of it but I am not sure they are getting the expected results ... They are trying to say that everyone is Rwandan; Tutsi and Hutu do not exist ... It is not bad to keep part of one's culture. Why can't the government say that there are Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, and they must live in the country peacefully? That would be fine, but do not attempt to say that the divisions do not exist! (05/07/2008)

Philippe sees this differently.

There is no choice. Rwandans cannot be Hutu and Tutsi. That is why they are being worked out of existence. It is not ideal, but there is no choice. We cannot have these identities and be united. (27/05/2008)

The pre-genocidal government in Rwanda instrumentalized ethnicity to maintain Hutu political power and dominance in the country; that is, ethnicity was used as a political tool (Straus 2006:195, 200). Despite nationalist discourses by the post-genocide government, it appears that ethnicity, or the rejection of ethnicity, is being used in the same manner, but for the opposing group. According to Reyntjens (2005:187), "political discourse opposed to ethnism [sic] attempts to hide the domination of society by the self proclaimed representatives of the Tutsi

community”. It is therefore not the ‘naïve rhetoric’ (Tiemessen 2004:65) mentioned above, but a political tool. While Philippe indicates that the country cannot be united while ethnicity still exists, it also cannot be united while *Rwandese* is used as a mask to hide the Tutsification of the state. Just as before the genocide, one ethnic group is in power, while the other is left on the margins. How can Hutu feel that they are being represented in the same way as their Tutsi counterparts when the government is indicating by its actions that “Tutsi can only count on Tutsi for support” and “Tutsi power is the only means for Tutsi survival” (Drumbl 2000:271)?

In addition, both Ignace and Thomas indicate that there is an imposed moral division between the two groups resulting from the genocide, which makes it difficult for the two sides to come together. “People present the situation in a good versus evil manner, meaning all Tutsi are good and all Hutu are bad” (Ignace 5/07/2008). Thomas mirrors this statement:

You know how people differentiate in a movie ... by the good guys and the bad guys ... I find it so amazing that people can look at the same thing and one say it is good and one say it is bad. (25/04/2008)

There is a tendency to encapsulate all Hutu and all Tutsi into the specific overarching categories of bad/perpetrator/guilty and good/victim/innocent since the genocide.

Mamdani (2001:267) notes that, “To be a Hutu in contemporary Rwanda is to be presumed to be a perpetrator”, and while the Tutsi and Hutu moderates are considered ‘victims’, it is only the Tutsi who are considered ‘survivors’. Yet as Desforges (1999:748) indicates with respect to the Hutu population in particular, “Not all Hutu had wild hearts ... [Not] all Hutu killed. There is a difference between Hutu and assassin”.

The continuance of these moral labels only serves to encourage polarized thinking and the dichotomization of the two groups. This is despite the fact that the Rwandan government promotes a national identity over ethnic ones, because participatory genocidal identities are still rooted in the ethnic identities of Hutu and Tutsi (Tiemessen 2004:67-68). These moralizing identities also subsume the hazy middle ground in which individuals from both groups may be neither 'good' nor 'bad', or both (Govier & Verwoerd 2004:372). The fact that individuals have multiple allegiances, and can claim membership in a variety of groups in Rwanda (church, interest groups, community organizations, business affiliations, clans, clubs), is also undermined by the homogenizing nature of the good/victim/innocent and bad/perpetrator/guilty identities. Any cross-cutting ties which are created by these multiple group memberships are forgotten, while the cleavages remain (Gluckman: 1956:4, 25).

Summary and Conclusion

The data provided from the life stories, above, indicate the complexity of the diasporic condition and the ongoing tensions as individuals mediate between two positionalities, between the homeland and host country, as well as a myriad of other positionalities and identities they may have. The Rwandan homeland, remains present to varying degrees, whether through long distance nationalism, family ties, or simply as an idyllic memory. Despite its distance, the events that happen within Rwanda's boundaries have an impact on diasporic populations.

This chapter also indicates that the divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda were present in the past, and continued at the time of the interviews. According

to the research participants, these divisions have ethno-political roots. Divisive government policies in the pre-genocidal era, including the ethnic quota system and ethnic roll call, created and reinforced divisions. Societal divisions in the post-genocide era are reinforced by the contradiction between nationalist government rhetoric and the Tutsification of the state, as well as the equating of Hutu and Tutsi participant identities in the genocide to homogeneous moralized ones. To what extent do individuals propose these divisions replicated in the diaspora? This is the focus of the next chapter. Using data collected from the research participants, Chapter Four is an examination of individual views regarding community level interaction in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau. It is also an exploration of individual relationships in this diasporic group. Research participants purport that a divide, similar to that in Rwanda, is present in the diaspora. However, this divide does not extend to the individual level where research participants indicate boundary crossing and varying levels of interaction with members from the opposing ethnic group.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE DIASPORA

Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the diasporic condition and what it entails for the six Rwandans currently living in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. The complex nature of membership in the diaspora was discussed, as people effectively remain tied to their past in the homeland while also living in the present in the host country. As part of this discussion, research participants indicate that Rwandan society is divided based on ethno-political factors, partially situated within the 1994 genocide and the post-genocide political situation, which are rooted within the historically manufactured divide between the two groups.

This chapter narrows in focus to look specifically at interrelationships within the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau. It is interesting to note that research participants contend that there is a community level polarization, present in the diaspora, similar to that in Rwanda. However, they also reveal that individual interaction occurs across political and ethnic boundaries, which appears to counter the discourse on the purported community level divide. This is a classic example of the discontinuity (often found within anthropological research) between what people say (they do) and what people do, that is, their rhetoric may not match the reality. Research participants insist there is a division in the community while personally interacting with those from whom they are supposedly divided. This raises questions as to why, if there is potentially no divide, individuals insist one is present. What is the possible reason or purpose behind the manufacturing of this division? What factors may have influenced the articulation of this

divide within the context of this study, which took place within a particular temporal and spatial setting? These are questions that will be addressed later in this chapter as well as in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

By providing a brief background on the Rwandan community in the region (i.e., population statistics; period and type of immigration; organizations/associations), the first section of this chapter situates the discussion that follows. The second section focuses on individual views regarding the community level interaction in the diaspora, and the role of ethnicity and politics in the apparent polarization of the larger Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau. The final section examines individual interactions and relationships within the diaspora, highlighting the factors that inform ethno-political boundary crossing, including the level of salience given to ethnic identity, and negative and/or positive ethnically based experiences.

The Rwandan Diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau

According to the 2006 census by Statistics Canada there are approximately 4,015 Rwandans living in Canada. Of that number, just under 1500 reside in the province of Ontario (Statistics Canada 2006a). A survey, highlighting both the period of immigration and place of origin, indicates that 745 Rwandans immigrated and settled in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau between 1991 and 2006. In addition, at least 50 Rwandans are counted as having immigrated to the region prior to 1991. The majority of those who immigrated to Ottawa-Gatineau in the 15 year period of 1991-2006 did so between 1996 and 2006, with 580 individuals coming to the region (Statistics Canada 2006a). The 1994 genocide in Rwanda may be a factor in the dramatic increase in numbers during this period. Of the

795 Rwandans living in the region, 250 live in Quebec/Gatineau, and 545 live in Ontario/Ottawa (Statistics Canada 2006b; Statistics Canada 2006c; Statistics Canada 2006d). There is no statistical information indicating the type of immigration (i.e., refugee, temporary foreign worker, student visa, etc.). However, those interviewed for this study came to Canada as refugee claimants, on student visas, or as landed immigrants.

There are at least four formal Rwandan organizations and/or associations in the region including: Humura; the Rwandan Social Services and Family Counselling (RSSFC) organization; the Rwandan Association of Ottawa-Gatineau; and, the *Communauté des Immigrants de la Région d'Ottawa-Gatineau (CIRO)*. Humura is an association of survivors of the genocide with a mandate to “keep alive and honor the memory of the victims of the 1994 genocide against Rwandan Batutsi” (Humura 2008). RSSFC is a non-profit, community-based organization servicing all Rwandan immigrants and refugees as they adjust to living in a new culture (RSSFC 2009). There is very little published information on either CIRO or the Rwandan Association of Ottawa-Gatineau, so it is difficult to get a clear understanding of their purpose and composition. Two of the individuals who were interviewed also mentioned involvement in an informal sports group made up of primarily Rwandans.

Similar to other organizations formed by diasporic groups, these organizations may have been formed as a way to create and maintain connections within the diasporic community as well as to the homeland (Haller & Landolt 2005:1187). The organizations may support the transmission of Rwandan cultural values and practices or they may simply serve as a means to gather with others who come from the same place, as in the

case of the Rwandan soccer team mentioned above. These organizations may also provide emotional or practical support to members of the Rwandan community in diaspora. In fact, RSSFC itself was formed as a result of practical concerns related to the challenging process of acculturation into a new society (RSSFC 2009).

