Part I
Introduction

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Kubaka Ubumwe

Building Unity in a Divided Society

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Near the village of Kageyo, in the unspoilt darkness of an Akagera night, a late visitor addresses the crowd of assembled young men and women. 'Can someone tell me what unity is?' asks the employee of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission from the makeshift podium. After a silent pause, an *animateur* of the crowd takes the lead. 'There is you and there is me, and there is no difference between us, that is unity', he suggests, to the general contentment of the speaker. But unity or *ubumwe* in Kinyarwanda is not only a discussion point in the remoteness of an *ingando* camp. The term has a wider public presence, being deployed and redeployed in media, meetings, activities, policy documents and happenings in rural and urban Rwanda. In the parlance of the commission that bears its name, the shorthand 'u&u' – short for *ubumwe n'ubwiyunge*, unity and reconciliation – is suggestive of the common currency that the term has become and points to its bureaucratization and status as a 'social project' of the state.

In one reading then, what follows is a study of an exigent social engineering project of coexistence in the aftermath of mass violence. How does a government approach the task of building a social togetherness and a cohesive social whole after genocide? Why and how does such a project take the shape it does? How do nationwide and state-directed social projects align with, negotiate or override the needs of local communities into which they insert themselves? What is the ultimate goal of social togetherness on a large, nationwide scale? Who makes it, how and with what effects?

This book takes the opportunity to start exploring this complex social process, at once very abstract and quite concrete. On one side lies the abstraction of unity, a discursive domain responding to complex fields of meaning that are not readily visible. This contrasts with the almost mundane nature of the execution of unity as a project – there is an actual government

institution in charge, there are specific individuals in it, and there is the work that they do to make this happen.

In its exploration of *kubaka ubumwe* (unity building), the book opens the enquiry beyond the subject's typical disciplinary 'location' – reconciliation and transitional justice – considering instead the broader social and political field within which the process is embedded. Such expansion better reflects the fact that unity building is merely one aspect of a wider transformation project of the state, a project that is unique in its intensity and its targeting of all aspects of society (Straus and Waldorf 2011; Reyntjens 2013). An expanded inquiry also better mirrors the nature of power itself, which, as a structuring force of possibility (Foucault 1982; Hayward 1998; Stewart 2001) does not conform to social science disciplinary ontology, cutting instead through all categories of inquiry. The issue here is not only ontological, however. It reaches method too. Power is an insurgent force, an opportunist flow. Conceptualizing power as insurgency is key to unlocking the logic of social transformation in Rwanda where 'thematic' boundaries (between politics, development and unity and reconciliation) are blurred as diverse spaces and platforms are often appropriated for broader, overarching aims. But in order to trace power, the study itself has to simulate its manner of propagation, it has to become contingent and opportunistic, an ambush on openings and leads as these arise.

In another reading then, the book is a tracing. The study does not presume what *ubumwe* should be about, rather it tries to approach unity building as an unknown object and learn about its different aspects anywhere where the term is invoked or deployed intensively, looking at what people do when the term 'applies'. The strategy leads the researcher through diverse contexts, from the textual to the voiced and the performed, from logical frameworks and conceptual notes, from the office of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) to the placing of diverse bodies 'together', to role play and enaction, to the makeshift and transient *ingando* camp at the Tanzanian border, a work camp for released prisoners at Gasabo, to the festivals of *ubusabane* outside Nyanza, or the *umuganda* community works in Gikondo. The result is not a fine contour but a sketch outlining the life and anatomy of unity as an idea and a political project. It is a story of the many ways in which an idea is conceptualized, operationalized and performed in very specific settings inside Rwanda, and the ways in which the word's interpretive latitude invites creative manipulation.

Finally, we might say the book is ultimately not about unity, despite the title proving that it indeed is. Perhaps unity is best understood as a frame, a window to understand the wider state-society relations and the process of creating a new political community in post-genocide Rwanda. Perhaps what is most important is not the particular 'what' of unity but the 'how' – how a social togetherness is envisioned on a mass scale – how the state imagines social transformation, how it approaches its citizenry, in fact what type of

citizen it seeks to create. Languages of unity can serve as powerful openings to discussions on the appropriation of the symbolic in determining political inclusion and exclusion, the making and remaking of social roles and bonds, and the fashioning of the public self and the collective corps.

Locating the Subject: Post-Conflict Reconciliation

The project of social unity is typically narrated as one aspect of much broader processes of post-conflict reconciliation, a topic that has received intense scholarly attention in the past two decades (Shaw et al. 2010; Wilson 2000 and 2001; Minow 1998; Minow and Chayes 2003; Huyse and Salter 2008; Hayner 2010; Clark and Kaufman 2008; Pankhurst 2008; among others). Reconciliation is typically understood as a multidimensional project comprising justice or retribution, restitution (whether reconstitutive, rehabilitative or symbolic), truth telling, commemoration and other memory-related performances, as well as unity or nation building. The latter aspect has received relatively little academic attention – in the Rwandan context, it is overshadowed by a vast literature on the *gacaca* courts and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) – and this despite unity building being a uniquely pressing and challenging task in so-called violently 'divided societies' where perpetrators and victims of violence live in close proximity, and where people struggle to re-imagine and reconstruct their political and moral community.