Despite the presence of these associations or organizations in the region, which suggest some level of community interaction, the individuals interviewed contend that the community is polarized along ethno-political lines. In fact, some of the organizations themselves may be ethnically or politically based and, as such, may be a manifestation of the alleged divide, which may exacerbate (directly or indirectly) the tensions between the two groups. For instance, Humura officially describes itself as a survivor's organization that has a multi-ethnic and multi-racial membership (Humura 2008). However, as noted previously, the term 'survivor' generally connotes Tutsi in Rwanda, and if this is transferred to the diaspora, it means that the multi-ethnic and multi-racial description may not be the reality of the organization's makeup. It may be, in fact, solely a Tutsi organization. Agathe alluded to a possible ethno-political division among the Rwandan organizations and associations in the region and discouraged contact with anyone from one particular organization due to its official platform with respect to the genocide. This gives credence to Skrbis (1999:59), who indicates that the variety of diaspora organizations reveal the differences found within the group: "Diasporas are further internally differentiated into diaspora organizations which may be based on religious, social, interest, or other criteria." The next section examines individual claims regarding the community level divide in the region.

The Ethno-Political Community Divide

An overarching ethno-political theme emerged in the participants' telling of the divisions in the Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau. According to the research participants, the purported polarization in the Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau is primarily rooted in ethno-political underpinnings stemming from the historic political manipulation of ethnicity in Rwanda, which culminated in the 1994 genocide, and from oppositional views with respect to the current government, its policies and its role in the genocidal process. This links directly to the ethno-political factors that have informed the social divide in Rwandan society, and highlights the potential influence of historical antecedents in the homeland to the situation in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau.

Immaculée suggests that the divisions in the community are a result of the war (1991-1993 Civil War and the genocide) and linked to the notion of ethnicity.

The communities here are divided. It is because of the war. It is not easy for both communities to get in touch. Everyone suffered during the war. I lost so many people, so many people in Rwanda. It is the same for everyone. It will not be easy because of everything we went through. It will be better for our kids. They will not think of the ethnic thing, but for our generation it will not be easy. (18/06/2008)

Like Immaculée, Jean-Baptiste feels that the divisions in the community have roots in ethnicity. He also indicates a political influence.

It started from the genocide - the polarization comes from that. What has happened in Rwanda is that the [current] government refuses to acknowledge that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) killed Hutu as well. So what it is doing is taking itself out of the genocide... Yet, if the Tutsi continue to say that the Hutu killed them, but they did not kill [Hutu], there will never be common ground between them. (04/07/2008)

The genocide was organized and planned by a small group of powerful Hutu in the government who specifically targeted the Tutsi population as well as any government

officials who were considered to have moderate leanings. Members of the Hutu population were killed by the RPF as part of its military actions to defeat the extremist Hutu government and end the genocide. There have also been reports of retaliatory killings by members of the RPF in different parts of the country after the official end of the genocide.²⁰ However the current Tutsi led government, by granting the RPF immunity for its attacks on innocent Hutu civilians, implies that the RPF's actions were without fault. Thousands of Hutu are currently imprisoned and awaiting trial for suspected crimes of genocide, while members of the RPF have gone free (Zorbas 2004:32, 41). In Jean-Baptiste's opinion above, until there is acknowledgement of, and punishment for, the crimes committed against the Hutu population, there will be no reconciliation between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and in the diaspora.

Ignace, who has very strong opinions about the post genocide government in Rwanda, echoes the feelings of Jean-Baptiste:

In order to get both parties reconciled, there needs to be fair justice put in place for everyone. I recognize that not all Tutsi killed, but at least some of them committed crimes. Some Hutu also committed crimes. We have to bring the people who committed crimes to justice as individuals and not as a group. The people in jail in Rwanda are only Hutu. I do not know of any Tutsi who are in jail. (5/07/2008)

In his own words, Ignace indicates he is a member of a group in Ottawa-Gatineau that "tries to invite people who are from the outside of the events to try to understand other voices" (05/07/2008). By other voices, Ignace means the voices of those who do not support the current Rwandan government approved version of the genocide (i.e., that the

²⁰ An estimated 25,000-45,000 Hutu civilians were killed by members of the RPF during and immediately after the genocide. Thousands more were killed in Hutu refugee camps in 1995 as well as in 1997-1998 as part of government anti-insurgency campaigns in the northwest part of the country (Meyerstein 2007:486)

RPF were part of no wrong doing).²¹ In addition, he also tries to contribute to newspapers and offer his opinion about the government in Rwanda.

The current government in Rwanda, once you try to think and understand what is happening in the country, is trying to keep [any opposition silent]... Recently, I got an article published in Rwanda about what I am doing over here [in Canada], and I have been targeted as someone who is attacking the government. I am Rwandan and I have the right to criticize the government, especially if I think it is on the wrong track. It is the responsibility of those who are from the country to raise the issues. (05/07/2008)

As a member of the diaspora, Ignace is provided a unique opportunity; he can openly criticize the government of his homeland without fear of recrimination or punishment. His long distance nationalism is represented in opposition rather than support for his home country's ruling regime (Dufoix 2008:93). Rafti (2004:8) has stated that the opposition in Rwanda has been forced into exile and can only exist outside of the country, because open criticism is not allowed. Geographic distance protects Ignace and permits him to declare his opposition to the Rwandan government publically in the newspapers in his country because he does not live there. However, this does not mean that his position has no impact on relations in the diaspora. By speaking out against the government, he also reinforces cleavages between those in the diaspora who support or are against the Rwandan government. Ignace links the divisions in Ottawa-Gatineau to these differing opinions regarding the Rwandan government, and suggests that the division is totally political in nature, and has "nothing to do with ethnicity" (5/07/2009).

Agathe provides another explanation, in addition to ethnicity, for the division in the Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau.

The other problem we have in Rwanda is regionalism. Sometimes if you come from the north you do not get along with people from the

²¹ Ignace did not elaborate as to whether the voices he represented were Hutu or Tutsi or both.

central/southern regions. We have ethnic problems, but regional ones are big [here] too. (11/05/2008)

Regionalism is a form of social categorization based on geography and location within the state, which appears to create cleavages within the population of Rwanda (Straus 2006:23; Uvin 1997:94). This was discussed in Chapter Three, with respect to the north/south divide under Kayibanda and Habyarima, and reveals another factor informing divides in Rwanda which has been carried into the diaspora.

Philippe and Thomas, while noting there is a division, refers to none of the divisive factors above.

I do not know if there is some type of pride. For Rwandans, they first have to get to know you before they accept you and socialize with you.... I think maybe it has to do with trust issues. Rwandans do not really trust each other. I think even back home I noticed it. You do not trust. You do not know who to trust. (Thomas 25/04/2008)

Philippe states,

Sometimes it is where you landed [in Canada] that determines the cliques you hook up with. It is also your personality as to whether you stay within your own community or go outside of it. (27/05/2008)

Accounts provided by each of them help explain their comments. Thomas went to a solidarity camp (*Ingando*) when he arrived in Rwanda in the months preceding the genocide. These camps were part of government reconciliation activities where the state sponsored version of Rwandan history was 're-learned' by attendees and efforts were made to promote a national identity over ethnic ones (Meyerstein 2007:498; Tiemessen 2004:67; Mgbako 2005:209, 217). The process of nation building is used by governments to mold different and often dichotomous groups within a state into a singular unified nation. As part of this process, national symbols are used, including national myths. In post-genocide Rwanda this has meant a government rewriting of

history in which the defects of the genocidal regime are highlighted and pre-colonial Rwandan society is presented in an idealized and romanticized manner (Mgbako 2005:209).

Thomas has either bought into the concept of a national identity over ethnic identity, and, therefore does not wish to link ethnicity to polarization in Ottawa-Gatineau, or, he chooses his words carefully because the government of President Paul Kagame views all discussions of ethnicity as a form of divisionism (Meyerstein 2007:499; Zorbas 2004:43). With respect to the former, Mgbako (2005:218), who has extensively studied the impact of solidarity camps, including their impact on youth of pre-university age, indicates that the camps “provide[d] the government with the opportunity to mold the opinions of young students and orient them toward the RPF government, helping to create a generation of RPF loyalists”. If this is the case, then it is most likely that Thomas has internalized the government’s main policy of ethnic identity suppression and, therefore, is reticent to link any divisions (at home or in Ottawa-Gatineau) to ethnicity.

Philippe, a Tutsi who comes to the discussion from the perspective of an individual who survived the genocide, and who experienced firsthand the destructive nature of ethnicity, refers to individuals’ landing location in Canada or personal choice regarding relationships as the deciding factor in community organization. Previous comments related to divisions in Rwanda make it clear that Philippe, too, is against ethnicity as a social category. It is evident that his lack of reference to an ethno-political foundation for the divide is a reflection of his own perspective rather than an indication of the nature of the Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau.

Agathe's final thoughts on the possible community divide sums up the observations of the other participants.

We took our divisions from Rwanda and we brought them here, and I do not understand ... In my opinion, I thought that because we all suffered there would be a different reality now. People do not change. The experience has taught us nothing ... After [a time] you have to get on with your life. You go back and lose time trying to fix that which you cannot fix. People just discuss what happened and waste time. They forget they are living here. (11/05/2008)

This statement once again reflects the necessary tension involved in diaspora - being a member of the new homeland, while constantly looking back at the old.

The data collected from the six life stories suggest that feelings deriving from the genocide and its ethno-political undertones, as well as the post-genocide political situation, have a possible impact on community level relations in the diaspora, just as they do in Rwandan. Regionalism may also be a factor in the community divide. With respect to ethnicity, tensions are not suppressed for those living in Ottawa-Gatineau because members of the diaspora do not have to rely on one another in the same way they would have to in Rwanda. They are not forced to live beside people who may have participated in the genocide or in the killing of family members. Ethnic identity does not have to be concealed as part of government attempts to create a national unifying identity.

Canada's multicultural platform, which promotes the maintenance of culture and ethnic identity, in some ways permits ethnic differences to be reinforced in the diaspora, rather than blurring over such distinction. Living in Canada also provides the opportunity for those who are against the current Rwandan government to speak out more freely, whereas in Rwanda overt opposition is frowned upon and labeled divisionism. As was mentioned in Chapter Two, there is a degree of non-responsibility in participating in long distance politics, particularly opposition politics. The consequences or punishment meted

out in the home state rarely transmit fully to the diaspora (Anderson 1992:11-13). The freedom of individuals in the diaspora to criticize and share political views may actually exacerbate potential tensions within the wider Rwandan community. All of these factors, in combination, inform the potential polarization between the Hutu and Tutsi populations in Ottawa-Gatineau.

Despite individual views on the nature of the divisions between Rwandans in the region, participants do consider ways to overcome the purported divide. For instance, Jean-Baptiste indicates another form of social categorization that may serve to build bridges between the Hutu and Tutsi populations both at home and abroad. The clan, according to Jean-Baptiste, is re-emerging as a form of social grouping, and it is one that, historically, cut across the ethnic divide.

A long time ago, people identified themselves in clans and this is happening again. The clans are coming back and I like it. The clans can be made of both groups [i.e., Hutu/Tutsi] ... The clans are creating a type of empathy among a group of people who say ... we will not fight amongst ourselves because we are from the same clans. (24/06/2008)

According to Hintjens (1999:250), pre-colonial Rwandan society was divided into eighteen clans, with members from each clan claiming descent from the same mythic ancestors. These clans were divided into sub-clans and then lineages, with membership consisting of Hutu and Tutsi. Clan, rather than ethnicity, was the main form of social categorization. The clan served as a linkage; a cross-cutting tie, which bridged cleavages, and brought members of the Tutsi and Hutu populations together in ways that were effectively erased during the colonial and independence eras (Gluckman 1956:5). The national Rwandan identity being promoted as a unifying force by the government is doing so at the expense of ethnic identities. It appears that in suppressing these identities, the

cleavages are only being reinforced. Clans may help to unify Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups in a way that nationality cannot, because the clan embraces these identities rather than subsuming them.

The following section focuses on individual inter-ethnic interaction in the diaspora. Data collected from the research participants indicate that the salience of individual ethnicity, in comparison to other identities and forms of belonging, greatly influences the level of ethnic boundary crossing in the diaspora. The salience of this identity is situated within the process of ethnic socialization and the level of educational attainment, and other forms of belonging and relating to others, and is juxtaposed against positive and negative ethnically-based experiences.

Individual Interaction and Relationships in the Diaspora

The homogenizing nature of ethnicity often mitigates the fact that all ethnic communities are made of individuals with experiences, personalities, opinions, values, ideas, and other identities that are uniquely their own (Barth 1994:25). Research participants contend that there is an ethno-political polarization at the community level in the Rwandan diaspora, which is not necessarily present at the individual level. Research participants do interact across the alleged ethno-political boundary, albeit to varying degrees. Three levels of interaction were indicated in the life story accounts: 1) full inter-ethnic interaction (Philippe, Thomas); 2) ethno-political boundary crossing, but limited only to those known from Rwanda prior to the genocide (Agathe, Immaculée); and, 3) non interaction with the Rwandan community in the region (Jean-Baptiste). Ignace is the only research participant who did not discuss personal interactions within the community.

Ignace's life story account was relatively brief with respect to personal detail, as he was more focused on sharing his views on the genocide and the role of non-Hutu actors in the events, and sharing his opinions on the post-genocide government. This openness with his political opinions perhaps reveals his motives for participating in this study – that is, to get his viewpoint and opinions heard. However, it could also reflect issues with the methodological process, and a failure on the part of the researcher to ask the right probing questions during the life story interview process.

In all three types of interaction, the salience of ethnic identity at the individual level, as well as ethno-politically related experiences are factors that inform the level of interaction. While none of these factors can provide a full explanation on their own, taken in conjunction, a partial explanation can be provided for individual interaction in the diaspora. Related considerations are also taken into account including age, family status, and level of education in recognition of the fact that ethnic identity is neither static nor totalizing in nature. Other identities and/or positionalities, experiences and relationships also inform interaction (Anthias 2002:500).

Full Interaction - Philippe²² and Thomas²³

Both Philippe and Thomas, who are Tutsi, indicate in their life story accounts that they cross the ethno-political divide in the diaspora and interact fully with members from both ethnic groups. Philippe, for instance, has a Hutu roommate. Thomas also interacts with members from the Hutu and Tutsi communities in the region. Their interactions are linked to the level of salience given to ethnic identity, and, in the case of Philippe, ethno-politically based experiences he had whilst growing up in Rwanda.

²² Qualitative data taken from life story interview dated 07/05/08 and 27/05/08.

²³ Qualitative data taken from life story interview dated 21/04/08 and 25/04/08.

Philippe

Philippe spent a portion of his childhood outside of Rwanda, having been born in Canada. He appears to have been unaware of ethnicity or his own ethnic identity as a young child. In fact, Philippe notes that he was unaware of his ethnic background until he went to school in Rwanda.

I didn't know whether I was Hutu or Tutsi [when I was asked at school]. The first time I asked my dad he told me, well the way he explained it seemed alright; he told me that there are white people, there are black people, there are Hutu, and there are Tutsi. He made it seem like it wasn't a big deal. I wasn't afraid of standing up [for roll call] and when [people] talked about it, I was cool with it. (07/05/09)

With respect to socialization process, Stone and Dennis (2003:64) note, “[S]ocialization is likely to include an ethnic component. The child will learn not only that he or she is ‘X’, but also what this means in terms of self esteem and worth, or appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; and what it means not to be a ‘X’, a ‘Y’, or a ‘Z’.” Ethnic socialization is therefore not only a process which establishes who one is, but also juxtaposes this identity with others (i.e., who one is not). In most cases this is done by a variety of agents including the family, social circle, cultural communities, and other social institutions.

For Philippe, his ethnicity was established as Tutsi by his father but beyond that little else was given as to the relative importance of this self-ascribed identity. Ethnicity was simply another identity used to categorize difference, and it was not given a particular political meaning or social value for Philippe as a child. This countered, for Philippe, the socio-political motivations of the ethnic roll call that occurred in school. In Rwanda, ethnic roll call in the schools was part of wider macro-level state policies that served to control and reinforce the meaning of Tutsi and Hutu ethnic identities.

Educational institutions were part of the vast macro-level state machinery used toward achieving the goal of an ethnically divided society in which one group was afforded legitimacy and rights, while the other was not (Barth 1994:21; Gourevitch 1998:57-58).

Philippe's early ethnic socialization, in which the identity was given little salience by his father, was reinforced by other experiences in his life, which revealed that Hutu and Tutsi identities were of less importance than what the government tried to promote through its various ethnic policies and activities. Even while becoming more aware of these identities and their implied connotations (i.e., Tutsi were foreign invaders and Hutu the rightful heirs of the Rwandan state), Philippe recalls that his father had many friends who were Hutu when Philippe was a child.