Rwanda is a unique case in this respect. The degree of disruption that the 1994 genocide caused is hard to overstate. The unprecedented scale of the event demanded creation of a new term to describe it – *jenoside*. The *jenoside* claimed up to a million lives,[1] produced millions of refugees and spawned a continental war, touching every life inside the country and beyond. It has been a tragedy of mass proportions, not only in terms of victims but also perpetrators. The genocide was locally carried out, often by 'intimate enemies' (Theidon 2006; Straus and Lyons 2006). The result is a society where the dividing lines run through every community and are themselves complex. Far from a simplistic account of a bipolar society of Hutu and Tutsi struggling to be reconciled, the society represents a complicated web of tensions between survivors, *genocidaires* and moderate Hutu,[2] between those who suffered, those who saved, those who killed or simply stood by and that 'segment of the population that blurs the [victim-perpetrator] dichotomy, inhabiting Primo Levi's (1989) grey zone of "half-tints and complexities"' (Theidon 2006: 436). Further to this, since the end of the genocide close to forty per cent of the present population have returned from various countries in the diaspora and tensions exist among Tutsi returnee groups as well as between returnees and those who stayed behind (the *Sopecya*).

Into this context comes a government dominated by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in which Tutsi returnees from Uganda are overrepresented[3] (Ansoms 2009; Reyntjens 2004 and 2006; Zorbas 2004; Prunier 2009) and which oversees a strong state, a minority government that is nonetheless set to deliver 'unity'. 'Rwandan officials are prompt to point out that the aim of the state at this critical juncture is to build a nation' (Lemarchand 2009: 65). But what does unity mean, and to whom? In the complex social context delineated above, how do today's Rwandans learn to 'live together again'? Since living 'side by side' is not a choice but a given, what does the state's social engineering project consist of?

Re-locating the Subject: Power and the State

The Rwandan government has certainly not stayed with mere rhetoric. One cannot but notice the vast labour spent on production of activities created in the name of unity and reconciliation, many of which lay claims to traditionality and connection to the local. Thousands of local *gacaca* courts have tried millions of accused. In an attempt at de-ethnicization, the government has abolished the mention of ethnicity and is promoting the building of Rwandanness and Rwandanicity. A score of allegedly 'local', 'participatory' and 'traditional' unity and reconciliation activities and institutions have been set up, including *abunzi* mediation committees, *ubusabane* community festivals, *ubudehe* development schemes, *itorero* schools and *ingando* camps, among others. A new history has been drafted and is being disseminated (see Melvin 2013). The National and Unity Reconciliation Commission (NURC), stipulated under the 1993 Arusha Accords and established in 1999, has been promoting 'civic education' in *ingando* camps and urging Rwandans to ask for and grant forgiveness. The sheer scope of activity in Rwanda contrasts starkly with neighbouring Burundi, where it is activity's absence instead that is noticeable. In the light of production alone, Rwanda indeed seems remarkable.

But appearance has its own politics. Official characterization abides by its own political economy – naming and description can themselves mask and perform political work. The state and political power work on the premise that tokens – formalities and formulations – are substances in their own right and they are exploiting this 'parallel occurrence' or 'doubling' (formal discursive roster and actual tangible practice). In Rwanda, systematic discrepancies exist between how activities are depicted and their observed content. The systematic 'production of gaps' thus needs to be explored alongside the logic that underlies specific labelling and the labels' sanctioning power.

Treating characterization as a strategic tool has implications for method. Just as I decided not to presume what things are, I did not want to presume

what the effects ought to be. Noting the 'dynamics of gaps' and the delicate politics of characterization, I decided to proceed away from discussions of 'effectiveness' to discussions of 'productiveness' of social events. Rather than asking 'Are these activities achieving what they say they want to achieve?' I asked 'What are the different effects that are actually produced and why?' The productive aspect of social events is often overlooked, with the result that activities might be outright dismissed as ineffective. For example, referring to the Rwandan prohibition on the mention of ethnicity, René Lemarchand exclaims: 'As if one could change society by decree!' (2009: 106). Naturally, society cannot be changed by decree, neither has it been, and even government officials acknowledge this. Hence the more interesting query becomes 'What if any ends are nonetheless served?' Mere discursive or surface-level enactments, whether enforced articulation or active silence, are acts useful to the government, with containment as a wider strategy. 'Shallowness' or 'failure' to achieve intended, programmatic goals can still result in 'useful production' for the regime.

The dynamics of gaps is just one aspect of a broader politics of reconciliation in Rwanda. Understanding the full extent of politicization has been a gradual process, one that ultimately shifted the key themes and vocabularies of my inquiry. When I was setting out for my first fieldwork trip to Rwanda in 2008, none of the terms that are part of the book title featured prominently in my research design. Originally, I set out to study the making of the new official history, a story of the past highlighting unity of all Rwandans and the imposed nature of divisions. I wanted to see how this history was being transmitted, received, reworked and renarrated on the ground. I was also particularly interested in the settings of the *ingando* camps – painted by the government as 'solidarity' and nation-building tools while critics dismissed them in broad strokes as political re-education or brainwashing. But soon after coming to Rwanda, much broader themes of power, the state and 'unity' repeatedly appeared in my notes and transcripts, and it is around these that my research ultimately got re-centred. I understood that without placing my endeavour in relation to these themes, it would be impossible to understand construction of historical or any type of narratives, the space of *ingando* and in fact any other type of performance.

Not only were these key themes, they were clearly interconnected. State building and unity building in Rwanda are not easily separable. Once in the field, it soon became clear to me that one could not study the myriad official activities called 'unity and reconciliation' activities without seeing these as yet another encounter with the state and power at the local level. Contrary to the dominant image of a 'weak' African state, the state in Rwanda is dense and intricate, which is not to say that it is all-powerful. Many people might eye it with suspicion or as something to be avoided, but this does not mean the state is not present in their lives, that it is easy to escape

its reach, or that it indeed does not have important effects in the sphere of the everyday.

As a result of this re-centring, I reformulated and broadened my interest. Beyond simply focusing on official versus counter-narratives or claimed versus actual effects in unity building and reconciliation, I found it meaningful to go deeper and ask questions about power and the state: How is power organized and legitimized in post-genocide Rwanda and how does this affect how 'unity' and 'reconciliation' are construed and pursued? How does politics inscribe itself into the very conceptualization of unity (in the official discourse) and in what ways does it determine the nature (not only possible outcomes) of unity and reconciliation activities? How, to what extent, and to what ends does the government appropriate the wider discourse of 'unity and reconciliation' and the activities organized in its name? Besides studying the way in which power works at the macro level, I also wanted to see how it functions at the micro level: How do the political dynamics determine what can be achieved through purportedly local, traditional and grassroots activities? What does participation in these activities mean in the context of a 'strong state' equipped with an intricate system of surveillance and a tight management of voice and silence?

The Politics of Ambiguity

'Unity' is an ambiguous term. In line with its semantic allusions to encompassment, unity is expansive, open to more than one interpretation. Since it does not have one obvious meaning, the word is 'uncertain' when standing on its own. Ambiguity nonetheless differs profoundly from vacuousness. The word does not mean 'everything and nothing'. There are both constraints on possible interpretations, and very particular interpretations actually at play and in tension. For most people unity does not carry a 'neutral' tinge but the semantic prosodies (associations) are both negative and positive, adding yet another layer of ambiguity that can be politically exploited.

Language is contingent on context and the best way to find out what unity means and is in a particular setting is to trace its use. To understand the 'lived' reality of language means it has to be effectively 'decenter[ed] onto other dimensions and other registers' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 8). One of the key projects of the book is to decentre unity onto the political realm. The argument I make is as follows: unity has a political life of its own. It not only has a long political history in Rwanda and the region, but it is a politicized idea in the current public discourse that performs political work. More importantly, unity as a political idea cannot be divorced from unity as it is understood by people outside of officialdom, or from unity as deployed

in the discourses and practices of transitional justice. The political sphere fundamentally shapes any action in these arenas.

As suggested above, unity's ambiguity is particularly productive politically and has been appropriated many times by centres of power, in Africa and beyond, simultaneously cast as for the social good and appropriated for respective political ends. After independence in the 1960s, African leaders have deployed discourses of unity as a way to legitimize the erection of one-party states and a way to excuse the erosion of political space. With the distinctive connotations attached to 'unity' as a state-sponsored ideology, *ubumwe* is reminiscent of the Slovak word *jednota,* which to this day carries a strong tang of pompous collectivist ideals, disciplined bodies[4] and the grandiose propaganda of the communist regime. Rwanda's context is of course unique – the official meaning of unity here arises in the securitized, tense environment of a post-genocide society. But what is perhaps similar is that in the public sphere *ubumwe* is not an obscure word but a charged notion, along with its opposite – division. In fact, it is against this prominent notion of division and divisionism that a specific and powerful political notion of unity arises.

Unity as deployed in Rwanda's public realm is a fundamentally politicized word, not a neutral term. Yet in the international arena of post-conflict reconstruction and peace building, unity represents what Renner (2014) called (in reference to reconciliation) an 'empty universal' – 'a vague yet powerful social ideal'. Unity building arises as an 'essentially defined concept' (Nordstrom 1997: 115) and one a priori defined as positive. It is knowledge 'always already there' in certain social epistemologies, knowledge from which technical questions arise (e.g., How to best build unity?) but which is not questioned itself. The findings presented here will unsettle this notion. The languages and projects of unity are fundamentally politically ambiguous, and it is only through the observation of their concrete deployments and enactions that we can come to learn about the type of social and political work that these perform.

Rather than as a challenge, I take ambiguity as a central opening to analysis, exploring the productiveness and political uses of both unity's semantic latitude and semantic prosodies. I want to see how political actors borrow from and dialogue with 'alternative' interpretations, layer and fragment the notion themselves through their discourse, policy and practice, how they play off the wider unquestioned (and positive) associations of the term, and how, despite the 'multiplicities of unity', a very specific official version nonetheless results. Drawing on communications and organizations studies literature, and taking inspiration from Eisenberg's (1984) influential concept and findings regarding 'strategic ambiguity', the present research will show that 'unity's multiplicities' are far from a paradox, but rather a 'working tension', a dynamics that operates in particular ways and to particular interests.

A 'Politography' of Unity

This is not a book 'about' Rwanda, and yet it is. It studies the way in which a government is trying to create a Rwanda, it is about the imagined unit(y) and how this is produced from the centre and applied at the margins. It is about a project of 'rooting' identity in a place that is in flux and whose history is in dispute. Rather than carefully observing a given community, I trace and observe actors who nurture an idea, what this idea means to them, how they transmit it to others in disparate corners in disparate social situations, how the idea transforms into policy practice and action and, finally, how it is performed.