All I knew were Hutu [people]. Some of my dad's good friends were Hutu ... My dad's best friend was a Hutu. They lived as neighbors in Laval [Quebec] and they remained close neighbors after their return to Rwanda. My dad was the godfather to this man's son. (07/05/2008)

For Philippe, the ethnic propaganda presented was countered by what he saw at a personal level. This was in the early 1990s when anti-Tutsi propaganda was rife on the radio stations in Rwanda (Meredith 2006:497-498). Family friendships mitigated any of the implied tensions or divisions between Hutu and Tutsi propagated by the media. Philippe became very aware of the political situation in Rwanda, however, when his father became active in the *Parti Liberal* (PL) after his release from prison in 1991. The PL was formed as one of the four opposition parties to President Habyarimana's *Mouvement Révolutionnaire Nationale pour le Développement* (MRND) and had very liberal views on ethnicity. According to Prunier,

[The PL] was an urban party which tended to attract businessmen ... and soon counted in its ranks many well to do Tutsi ... [It] also tended to attract people

whose ethnic status was ambiguous ... or people married to members of the other ethnic group. (1995:124-125)

Philippe was not only aware of the liberal platform of the PL, he was also aware that many Hutu were involved in the party. “[The liberal party] was supposedly the party of the Tutsi but there were many Hutu involved too” (07/05/2008). Only 12 or 13 years of age at the time, Philippe was able to recognize that there were Hutu who were also in opposition to the ethnic policies of the current government. This again countered any implied differences between the Hutu and Tutsi population.

Thirdly, Philippe was hidden, along with other Tutsi, by a Hutu man during the genocide.

I am not sure what convinced him to hide us but he did. He hid the group of us from April 27th to mid-May ... he would arrive each night with a bloody machete and his clothes covered in blood (07/05/2008).

...

I gave the man the 10,000 Belgian Francs that had been given to me by my mother. It was a lot of money. He hid me ... The man left to fight the RPF when they began their advance on Butare sometime near the end of June and I was alone until early July. (07/05/2008)

The fourth event referred in his account occurred, as note previously, when Philippe was given shelter and cared for immediately after the genocide by a Hutu man, a doctor who knew Philippe and his family.

[The doctor] cleaned me up. He burned my clothes and got rid of the lice. He slowly gave me food because I had barely eaten in weeks ... The doctor let me stay with him and his family. (07/05/2008)

Philippe was twice protected and cared for by members of the Hutu population during, and immediately following, the genocide. The motivations of the Hutu man who hid him appear to have been monetary, which means that the opportunity for personal gain trumped any negative meaning to Philippe’s Tutsi identity. The fact that Philippe

indicated that the doctor who helped him was a Hutu moderate and a family friend further reinforces his awareness, at the time, that there were Hutu who did not follow the ethnic propaganda of the ruling Hutu elite. This harkens back to Philippe's exposure to a liberal ethnic political platform as a young teenager. If Philippe had not been exposed to a different way of thinking about ethnicity during his father's political involvement in the *Parti Liberal*, he may not have had the ability to differentiate between those Hutu who were active participants in the genocide, and those who, for other reasons, assisted their Tutsi neighbours.

These experiences help to shape Philippe's current inter-ethnic interaction and relationships within the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau at the individual level for two reasons. First, he is able to relate to individuals based on other cross-cutting ties, such as well established family friendships, rather than ethnicity. Secondly, he can differentiate between the destructive nature of ethnicity at the collective or group level, and individual ethnicity, which may not have the same meaning (Barth 1994).

Thomas

Like Philippe, Thomas lived outside of Rwanda as a child. He did not return to Rwanda with his family until the post-genocide era which implies a potential non-exposure to ethnicity in general and to the Rwandan form of ethnicity in particular. He has no direct experience of the anti-Tutsi propaganda in the 1990s, or of the genocide itself. In fact, his first experience with ethnicity in the Rwandan context, as mentioned in earlier sections, was as part of government activities (*ingando*) that sought to suppress ethnic identities. This may explain his touting of nationalist identities over ethnic ones, and perhaps provides a reason for his ethno-political boundary crossing in the diaspora.

In addition, as noted in Chapter Three, Thomas did experience what it meant to be an outsider while he was living in Uganda (i.e., he refers to this in relation to having to pay school fees as a foreigner), which seems to have reinforced a (reactionary) national Rwandan identity. This may further explain why he readily interacts with others in the diaspora, regardless of ethnic background as knowing what it means to be an outsider; he does not want others to feel the same way.

Philippe and Thomas interact with members from both ethnic groups in the diaspora. Agathe and Immaculée also interact with individuals from other ethnic groups in the diaspora. However, their interaction is limited to those with whom they had established relationships in Rwanda prior to the genocide. Reasons for this limited interaction are discussed below.

Limited Interaction - Agathe²⁴ and Immaculée²⁵

Neither Agathe nor Immaculée shared their ethnic background within the life story interview. However, both indicate interaction with others, including those from different ethnic groups, within the diaspora. This interaction appears to be limited to those individuals known previously from Rwanda, and with whom relationships were established prior to the genocide. Both refer to long term family connections with members from other ethnic groups in their life story accounts, relationships that remain active in the diaspora. For instance, Immaculée indicated that the mother of one of her friends (someone from the opposite ethnic group) in the diaspora is her godmother, while the friend is the godmother of Immaculée's daughter. Neither woman seems to interact with other Rwandans only met since coming to the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

²⁴ Data taken from life story interview dated 11/05/08.

²⁵ Data taken from life story interview dated 18/06/08.

Agathe

For Agathe, at least, the most obvious reason for her decision to remain apart from other Rwandans relates back to the ethno-politically based community level divide, and her desire not to become caught up in the antagonistic schism between the Hutu and Tutsi communities. This is reinforced by Agathe's comment regarding a lack of understanding as to why people in the diaspora were not willing to move on from the genocide and the divide it has caused.²⁶ It is apparent that the pre-existing Hutu and Tutsi relationships from Rwanda stand outside of this divide and, as such, have been able to survive despite the fractured diasporic relations. These relationships are based on something other than ethnicity, which has created strong social bonds and cross-cutting ties between individuals in the midst of ethnic cleavages at the level of the diasporic group(s).

The strength of such Hutu and Tutsi individual relationships supports the importance of other identities or forms of relating to others at the individual level, and to the process of ethnic socialization, over blind adherence to a collective ethnic identity. For Agathe, ethnicity was given little importance by her mother, who, instead, reinforced the importance of being a good person. The minimization of the significance of ethnic identity went against that being taught in the schools and experienced by Agathe daily in class, through ethnic roll.

[At school an] ethnic group was called and I stood up. The teacher asked me what I was doing. I did not know what [my ethnicity] was. When I went home I asked my mom and she said it was not important. I told her I wanted to know where I belonged and she said it was not important. She told me to be a good person and spend time with good people. That was what was important.
(11/05/2008)

²⁶ See Chapter Three, Section 3.4.

Agathe's mother's statement can be explained in two ways. Ethnicity was unimportant as a form of belonging to Agathe's mother and, therefore, was minimized against other more important ones. Agathe comes from a strong Catholic background in which the teachings of the Christian faith were very much a part of her upbringing. It is possible that religious or spiritual qualities or 'being a good Christian' had more salience than ethnic identity. Agathe's indication that her religious beliefs are still relevant in her present life reinforces the significance of this aspect of her identity

Secondly, ethnic identification had such significance at the median (e.g., community, school) and macro (state) levels, that the minimizing of this identity within the family may have been a strategic response. 'Goodness' became a counteractive to an identity with negative meaning. Agathe's life story account is imbued with experiences, such as the death of her father²⁷ that personally reinforced the negative nature of ethnic identity in Rwanda. She recalls the government's enforced banishment of Agathe and her mother and siblings to her father's village, after his 'disappearance', as a lonely and isolating time in her life.

[When the government] sent us to the village we had no rights. We had to stay in the village and never leave unless we asked the mayor ... This was our particular case, not for anyone else. It was very difficult, like [living in] a prison. I was very aware of this because I saw my mom having to go to the mayor all the time for permission [to leave the village]. People did not talk to us in the beginning. I do not know if they were scared. [My family] was feeling so alone for the first while in the village. (11/05/2008)

Agathe's experience in the village was one of isolation and initial feelings of being ostracized. Taken with Agathe's comment in the previous chapter about feeling for the first time a sense of belonging upon her arrival in Canada, Agathe has felt a sense of

²⁷ As presented in Agathe's life story account in Chapter Three, her father was taken away and killed during an ethno-political crisis in the early 1970s.

separation and not belonging for most of her life in Rwanda. She was possibly made aware in school and through her experiences in the village after the death of her father that she was somehow different, and this difference had a negative connotation. Yet, this was persistently countered by her mother who taught her daughter that goodness trumped any ethnic identity. Because of this Agathe is able to look beyond ethnicity, at a personal level, to interact with Rwandans outside her own ethnic group. This is also despite personal experiences during the genocide. However, as indicated previously, those with whom she interacts within the diaspora are those she knows from Rwanda. She chooses not to interact with individuals who remain fixated on the genocide and the resulting ethno-political divide.