Hence the study is best understood as one 'grounded in a topic and a process rather than a place' (Nordstrom 1997: 10). Topicality as an organizing principle is well expounded by Nordstrom's 'ethnography of a warzone' (1997) or Crewe and Harrison's 'ethnography of aid' (1998). Processuality on the other hand is perhaps best captured in Malkki's (1995) study of the construction of political subjectivity, collective identity and historicity in the context of displacement, or in Ferguson's (1999) 'ethnography of decline' on the Zambian copperbelt. Topic- and process-centered approaches seem especially well suited to conflict-affected settings as they divert attention from certainties and taken-for-granted unities ('The Nuer', 'The Banyarwanda'), transforming the task instead into one of trying to capture the uncertain and contested process of their creation. In the context of conflict and war – both being social disruptors and transformation 'intensifiers' – this approach has been employed by Sharon Hutchinson (1996) in her study of the Nuer of Southern Sudan. Hutchinson has challenged Evans Pritchard's celebrated 1940 study of the Nuer, a classic of anthropology, on the grounds that it produces 'an illusion that Nuer culture and social life are somehow above history and beyond change'. Rather than focusing on 'unity, equilibrium and order' and 'things shared', Hutchinson's *Nuer Dilemmas* analysed 'confusion and conflict among the Nuer' and the 'conflicts of interest, perspective and power' among various sub-groups, thus 'call[ing] into question the very idea of "the Nuer"' (ibid.: 28–29). Hutchinson shows how money and commodification of values, war and the state fundamentally transformed Nuer communities.

Just like the Nuer of Southern Sudan, Rwandan societies have undergone profound change over the past centuries – ever greater incorporation into a centralized polity, colonial encounter, capitalism, genocide, mass outmigrations, mass returns. These historical dynamics also brought changes to Rwanda as a unit(y) (Vansina 2004; Des Forges 2011). An approach emphasizing process thus seems sensible not only in a divided, post-genocide society, but also a social geography where historically, just as in many other places, peripheries were often forcibly incorporated into the centralizing and

expansionary central kingdom, ruled by the Nyiginya dynasty (C. Newbury 1988; D. Newbury 2001; Pottier 2002).

A unity cannot be conceptualized without the unifier, or a polity without power. Even on a small territory such as that of Rwanda nation is not something that is 'ever there' but rather an unstable and evolving political project linked to the (expansionary) state (Vansina 2004; Des Forges 2011; Newbury 1988). Hence rather than 'a people', the book takes 'labor in production of a people' as its topic. By looking at the social processes and agents involved, it approaches 'a people', 'unity' and 'reconciliation' as an enterprise. This means that it treats the appeals to 'unity of culture' as themselves contestable and political (e.g., 'we all speak Kinyarwanda, we are one').

Approaching unity building as a political project and process might tempt us to narrate it against the tension between homogeneity and difference. The stress on things shared, after all, clashes with the diversity, disruption and movement on the ground. This tension, present in all state-directed social engineering projects has now been well explored, most prominently by James Scott (1998). Scott's close-up study of the top-down revealed homogenization as a key project of the 'high modernist' state, whose ways of seeing and search for order and legibility fundamentally undermine the local, contingent ways of knowing and being he called *métis*.

Rwanda is a high modernist state par excellence, and what could be a better social engineering project to demonstrate the tensions between homogenization and difference than unity building? The reality, of course, is more complex. The simple opposition between state and society, and the logic of homogeneity versus diversity, do not hold up to scrutiny. As will be shown, even the project of unity itself is not 'one' and multiplicities and fragmentation are built into it. At the same time, the state, far from 'hovering' above society is embedded within it in multiple ways and borrows from its cultural registers (see also Purdeková 2013). Finally, the simple opposition between the local as a 'site of resistance' and the state as a 'site of control' is oversimplified. Yet, despite the blurring of boundaries, a very specific version of 'unity' is asserted, at different levels and in different social situations; it is the purpose of this book to explain how and why this happens.

Since the (re)fashioning of a social whole is fundamentally a political project, what follows is a 'politography' of sorts – not a full political ethnography but a study 'with an ethnographic aspect' (Ferguson 1999: 21). Altering the name is not only a way to emphasize the difference. More importantly, dropping the 'ethno-' prefix but keeping the 'graphy' is a way to combine the useful methodological aspects of ethnography emphasizing participant observation, thick description and the actors' point of view with the very different ontological focus on the 'making' of unities, without presuming that these do in fact exist (that there is, literally, an identity). Polity refers to a political

form (and formation) of a union, whereas ethnos refers to a people, a nation, a community.

With regard to key terms, the reader might still wonder why the more familiar term of 'nation building' should not suffice, instead of unity building. I have previously carried out such more conventional analysis exploring the Rwandan project as a 'state-to-nation' nation building, exploring its inbuilt paradoxes of inclusion and exclusion, as well as de- and re-ethnicization (see Purdeková 2008a). The nationalism framework is useful but ultimately limiting. For one, nation building encloses us within a very specific debate on collective identities (where Anderson's 'imagined communities' or Brubaker's notion of 'groupness' undoubtedly offer key and innovative analytical tools) and it presupposes a very specific notion of unity as nationalist or cross-ethnic loyalty. But such pre-filled meaning precludes our understanding of alternatives and additional, even conflicting layers of meaning. The frame of unity has a much stronger analytical purchase. Unity is a broader term than nation and cannot simply be equated with de-ethnicization. The term directs us to imaginaries and production of 'social wholes' and 'togetherness' whatever form these may take. Focus on unity thus allows for a richer, more emplaced and closer look at the project unfolding in Rwanda. Most importantly, unity – *ubumwe* – is the term of choice on the ground. It derives from the word *umwe* or 'one', hence its literal translation is 'oneness'. In contrast, *igihugu cyacu* (our nation, country) is most often used in reference to development (as in *kubaka igihugu* or building our country), patriotism (*rukundo rw'igihugu*), or when underlining the oneness of the people of Rwanda by highlighting that they have *igihugu cimwe* (one country), *umurima umwe* (one language) or *umuco umwe* (one culture). These expressions are part of the broader unity-building discourse but do not represent it in its totality. At its core, *ubumwe* is tied more to popular expressions such as *twese hamwe* (all of us together) or the greeting *turi kumwe* (we are together). Unity is fundamentally the oneness of 'being together' and it is the aim of the project to find out what sort of 'togetherness' the state promotes.

Importantly, the present book cannot and does not explore all there is to learn about unity in contemporary Rwanda. Nor is it an exhaustive study of 'multiplicities of unity' – it does not cover in sufficient depth alternative 'imaginings' of unity on the ground. The full 'life' of *ubumwe* and its appropriations by political actors will require further historical and ethnographic work. The key aim here is to uncover the broad driving forces, the key logics, and some of the core imaginaries underlying the official unity-building project. The official project is indeed key since the 'policing of unity' and the rallying of people around a particular notion of unity makes the notion of 'separate', 'non-state', 'grassroots' or 'genuine' field of action a problematic proposition. Though multiple initiatives are initiated outside of the state framework, the search for the 'truly grassroots' obscures the way in

which actors at all levels have to negotiate power and the state in their daily lives.

The Politics of Depoliticization

Though transitional justice entered academic 'fieldhood' only recently (Bell 2009), it has already produced voluminous scholarship investigating the ways in which societies struggle with a history of injustice in the context of regime transition. It was in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe where a very specific query arose: 'How should societies undergoing political transition deal with a past of violence and human rights abuse?' Besides this specific historical context, transitional justice was narrowly constituted as a legal discipline and has largely remained 'abstract[ed] from its political context' (Thomson and Nagy 2010: 12). Only recently has the legal stronghold started to be 'de-colonized' by permeation of other disciplines, including anthropology and political science (Bell 2009: 6) slowly producing a 'thicker' understanding (McEvoy 2007).

The evolving field needs to continue moving beyond regime transition (e.g., South Africa, post-Soviet Europe, El Salvador), making its considerations and solutions relevant to contexts of community violence (e.g., Rwanda, Burundi) and political environments where the state and the regime type have not been fundamentally reworked, what has recently been coined as the problem of 'new beginnings' (Anders and Zenker 2014). In such contexts, political analysis is indeed indispensable and needs to revolve around a unique set of questions, among them: What happens when projects predicated on 'transformation' (such as unity building after conflict) are executed by political regimes that embody continuity (in form) rather than change? What happens to social projects revolving around 'inclusion' (the new rules and forms of social togetherness, new imaginaries of belonging) when these are executed by a regime that constrains political space? More broadly, what is the relationship between political process (of regime production and reproduction) and national-level social processes such as unity building? Does one 'shape' the other, are they co-constituted, or is the causality more complex? Further research is necessary if we are to successfully answer these questions. In the context of Rwanda, political analysis of reconciliation has been limited almost exclusively to *gacaca* trials and courts (Thomson 2011; Ingelaere 2009; Chakravarty 2014), omitting key aspects of the broader process and thus precluding more integrative analysis.

The present project aims to at least partially fill the gaps in knowledge identified above by politicizing or else 're-politicizing' our reading of Rwanda's unity-building process. There are diverse ways in which one can launch such analysis, but three are especially useful for the context of Rwanda

– to critically investigate the depoliticized language enveloping the 'unity and reconciliation' activities, to open to view the genealogies of unity building as a political tool in Rwanda and the wider region, and finally, to consider the appropriations of unity building and transitional justice processes for political ends. In each case, the linkages between social process and political regime will be explored.

In the broadest sense, politicization refers to making the underlying political forces visible. Their invisibility has political implications in itself. Discursive exclusion of topics such as nationalism, unity building and justice out of this sphere makes these arenas more open to manipulation (without repercussion) and pushes these processes out of the 'contestation sphere' – the space where people can legitimately challenge, criticize and rework a process or an institution – thus indirectly aiding the consolidation of authoritarian rule.

Rwanda's multiple unity and reconciliation activities – the *gacaca*, *ingando*, *itorero*, *abunzi*, *ubusabane*, to name just a few – are invariably presented as traditional and as located close to the people – both conceptually and physically. Yet the traditionality label as well as the very framework of transitional justice through which these activities are often glanced are fundamentally depoliticizing, obscuring how these spaces double as platforms of control, governance and symbolic production of power.