Immaculée

Immaculée, too, was brought up without any overt significance placed on ethnic identity. “I wasn’t raised to know the differences between the [ethnic] groups. My parents didn’t show me the differences. For me it was like that - I was unaware” (18/06/2008). However, Immaculée’s experiences are somewhat different than Agathe’s. She describes her life as one that was not ‘typically Rwandan’, because of her father’s position in the post-independence Hutu governments. Yet, this did not mean she did not feel the increasing ethnic tension in the country in the years immediately preceding the genocide. She chose to stay away from Rwanda after her last visit home in 1993, because she felt the country was becoming too dangerous. She has not returned to Rwanda since her last visit and (at the time of the interview) does not think she will return in the near future. She states, “I [feel] personally that I [will] be targeted by people as well as by the government” (18/06/2008). Immaculée’s comments reinforce the ethno-political nature

of the social divide in Rwanda, and also the feeling that, despite a veneer of nationality, there is still deep rooted animosity towards those who participated in the Kayibanda and Habyarimana political regimes. In the potentially highly ethno-politically charged diaspora, Immaculée is making a conscious decision to remain separate from the community, in part, perhaps, because of her family background and fear of being targeted by one group or another. By connecting only with those she knows from her past life in Rwanda, she can be secure in the fact that they relate to her on a different, non-ethnic level.

One final note about the salience given to ethnic identity in the Rwandan diaspora, and the limited interaction of Agathe and Immaculée with others within the diaspora group relates to their role as mothers. Both have a desire (or hope) for their children to live without this particular identity. Immaculée states,

Because of everything we went through, it will not be easy [for us to come together]. I think it will be better for our kids. They will not think of the ethnic thing but for our generation it will not be easy. (18/06/2008)

Agathe does not speak to her children about what happened in the past, nor does she wish for her children to know what it means to be Hutu or Tutsi. The two women are mimicking the actions of their parents from decades ago by minimizing or erasing ethnicity from the minds of their children. By limiting their interaction in Ottawa-Gatineau to those they relate to outside of ethnic parameters, they are ensuring that their children are socialized into non-ethnic identities, or multicultural Canadian ethnic identities that do not include the significance given to them in Rwanda and by others in the diaspora.

Agathe and Immaculée participate in limited interaction in the diaspora; Philippe and Thomas, participate fully across ethno-political boundaries. Jean-Baptiste, however has chosen complete separation from the entire Rwandan diasporic community, both Hutu and Tutsi. His reasons for this are discussed below.

Non-interaction in the diaspora – Jean-Baptiste²⁸

Jean-Baptiste indicates that he is in contact with only one other Rwandan whom he knew from his life in Rwanda prior to the genocide; someone who also holds himself apart from other Rwandans in Ottawa-Gatineau. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, he is considered to have non-interaction with the community as a whole, that is, with neither ethnic group. His non-interaction has a foundation in the established divide in the diaspora community and his own mixed ethnic heritage.

Others still have the fixation of Hutu and Tutsi. I found that the community was divided between Hutu and Tutsi when I came to [Ottawa-Gatineau] in 2002. I said, ‘No, I cannot go either way, so I will stay in the middle’.
(04/07/2008)

Jean-Baptiste feels he cannot choose one identity over the other so he refuses either. This harkens back to Jean-Baptiste’s statement regarding his choice of a national identity rather than an ethnic one in Chapter Three. It also has to do with the fact that in choosing one he is perhaps reinforcing the collective meaning of that identity unintentionally. This perspective has been influenced by a number of events and experiences, which are linked to his dual Hutu-Tutsi ethnic background.

Jean-Baptiste was born outside of Rwanda, as noted previously, and spent the first 13 years of his life in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was unaware of ethnicity until he moved to Rwanda with his parents. In fact, he stated, “All of what I know of

²⁸ Data included in this section taken from interviews dated 24/06/08 and 04/07/08.

ethnicity I learned in school [in Rwanda]” (04/07/2008). He recalls being asked during ethnic roll call if he was Hutu or Tutsi but he did not know the answer. When he asked his father, Jean-Baptiste was told, “You are Hutu because I am Hutu” (04/07/2008).

For Jean-Baptiste, who is of mixed ethnic parentage (which reinforces the idea that these identities were of limited importance at the individual level in the pre-genocidal era) his father’s statement about Jean-Baptiste’s Hutu identity was a simple statement of fact. In Rwanda, ethnicity is determined by patrilineal descent. As a Hutu, Jean-Baptiste’s father was part of the majority (i.e., population and power) population in Rwandan society. He could have used Jean-Baptiste’s question regarding his ethnic identity as a way to introduce his son to the socio-political meaning and opportunity afforded to Hutu. However, he did not.

As part of a massive anti-Tutsi campaign under president Kayibanda who sought to strictly reinforce the quota systems, all Tutsi were forced out of the university at Butare in 1973 (Uvin 1997:102). Jean-Baptiste was beaten because he had a Tutsi mother but was allowed to stay because his father was Hutu. He was punished for one part of his ethnic heritage, and then allowed opportunity because of the other.

Jean-Baptiste was also in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994 but he shared very little of his personal experiences during that time. His experience, however, was somewhat different than that of Agathe and Philippe because Jean-Baptiste, as an official Hutu, was not targeted in the same way. He was able to escape to the relative safety of a local hotel and was eventually evacuated by the Belgians.

As the oldest of the research participants, Jean-Baptiste has years of experiencing the particular form and politicized nature of ethnicity in his country, which came into

effect under the Hutu ethno-nationalist regime at independence. His experiences as an individual of mixed ethnic background meant that he was inundated with negative ethnic portrayals of his mother's ethnic group, while at the same time hearing that he and his father, as Hutu, were the true rights holders in the country. His experiences have affected the way he views ethnicity, in general, and his own rejection of both these identities as an individual. The result has been that he refuses to interact with those who continue to give a high level of salience to this form of identity individually, and as part of relating or not relating to others.

This section has discussed the factors informing the three levels of individual interaction (full, partial, and non-interaction) found within the diaspora according to data provided from the life story interviews. The next section focuses on the key findings and convergences and divergences between the accounts detailed above.

Key Findings

Numerous similarities and differences of experience are found in the life accounts, as well as four main findings in relation to the nature of ethnicity and the genocide in individual interaction in the diaspora: i) ethnicity is a matter of degree; ii) early ethnic socialization informs the level of salience given to individual ethnicity; iii) ethnicity is not the only indicator informing interaction; and, iv) the genocide does not have a direct defining role in individual interaction in the diaspora. These are discussed below.

i. Ethnicity is a matter of degree.

The key finding and main point of convergence from the accounts above is that ethnic group membership does not automatically equate with a high level of

attachment to that particular identity at the individual level. As noted by Williams (1989:417), “From the standpoint of the individual, ethnicity is a matter of degree”. Belonging to an ethnic group also does not mean that the individual takes on the collective point of view of the group, or defines self and others solely within these parameters. The community level ethnic divide in the diaspora is linked to the homogenizing perpetrator-victim role of the Hutu and Tutsi during the genocide, as well as to the ongoing perpetuation of these roles in the post-genocide era. Yet, at the individual level, the research participants do not limit their interactions as a result of these ascribed and homogenized ethnic categorizations.

Thomas, Philippe, Agathe and Immaculée interact and have relationships with others within the community regardless of ethnicity, and while interaction is limited to those known from Rwanda for Immaculée and Agathe, they still do have relationships that cross ethno-political boundaries. Their non- interaction with previously unknown members of the diaspora is due to the (purported) ongoing community focus on ethnicity and the underlying meaning ascribed to these identities, rather than any personal animosity towards a particular ethnic group or a high level of ethnic salience. Jean-Baptiste chooses non-interaction for similar reasons, but his choice is informed by his own experiences as an individual of mixed ethnic background and his personal understanding of the socio-political detriments and benefits afforded these two identities in Rwanda.

ii. Early ethnic socialization informs the level of salience given to individual ethnicity.

The salience of ethnic identity, within this particular diasporic context, can be linked back to early ethnic socialization experiences. From an early age individuals are

socialized by a variety of actors into specific groups, whether ethnic, religious, national, or linguistic. The agents involved in this process include, but are not limited to, parents/family, peer groups, educational institutions, religious groups, community and cultural organizations, and the state. Each of these micro, median and macro level forces compete as they seek to inform and influence individual identity (Umana-Taylor 2006:391; Barth 1994:15, 20-27).

The family is said to be one of the most important agents of ethnic socialization and identity formation. However, it is not the only one; family is no longer the “only experiential basis from which identity is formed” (Barth 1994:15). Schools are also integral to the process. This institution propagates the dominant myths, lore, history, and beliefs of a society (Becker 1990:48). In Rwanda this meant the propagation of ethnicity. As noted by Jean- Baptiste, “All of what I know of ethnicity I learned in school [in Rwanda]” (04/07/2008).