The post-genocide production of neo-traditionality in Rwanda has to be placed in the wider context of resurgence and rather uncritical embrace of 'traditionality' in the sphere of reconciliation (for a recent critical analysis see Allen and Macdonald 2013; Allen 2010). Recourse to 'traditional' solutions or 'hybridized' processes (a combination of local and Western approaches) became popular in conflict-affected countries such as Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Uganda as it represented an antidote to the universalisms of development and promised to draw on more authentic sources. Rwanda is a perfect example of this phenomenon with tens of self-professedly 'home-grown' unity, reconciliation, justice and development activities springing up over the past ten years. Locally sourced activities adapted to specific and contemporary needs are certainly required. However, as will be shown, in the case of Rwanda 'traditionality' is imposed on communities from above and the very label of 'traditional' performs both intentional and unintentional political work.

Politicization also involves uncovering the dependence of unity approaches on the formation and types of regimes that instituted them, and the subsequent political uses and utility of the languages of unity. At the macro level, the pathways to peace and the nature of political/regime transition determines the type of unity-building strategies that result. In South Sudan, decades of civil war resulted in secession but the war has also created profound internal divisions, not least about the very idea of 'unity' with the

North (Johnson 2003; Deng 1995). In Eritrea, the struggle for independence from Ethiopia has fostered a distinct oppositional unity – cohesion sourced from the fight against an outsider (Tronvoll 1998). In Burundi, on the other hand, a negotiated settlement between an incumbent and rebel movements, and the resultant power sharing, have produced a distinct version of unity building based on ethnic accommodation (see Vandeginste 2014 for a detailed description). Rwanda presents a different macro context yet again, one where central power was captured through military victory by an exile political front and its armed wing, and hence where fewer compromises had to be made in pushing a dominant vision of unity through. The result is an approach to identity politics that is distinctly 'abolitionist' (Purdeková 2009; as in literally putting an end to something through official decree) or, in a more recent formulation, 'integrationist' (Vandeginste 2014), focused on suppression of difference and cultivation of nationalist loyalty.

The politics of unity has a long pedigree in Rwanda and is grounded in particular production and interpretation of the country's history. The early Rwandan historiography (from the colonial period up to the First Republic), exemplified by the work of Abbé Alexis Kagame and Jacques Maquet, has elaborated a distinctly court-centric view of the past, a centralized and unified picture of the pre-colonial kingdom (Pottier 2002), a picture that has re-emerged since the genocide. Despite evidence of very discordant local readings of the past (Chakravarty 2014; Watkins and Jessee 2014), the story of pre-colonial unity constitutes the core of the official history today and underpins the policy of de-ethnicization (Purdeková 2008a and 2008b). But the notion of unity has also been reappropriated as an explicit political platform by the Tutsi exiles, fleeing Rwanda in successive waves since 1959. Both the Rwandan Alliance for National Unity (RANU), created in 1979, and the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) into which RANU was transformed in 1987 highlighted Rwandan unity. The political platform of the newly created RPF, the so-called '8 Point Plan', included as the most important among its points the promise of 'inter-ethnic unity'. An RPF soldier recites an exile mobilization song with nostalgia: *Humura Rwanda nziza, humura ngaho ndaje!* (Don't be afraid good Rwanda, don't be afraid I am coming), *Isoko y'ubumwe na mahoro* (The source of unity and peace) (Stearns 2011: 75).

The broad outlines of the new 'consensus on history' date to the politics of the Tutsi diaspora but they were defined more clearly and formally after the genocide. Following the establishment of the transitional government in July 1994, the *Guverinoma y'Ubumwe bw'Abanyarwanda* or 'The Government of Rwandan Unity', grassroots consultations were held in 1996/97 where people across Rwanda were asked to name the main reasons for Rwandan 'disunity'. Later came the more decisive 'Urugwiro Meetings' at the Office of the President (May 1998 – March 1999) where the discursive consensus was finally cemented by eminent personalities of the state – political

authorities, religious figures and academics, among them the RPF founder Tito Rutaremara and Professor Paul Rutayisire (Director of the Centre for Conflict Management).

The aim of the high-level meetings was to arrive at 'a consensus on the priority programmes and issues necessary for reconstruction of Rwanda as a country' (ibid.), the first agenda item being the 'rebuilding of national unity'. Two documents exist summarizing the meetings, one specifically dealing with the 'Unity of Rwandans' (*Ubumwe Bw'Abanyarwanda*).[5] Briefly, it was settled that 'before Europeans' arrival, the country was characterized by unity' (Office of the President of the Republic 1999a: 11), that 'the unity was for all Rwandans: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa' (Office of the President of the Republic 1999b: 4) and that 'White People' were the usurpers of that unity. 'When Europeans came, the seed of hatred and disagreement started being sown among Rwanda's children' (Office of the President of the Republic 1999a: 10). In the last chapter, we learn that 'the Society, RPF *Inkotanyi*' (ibid.: 12) is set to restore this (merely dormant) unity. This narrative has formed the core of the 'official history' propagated ever since.

But unity discourses have been utilized elsewhere in the region and beyond. Under the successive Tutsi-dominated regimes in post-independence Burundi, talk of unity (also *ubumwe*) served effectively to paper over divisions and concentrations of power in the hands of a minority (Lemarchand 1994; Daley 2006). President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza (1976–1987) stressed national unity and banned all references to ethnicity. Bagaza's successor Pierre Buyoya (1987–1993) has further stepped up the rhetoric under his 'National Unity Policy'. A Charter of National Unity was drafted and adopted by popular referendum on February 5 1991, the day itself remaining a national holiday. In addition, 'every educated person had to engage in lengthy propaganda sessions to explain to the farmers the notion of unity' (Uvin 1999: 261). A unity monument was erected in Bujumbura, a unity anthem composed, even 'unity caps' went on sale (Naniwe-Kaburahe 2008: 150). As opposed to Rwanda, the talk of *ubumwe* under Burundi's Buyoya-led regime was accompanied by a move to political liberalization, which was as promising as it was short-lived. In 1993, shortly after the inaugural democratic elections, the first ever Hutu leader to assume the presidential post was assassinated, ushering in a fifteen-year-long civil war.

The distinct vagueness and yet political expediency of *ubumwe* has been immortalized in a small monument at the centre of a roundabout in the Burundian town of Rushubi, in Bujumbura Rural. Alongside Prince Louis Rwagasore, the 'hero of independence' and the assassinated President-elect Melchior Ndadaye, the 'hero of democracy', I noted a quote on unity by President Pierre Buyoya: 'The unity of the Barundi is the greatest wealth and it cannot be replaced if lost', read the plaque (*Ubumwe bw'barundi ni itunga ridasumbwa kandi nidashumbushwa*). The words today stand both as a paradox,

since unity was all but lost shortly after this pronouncement, and as a testament to the ever-inventive survival of unity as a political ideal-cum-tool.

Whether couched in nationalist terms as in Burundi and Rwanda or ideological terms as in socialist Somalia (1969–1991) where mention of ethnicity, clan or lineage was forbidden and effigies of 'tribalism' burned under Siad Barre's rule (Lewis 1988; Besteman 1999), unity has been cast as a progressive form of belonging opposed to and replacing the atavistic loyalties of region, class or kinship. In all of these cases it also proved no more than surface-level engineering that all but silenced continued and multiple exclusions from power, some of which operated along the very lines discredited through official ideology (see e.g., Lemarchand 1994; Lyons and Samatar 1995; Besteman 1999 and 1996). In the case of Somalia, however, Besteman argues that the effects were more profound yet: 'The law that redefined bodies and identities as Somali by eradicating the recognition of racial, status, or kinship distinctions was a first step in establishing state dominance over people's actions, discourse, and interactions' (Besteman 1996: 589). The result was a more pervasive social control of everyday life.

This type of political past has certainly given 'unity' discourses, which are read against historical precedents, an unpopular undertone, a tag of suspiciousness, paradoxically even triggering notions of exclusion at the same time as they discursively revolve around the very idea of inclusion, integration and cohesion. In other words, there is a historical pattern pointing to the usefulness of political discourses of unity, as well as to the limits of their acceptance. This also suggests that unity building has to be placed within the wider context of 'the moral discredit incurred by the state' in Africa (Lemarchand 1992) and incurred precisely through such practices of inversion.

A growing body of more contemporary research demonstrates how governing elites, through the use of the state, can appropriate unity and reconciliation processes to other-than-stated ends. Work by Alexander, McGregor and Ranger (2000) and Alexander and McGregor (2006) on Zimbabwe, Bozzoli on South Africa (2006), Longman and Rutagengwa on Rwanda (2004 and 2006) and Tronvoll, Schaefer and Alemu on Ethiopia (2009) show this specifically with regard to memory. Their studies demonstrate how:

> the state through its organs, or through the ruling party, [is] intent on shaping memory to its own vision and interests [producing] political constructions that were not only inaccurate but alienating to the people whose history they were meant to represent. A close look at these cases suggests that the provision of an accurate historical account is at best secondary to the transformative goals of the politics of state. (Bay and Donham 2006: 13)

Within the context of post-genocide Rwanda, additional work on appropriations of memory and crafting of useful histories include Pottier

(2002), Lemarchand (2009) and Hintjens (2009). While these works focus primarily on the new 'narrative closure', the present book tries to delve beyond these well-researched topics and explore in detail how the whole unity and reconciliation process (from concept and policy to execution in activities) is politicized and what ends it comes to serve as a result. The transformative drive of the Rwandan government can hardly be overstated and, as will be shown, unity building is certainly subsumed to the goal of creating a Rwandan citizen best suited to fit the exigencies of authoritarian development.

The notion of political 'appropriation' has to be used carefully though – not all effects that result from so-called 'unity and reconciliation' activities that might be incongruous with their official identity are the result of 'planned' manipulation by government-cum-state machinery. As Ferguson (1990) has observed with regards to the development projects in Lesotho, 'outcomes of planned social interventions can end up coming together into powerful constellations of control that were never intended and in some cases never even recognized' but are nonetheless 'the more effective for being "subjectless"' (ibid.: 19). Ferguson found that the machinery of international development can be instrumental in 'expanding the exercise of a particular sort of state power while simultaneously exerting a powerful depoliticising effect' (ibid.: 21). James Ferguson's work is an important starting point, but it needs to be modified if it is to explain and document how a process generally perceived as 'well-meaning' interlaces with etatization, control and surveillance, or the consolidation of non-contestation in Rwanda. For the process in Rwanda is one that combines both intention and 'instrument effect', and infrastructural and embodied power in addition to 'subjectless discourse' (each of these three spheres of power will be discussed in separate chapters).