This is another area of convergence within the accounts of Agathe, Philippe and Jean-Baptiste. The three were first introduced to ethnicity in Rwanda at school as part of ethnic roll call, and all sought answers about their ethnic identity from immediate family members. In all three cases, parents minimized the importance of ethnic identity to their children in different ways. It also appears that this was the case for Immaculée as well. This served as a foundation in which the family as a socializing agent could inform how individuals understood and related to ethnicity as an identity and ways of seeing others in the future.

iii. Ethnicity is not the only indicator informing interaction

Ethnic identity is not a totalizing one. Individuals are situated within multiple positionalities and forms of belonging and otherness outside of ethnicity that have meaning and significance within identity construction, and in the determination of ties and links to different groups and individuals (Anthias 2002: Schlee 2008:49). For instance, Agathe's identity as a Catholic and a Christian is an integral part of who she is as a person. Her faith and the moral teachings and lessons she received as a child (i.e., be a good person) remain meaningful as an adult, and, thus, may have more significance for her personally than her ethnic identity. Motherhood, noted above in relation to Agathe and Immaculée's limited interaction in the diaspora, also appears to have an influence on whom they interact with and why. A desire to protect their children from negative ethnicity is situated within this identity. This particular gender role may also explain why they limit their interaction to those with whom there are long term and pre-existing ties unlike Philippe and Thomas. As men and non-parents, Philippe and Thomas do not have the concern of raising their children in this particular environment, and, therefore, can interact much more freely within different ethnic groups.

Belonging to a certain age group can influence the level of life experience had by an individual, and therefore knowledge and understanding of particular events and situations. The older a person is, the more time there is to reflect, compare and contrast different experiences and societal and political modes. There is a marked contrast between Philippe, Thomas and Jean-Baptiste in relation to their interactions within the diaspora, which can be partially attributed to their differences in age. Jean-Baptiste is the oldest of the research participants. He therefore has far more life experience upon which

to build and base his decisions regarding whom to interact with and why. While Philippe's experiences during the genocide were far more extreme (i.e., the death of his entire family), Jean-Baptiste has decades of negatively situated ethno-politically based experiences (i.e., at school in the 1960s, experiences at university in the 1970s, etc.) outside of the genocide. These experiences are not irrelevant, because of their non-relation to the genocide

The level of educational attainment is a final positionality or identity of significance, and one within which there is a clear convergence among the research participants. There are two contrary positions regarding the effect of the level of education achieved on the salience of ethnicity at the individual level. The first is situated within the findings of Bannon et al. (2004), which indicate that formal education increases the likelihood of ethnicity being given salience by an individual, because educational institutions are one of the foundation agents in ethnic socialization. In Rwanda, academic institutions played an integral role in the government imposed construction of particular ethnic groups having particular socio-political meaning and preferential treatment under different political regimes.

However, the second position, situated within the research of Norris and Mattes (2003) and Bossuroy (2006), contrasts with Bannon et al. (2004), in that these authors find that as formal education levels increase, traditional values and identity, including ethnic identification, decreases in importance. A higher level of formal education (secondary, university) widens individual horizons, promotes increased interaction with other social groups, and reduces dependency on ethnic affiliations. This theory appears to be automatically disproved in relation to

Rwanda as educational institutions were deeply involved in the perpetuation of government ethnically ascribed policies and activities.

Two interrelated points are raised within the research participant life story accounts, which make the latter theory about education possible. The first is that none of the participants attended school in Rwanda for the total duration of their education, which means that their education did not always have an ethnic component. Jean-Baptiste and Thomas, in particular, did not attend school in Rwanda until they were teenagers, and, as Thomas did not attend school in Rwanda until after the genocide, it is less likely that he had any exposure to ethnic indoctrination via the educational system. Immaculée spent time in a European country as a child, so it is likely that she also was introduced to different ways of thinking and seeing the world. Similarly, Philippe was born in Canada and therefore most likely spent time in some form of early schooling.

Secondly, all study participants except Agathe, have either an undergraduate or graduate degree from foreign universities rather than from Rwanda. Philippe, Thomas and Jean-Baptiste have or are working towards degrees from Canadian universities. Immaculée's university education was in Germany. Because of this, they are exposed to different knowledge bases and individuals from different backgrounds.

As Thomas, Philippe, Agathe and Immaculée all indicated that they do cross the alleged community ethnic divide in the diaspora, it appears that there is some correlation between the level of education and reduced levels of ethnic identification and its role in social interaction, as posited by Norris and Mattes

(2003). While Jean-Baptiste maintains a position of non-interaction in the diaspora, the theory still has resonance, because Jean-Baptiste has chosen to limit his interaction with other Rwandans, not because of the importance of a particular ethnic identity at the individual level, but because ethnicity remains highly salient at the community level, from which he chooses to separate himself.

iv. The genocide does not have a direct defining role in individual interaction in the diaspora.

The initial outsider's view on the reason for the polarization of the Rwandan community in the region is attributed to the 1994 genocide. It is a factor in the divide, but so, too, is the current ethno-political situation in the country and the historic manipulation of ethnicity in the country. Thus, the genocide is not totalizing in that regard. At the individual level, the role of the genocide in individual perceptions of ethnicity and interaction in the diaspora is somewhat hard to define because it varies. For Jean-Baptiste and Agathe, it is the impact of the genocide on community interaction that informs their own choices of whom to interact with in the diaspora. They do not suggest that because those people are Hutu they will not interact with them, or vice versa. Rather they choose to remain separate from those who *do* think like that. It is a subtle but important difference. Immaculée, who was not present during the genocide, follows a similar path. This indicates that presence/non-presence in the country during the genocidal process does not necessarily have an impact on the level of individual interaction in the diaspora.

Philippe's experiences during the genocide also show the complexity of that particular time period in relation to the difference between group and individual action. Assisted twice by members of the Hutu population, and reinforced by earlier exposure to individuals who did not fit the 'Hutu mold', he is able to see that the mobilized actions of

the group at the median level do not necessarily translate to the individual/micro level. This has carried over into the formation and/or maintenance of relations across ethnic boundaries in the diaspora.

Summary and Conclusion

Research participants suggest that ethno-political antecedents, rooted in the historic construction of ethnicity which culminated in the 1994 genocide, and the post genocide socio-political situation in Rwanda, have been transferred to the diaspora and, according to the research participants, have caused a community level divide between the Hutu and Tutsi populations in Ottawa-Gatineau. The similarity of antecedents to the divide in Rwanda and in Canada reinforces the persistence of a connection between diasporic populations and the homeland. It may be that the purported tension in the diaspora has been somewhat reinforced by the nature of life in Canada. The Canadian government's multicultural and democratic practices may promote the retention of ethnic or cultural identity and freedom of expression.

At the same time, inter-ethnic interaction and relationships occur at the individual level. Three levels of interaction were identified from the life story accounts: full inter-ethnic interaction (Philippe; Thomas), partial interaction with those known previously from the homeland (Agathe; Immaculée), and non-interaction (Jean-Baptiste). Interaction levels are situated within the individual salience given ethnic identity, which is rooted in the process of early ethnic socialization and other positive or negative ethnically based experiences. Other identities and positionalities beyond ethnic identification may have more salience at the personal level, and in relation to those with whom the individual

interacts. These include: religious affiliations, gender roles (i.e., motherhood), age, and level of educational attainment, which are interwoven into a complex web of personal factors that collectively offer partial explanations for personal choices surrounding interaction and relationships in the diaspora. The dichotomy between the reported community divide and individual levels of interaction in the Rwandan diaspora highlights the variety of positions and identities held by individuals within different contexts, and serves to reinforce a “persisting diversity of positions and a continued potential for [individual] coexistence, even at the height of [inter-group] conflict” (Barth 1994:25).

The dichotomy between the perceived community divide and the varying levels of interaction at the individual level brings to the forefront the issue of public discourse versus private action. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the fact that individuals interact personally with those with whom they are supposedly divided at the community level, somewhat challenges the very existence of such a divide. The possibility that there is no polarization in the community, which could not be confirmed or refuted within the context of this study, raises questions regarding the possible manufacturing of the divide and the factors which influence this social construction.

For instance, the 14th anniversary of the genocide, along with commemorative and public awareness raising events in the region, occurred within the same time period as some of the interviews. The anniversary may have reawakened feelings that are suppressed in the everyday, and reminded individuals of the impact of the genocide on the country and at a personal level. In addition, within the same timeframe, a conference was held in Montreal, which allegedly challenged the widely accepted version of the genocide (i.e., the Tutsi were the victims and the Hutu the perpetrators) and spoke to the

victimization of the Hutu population instead.²⁹ Both of these events may have reintroduced or reinforced the presence of an ethno-political social divide between Rwandan Hutu and Tutsi at home and in the diaspora. Therefore, the articulation of a divide within the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau may be a reaction to these events rather than a true description of this particular diasporic population. Thus the temporal context in which individuals shared their story must be taken into account. A different description of relations within the wider diasporic population may have been articulated if the study took place at a different time.

²⁹ The conference *The Media and Rwanda: The Difficult Search for Truth* was held in Montreal, Quebec in late March 2008.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

The previous two chapters presented and analyzed the research data from individual interviews with Rwandans in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. This chapter consists of the summary of the key issues and findings of the research, reiterating some of the main analytical concepts and issues presented in previous chapters. The strengths and limitations of the study are raised, as well as issues for future research, before a final concluding section to the study.

Summary and Key Findings

As indicated in Chapter One, this thesis study explores interactions within the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada. The examination is situated within a conceptual and analytical framework related to diaspora and ethnicity. The research focus is the outcome of an observation by a non-Rwandan academic who indicated that the Rwandan community in the region is ethnically polarized due to the 1994 genocide.

As well as conducting preparatory background research through a review of the relevant literature on Rwanda's socio-political history, theories of ethnicity and recent writings on diaspora, the study also required the reading of literature on the life story methodology. The life story interview is a qualitative research methodology often used within anthropology, which focuses on the 'lived lives' of individuals shared through personal narratives and stories. This study, includes life

story interviews with six Rwandans (four men and two women) living in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau, carried out over a four-month period from April to July 2008.

The research participants indicate a community level polarization in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada. Participants in this study contend that the divide is ethno-politically based; partially situated within the 1994 genocide and post-genocide politics in Rwanda. At the same time, however, life story interviews with these same participants reveal that there is, indeed, social interaction at the individual level across the so-called ethno-political divide, which seems to contradict this divide. This speaks to the potential difference between rhetoric and reality, and raises questions regarding the factors that may influence the manufacturing of a divide if one is not present in reality. This will be discussed further later in this section.

As seen in previous chapters, the life story information gathered reveals that both positive and negative ethnically-based personal experiences influence the level and form of individual interaction between these Rwandans. Such personal experiences also contribute toward the salience of ethnic identity accorded by individuals vis à vis other identities and forms of belonging and separateness they may experience.

Findings from the study indicate that the ethno-political divide in the Rwandan diaspora, as alleged in discussions with participants in this study, is reflective of the socio-political schism found in Rwanda. It is important to recognize that ethnicity, as a constructed and then instrumentalized form of social categorization, has been a major force informing social divisions and cleavages in

Rwandan society since the beginning of the colonial era (Mamdani 2001:70; Barth 1994:12). The terms Tutsi and Hutu, which originally connoted socio-economic categories, were recreated and reinforced as specific ethnic identities differentiated along racial lines by the colonizers. These ethnic constructs were then manipulated at the macro (state) level by various political actors in the post-colonial era to maintain power and control, particularly during times of crisis. Ethnicity effectively became a tool when ethnically-based policies (i.e., ethnic identity cards; ethnic roll call; the ethnic quota system) were used by those in power to divide Rwandan society into those with in-group status and those with out-group status (Welsh 1996:480). During the majority of the colonial era, the Tutsi had in-group status, while the Hutu were relegated to the periphery of society. However, as mentioned in Chapter Two, the last decade of the colonial era (1950s) saw a shift in the status of Hutu and Tutsi in society, with Hutu gaining a greater level of political recognition in the colonial state. In the post-independence era (1962 until the genocide), political and social supremacy went to Hutus, while Tutsis were relegated to secondary citizens with limited rights and opportunities in the state.

Data collected from the life story interviews also indicate that the post-genocide political situation in the country, resulting from the government enforced suppression of ethnic identities and the ongoing immunity granted to the Rwandan Patriotic Front by the government for their role in the genocide, also contributes to the purported divide between Rwandans in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. The link between societal divisions in the homeland and in the Rwandan population in Ottawa-Gatineau, reinforces the literature regarding the ongoing nature of the

connection between homeland and diaspora, and the influence of historical antecedents and situations at home, including ethnic conflicts, on relations within the diaspora (Dufoix 2008:93). Lewellen (2002:169) notes that, “It is not only culture that is reproduced in the new setting, but also ... conflicts that follow the émigrés.”

The host society is a second factor supporting the persistence of ethnic conflicts in diasporic populations. Multicultural policies, which promote the maintenance of ethnic ideas, allow these forms of belonging and otherness to remain salient, thereby encouraging individual and group self-identification within ethnic parameters. Host societies that support democratic principles and freedom of expression, allow opposing views to be shared, which can serve to reinforce and exacerbate tensions within diasporic populations (Gayer 2007:26). Individuals in diasporic populations are able to participate in a form of non-responsible long distance nationalism in which they can freely express opposition to the government regime of the homeland without fear of recrimination or punishment (Anderson 1992:11).

Despite individual accounts claiming an ethno-politically based divide within the Rwandan diasporic population in the region, varying levels and forms of inter-ethnic interaction appear to occur at the individual level. This apparent contradiction, firstly, reinforces the idea of the heterogeneous, divisive and stratified nature of diasporic populations, as posited by Hall (1990:235) and Skrbis (1999:72). Secondly, it undermines any notion that membership in an ethnic group presupposes a high degree of meaning given to that particular identity (Barth

1994:15). Finally, it reinforces the presence of cross-cutting ties, which bind people together, even in the midst of conflict (Gluckman 1956:4; Schlee 2008:47). These include family ties and relationships that are situated within non-ethnic identities and forms of relating to one another.

Data from the life story accounts show that three levels of interaction take place at the individual level within the Rwandan diaspora: i) full interaction across ethnic boundaries (Philippe; Thomas); ii) interaction across ethnic boundaries but limited to those only known from Rwanda prior to the genocide (Agathe; Immaculée); and, iii) non-interaction with Rwandans in the region (Jean-Baptiste). With respect to the interactions of Philippe, Thomas, Agathe and Immaculée, in particular, a link is found between the level of individual interaction in the diaspora and the degree of salience given to ethnic identity. The salience of this identity at the individual level is informed by the process of early ethnic socialization. Family members are found to be key agents in ethnic identity socialization, and strong opponents to other actors and agents seeking to inform ethnic identity formation and meaning at the median (community, educational institutions) and macro (government) levels (Barth 1994:15; Becker 1990:48).

Ethnicity is not totalizing in nature, but, rather, individuals exist within a variety of positionalities (i.e., age, gender, family, occupation, social status, religion, interest group membership, and level of experience, etc.) and forms of belonging and otherness, which can have a higher level of identity salience than ethnicity (Anthias 2002:502). Additionally, and in line with previous findings by Norris and Matte (2003) and Bossuroy (2006), the level of education an individual

attains appears to have a role in the relevance of individual ethnicity; higher levels of education result in a reduction of ethnic salience due to exposure to other ideas and opportunities for interaction.

With respect to the original statement regarding the role of the 1994 genocide in the apparent ethnic divide in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau, this study finds that, while the event of the genocide may be seen as a factor at the community level (along with the post-genocide political situation in Rwanda and situated within the manufactured historic divide), it cannot be so easily defined at the individual level. Direct or indirect experience in the genocide does not directly correlate to interaction/non-interaction between Rwandans in the diaspora. Certainly, Philippe, who survived the genocide while losing his entire family, and who fully interacts with others in the diaspora, refutes any attempts at generalization in this regard. Rather, it appears to be a combination of individual experience, the salience of ethnic identity, and individual perceptions of the Tutsi/victim/innocent and Hutu/perpetrator/guilty dichotomy that partially informs personal choices related to limited and/or non-interaction in the diaspora. Therefore, the genocide is not the sole determinant of the form and level of personal inter-ethnic interaction in the diaspora.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Studies situated at the micro or individual level provide valuable insights into the internal (and often dichotomous) workings of a population or group that would be unavailable if only focusing at the wider median or macro levels of

investigation. This micro-level research “gets at the [specific] world of the agent or subject’ (Mayput & Morehouse 1994:20). The main strength of this study, and of this type of qualitative anthropological life story research, in general, is that it allows individual views and experiences to challenge and/or provide different levels of meaning to overarching observations about a particular phenomenon (i.e., the alleged ethnic divide in the Rwandan diaspora in the region is a result of the 1994 genocide). In doing so, hidden meanings, unique perspectives, non-obvious features, and/or previously unheard voices are revealed (ten Have 2004:5). The data collected from the life story interviews provide another layer of nuance to the potential source of the divide in the Rwandan community in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau, and reveal the complexity and variety of factors informing individual interaction. At the same time, the small number of interviews that were conducted, due to the challenges of finding research participants, limits the voices that are heard within the scope of the study. Research participants appear to come from a relatively small subset of well-off and well-educated Rwandans. This must be taken into account, as their experiences, views and opinions may be atypical, and not necessarily those of the wider Rwandan diasporic population in the region, or of other Rwandans in general.

Due to ethical concerns and recognition of the potential sensitivity of issues or topics that might be raised in the course of the life story interviews, and a desire to minimize harm, research participants were told that questions surrounding individual ethnicity or personal experiences during the genocide would not be asked directly. It was left to the discretion of the research participants if this was

something they would like to share. As a result, only Philippe, Thomas and Jean-Baptiste indicated their ethnic background, while Immaculée, Agathe and Ignace did not. It was, therefore, difficult to ensure an equal representation of Rwandan Tutsi and Hutu in the study. Determining if there is a correlation between ethnic identity, individual views on the community divide and individual interaction in the diaspora was also affected by the fact that not all participants indicated their ethnic identity. Future research on this topic would have to consider this limitation and perhaps modify the research methodology.

Issues for Future Research

This study focuses specifically on individual views regarding the divisions in the Rwandan diasporic community in the region of Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada, using the term ‘community’ in the broadest sense of the word, that is, as a group of people with a shared history or background (i.e., all consider themselves to be Rwandan) living in close proximity to one another in a specific area. As noted in Chapter One, and considered a limitation to this study, first hand exposure to actual manifestations of the purported divide did not occur within the scope of this thesis research. Research examining the formal structures of the Rwandan community, such as the organizations and associations listed in Chapter Three (i.e., Humura, the Rwandan Association of Ottawa- Gatineau; the Commuant des Immigrants de la Région d’Ottawa-Gatineau (CIRO); and, the Rwandan Social Services and Family Counselling (RSSFC) organization) would provide another level of meaning to the

study and to the presence and/or nature of the community divide as expressed by the research participants.

This raises another issue for future consideration, and one that will be addressed once again here. If a discrepancy were to be found between individual discourse on the divide and the actuality of community level interactions in the diaspora (which to some extent has already been challenged in this study by the level of individual interactions) what is the reason for the manufacturing of the divide? Studies in anthropology often find a disjuncture between individual public discourse and private action. As noted in Chapter One, the life story is a social event. Individuals who share their life story do so within particular social and temporal contexts, which inform the narratives or responses provided. For instance, it was indicated in Chapter Four that the interviews took place within the same time period as the 14th anniversary of the genocide and a conference, which apparently challenged the Tutsi victimization during the genocide. These events may have influenced individual views on the presence and nature of a societal divide in the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau and provide a partial explanation as to why individuals insist on a wider social divide even while their personal actions speak otherwise. Further research might help to determine if the social divide is a reality or if it is a manifestation resulting from particular circumstances such as those noted above.

There is a significant Rwandan population in Montreal, Quebec, and one of the research participants indicated that this community is also divided along ethno-political lines. A comparative study between the populations in Ottawa-Gatineau

and Montreal may highlight differences and similarities between the populations and other factors that might inform community and individual interaction. This follows the research of Gayer (1998) who compared internal diasporic relations in London, England and Paris, France, and would further contribute to the limited social science and anthropological research on relations within diasporic populations in Canada.

The study of second generation diaspora members is relatively common in diaspora studies (see for example Andall 2002; Kurien 2005; Levitt & Waters 2006; and Wessendorf 2007) but, again, there appears to be minimal research on internal diasporic relations focusing on this generation. Several questions come to mind in this regard: To what extent does the second generation hold onto the homeland identity of their parents? For example, in this study, Agathe and Immaculée indicated that they do not want their children to be brought up to identify and relate with others within ethnic parameters, because they have both seen firsthand the results of this type of self-other identification at home and in the diaspora. To what extent, and by what external actors and influences (i.e., beyond the socialization of the family), has the second generation internalized the identities and conflicts (ethnic, religious, political, etc.) of their parents in the diaspora? What is the impact of such interactions with others on the second generation in the diaspora? These are other considerations for future research with regard to the Rwandan diaspora in the region specifically, and diasporic populations in general.

Final Conclusions

Religious, resource-based, ethnic and political conflict within, rather than between, countries is a global reality that can result in mass population movements and re-settlement in new countries and regions of the world. Often, the conflicts in the homeland are carried to the new country of residence, where they are reinforced or reformulated within the specific diasporic context. The study of internal relations within diasporic populations is, therefore, increasingly relevant, not only to anthropologists and other social science practitioners, but also to policy-makers, governments, social services organizations and immigration and refugee agencies working with diasporic populations and individuals.

In seeking to understand as to whether the Rwandan diaspora in Ottawa-Gatineau is ethnically polarized due to the 1994 genocide, this study indicates the following: the complexity of the diasporic condition; the nature of individual connections to the homeland; the potential role of the homeland and host country in internal diasporic relations; the possible presence of an internal schism in the Rwandan diasporic population, according to individuals' perceptions; and, the persistence of cross-cutting ties that bind individuals together before, during and after conflict. It also reinforces the fact that membership in a particular group does not automatically equate to a high level of salience given to that particular identity. Individuals are situated within a variety of positionalities, identities, and forms of belonging and otherness, and personal experiences which inform interaction. As the life stories in this study reveal, personal interactions at the individual level can rise above the most difficult tensions and conflicts witnessed (or believed to occur)

in relations at the group level. This, in itself, may be a useful point of departure for community leaders and policy-makers aiming to resolve problems within apparently divided diasporic communities.

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APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INFORMATION & CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (ORAL SCRIPT)

My name is Wendy Owen and I am a Masters of Arts (M.A.) candidate in Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. I am under the academic supervision of Louise de la Gorgendiere (Ph.D). Contact information is as follows:

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Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this research project.

The primary purpose of this research project is to conduct life history interviews with Rwandans refugees and/or immigrants in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. In analyzing individual life stories, this study aims to provide insights into Rwandan refugees' memories, thoughts, and understanding about their lives before, during, and after the Rwandan genocide. In particular, this study will examine the discourse (spoken words) used to relate these memories and the events, choices and actions of importance to each individual prior to, during and after the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

This study involves conducting interviews with different individuals over a one to three hour period within the potential for more than one interview session. These interviews will take place in a location of choosing by both of us to endure your comfort and security. Due to the potential sensitivity of the topics there is a moderate to high risk that you may experience emotional, psychological or social/cultural harm. You may feel distress or emotional and psychological suffering if revealing events from your past that are painful, particularly if they are related to the genocide and its impact on your life and the life of family and friends. Emotional and psychological risks may also relate to you experiences as a refugee if this is how you came to Canada. Participation in the study and the sharing of information may impact your interaction with other Rwandans in Canada if there is a concern that sensitive information is shared that may incriminate others. Others within the Rwandan-Canadian community may react negatively to your involvement in the study and see it as a form of choosing sides.

However, the following steps will be taken to minimize these risks: All the interviews will include various questions but at no time will I ask specific questions regarding your ethnic identification or the genocide itself. It is your decisions if you wish to share any information about the genocide. As a research participant, you have the right to not answer certain questions or to end the interview at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study completely, you may choose if I may use any of the information that you have provided, or request that it be destroyed. I will make contact information for counseling services available to you if you wish to seek support due to stress as a result of the interview process. You may ask me at any time to withdraw the data volunteered by you during the study.

I will take notes during the interview and will only record (audio) the interview with your permission. You will have full anonymity of response and information in the final research project and my notes will be coded to safeguard your identity. Pseudonyms will be used in the M.A. thesis when including direct quotes and any other information from the interview process. I will not share your involvement in the research process with any other participants, nor will I share it with any other individuals or contacts that are aware of the project.

All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home. Any recorded data from the interviews will be kept on a removable device (i.e., memory stick) rather than being saved on the computer. This memory stick will be locked in a filing cabinet in my home when not being used. Research data from this interview will be used in the final M.A. thesis as well as possible presentations for academic purposes including articles, conferences, papers, workshops and class presentations. The research findings will be made available to you through my final thesis at your request. Please contact me if you wish to see the final research product.

This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. Please direct any questions or concerns regarding your involvement in the study to the Research Ethics Committee Chair. Contact information is as follows:

Prof. Antonio Gualtieri, Chair
Carleton University Research Ethics Committee
1125 Colonel By Drive.
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
Tel: 613 520 2517
E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Oral Consent Script

As a way to ensure maximum potential for anonymity, I will only ask for your verbal consent for your involvement in the research process. Therefore, do you understand the information that I have shared with you regarding this research project and do you voluntarily agree to participate in this project.

APPENDIX II: SAMPLE INTERVIEW/PROBING QUESTIONS

1. When, where were you born?
2. Tell me about your childhood.
3. What is the most vivid memory from your childhood?
4. Tell me about your time at school. What do you remember most about school as a child?
5. Who did you play with? How did you meet/know your friends?
6. Describe your family.
7. What is your most vivid memory from your life in Rwanda?
8. What does 'home' mean to you?
9. How do you identify yourself (nationally)? Why this particular identity?
10. What does it mean to be a citizen of Rwanda? of Africa? of Canada?
11. When, why, how did you come to Canada?
12. Describe the Rwandan community in Ottawa-Gatineau.
13. Do you know other Rwandans here in Canada? Ottawa-Gatineau? How do you know them?
14. What interactions and/or relationships do you have with other Rwandans in Canada?
15. How do you get to associate with other Rwandans in Ottawa-Gatineau? In what types of situations?
16. What interactions/relationships do you have with Canadians? In what type of situations?