The Arts of Presence(ing): The State in Society

Contrary to the dominant model of the African state centred around weakness and fragility (Herbst 1996 and 2000; see also Menkhaus 2010; Bertocchi and Guerzoni 2010; Sogge 2009), the Rwandan state comprises working and sprawling formal institutions; it makes its presence felt in multiple ways, in people's daily lives, and at the most local level. As such, it falls entirely outside the evolving debates on 'the crumbling institutional environment of contemporary Africa' (Meagher 2012: 1074), the 'retreat of the state', alternative systems of order (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 1997; Titeca and de Herdt 2011) and 'hybrid governance' (Hagmann and Péclard 2010; Menkhaus 2008; Raeymaekers et al. 2008; Boege et al. 2008). It opens inquiry of a new kind, questioning the causal relation between state density,

formal and informal institutional infrastructure and presence on the one hand, and developmental outcomes, stability and social justice on the other. It equally shifts the state-building debate from discussion of challenges to such projects amidst violence or non-recognition (Smaker and Johnson 2014; Hills 2014; Menkhaus 2008), or the limits and unintended consequences of international state-building paradigms (Curtis 2013; Autesserre 2010) to the study of meaning and effects of 'home-grown' and illiberal state 'reach and overreach' (Ingelaere 2014). The book thus hopes to add to discussions on the nature of the post-colonial state in Africa by exploring a unique case that diverges starkly from the dominant paradigm and mainstream debates on weakness, failure and collapse of the state in Africa (see Migdal 1988; Reno 1998; Zartman 1995 for works in this tradition).

Importantly, the notion of a 'strong' state should not connote a state's capability to deliver on its social transformation goals; it refers to a dense and intricate structure exerting a variegated presence in people's everyday lives, resulting in a complex framework of social control. Such definition leaves any effects, whether positive or negative, open to question and investigation. It does beg the obvious query though: Is such a state uniquely capable of delivering the tasks it sets out for itself?

The Rwandan state has consolidated gradually, and it is meaningful to argue that the genocide presents another important watershed in the trajectory of state consolidation. It was in the mid-eighteenth century when the Nyiginya kingdom was 'beset by serious military challenges' (Des Forges 2011: 6) that the king Rujugira introduced 'social armies' positioned at the borders, which triggered not only expansion of the state into peripheral areas but also its institutional development. Later under kings Rwabugiri and Musinga (1896–1931) 'the state greatly expanded, as well as deepened', becoming 'extraordinarily complex' (ibid.: 11) even if not uniformly imposed. While the Rwandan state has been historically relatively intricate and centralized when compared to other states in Africa, we witness greater etatization of society after the 1994 genocide. There are three key and interconnected reasons for the 'densification' of the Rwandan state at this historical juncture. The destruction and political shifts accompanying the genocide ushered in reconstruction and the 'application' of state in most arenas of life. The existential insecurity on the back of which the regime has been built has also opened space for further securitization and increased surveillance of local life. This tendency has been strengthened further by the developmentalist outlook of the current government, its accent on rupture with the past and the wholesale transformation of Rwandan society in most arenas of life including the household economy, agriculture, political values, coexistence, health and hygiene, among others. The process of decentralization initiated in 2000 also contributed. It represented a 'profound and relatively rapid institutional change' whereby 'the role of the local level has been expanded

to an unprecedented degree in Rwandan history' (Chemouni 2014: 248). The fact that the state has been de facto captured by one political party aids etatization, though it is not a unique factor in the post-genocide period.

Importantly, the state 'densification' occurs despite the official abolition of the previously lowest administrative unit of the *nyumbakumi* and despite the fact that a well-known state activity – the *umuganda* community works – reappeared after the genocide in a less intense form. These developments have to be placed into a wider context of increased local devolution and multiple new activities and platforms of very local state presence, explored fully in Chapter Four. A number of important questions then arise: What does it mean that Rwandan society has become increasingly etatized? How does the benevolence of the rationale ('serving the population') square up with the effects on the ground? Finally, what lessons flow from this for the three grand projects of our time – state building, peace building and nation building?

The state is a key asset to the government in the execution of the *ubumwe* project, and is so at a very local and tangible level. But besides simply helping to 'unroll' activities and programmes, in fact through this very unrolling, it further increases its presence in the lives of ordinary Rwandans, with important political effect. The state after all is not only an institution 'substantiate[d] in people's lives in the sphere of everyday practices' (Sharma and Gupta 2006: 11), it is such day-to-day stateness that makes politics feasible: 'At one level, [state] proceduralism is so thoroughly commonplace and ordinary to be [considered] uninteresting … At another level, it is these putatively technical and unremarkable practices that render tenable the political tasks of state formation, governance and the exercise of power … they provide important clues to understanding the micropolitics of state work, how state authority and government operate in people's daily lives' (ibid.). Observation of 'mundane stateness' has certainly proved key to my own understanding of the nature of power and politics in post-genocide Rwanda. In my attempt to understand the interface between unity building and power/state making, I observed the presence of the state everywhere I went – on the streets of Kigali, in the permanent structure of the Nyakabanda cell office, or in a transient rural-based activity.

Despite the availability of empirically rich case studies exploring state-society relations in Africa (Leonardi 2011 and 2013; Ingelaere 2010 and 2014; Lefort 2010; West 2005; Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2003; among others) one struggles to find a more integrated analysis focused specifically on state presence, its perceptions by people and its effects. Even anthologies explicitly on the anthropology of the state (i.e., Sharma and Gupta 2006; Das and Poole 2004) fail to explore state 'presencing' techniques and their links to governance and control (for recent exceptions exploring surveillance in the African context, see McGregor 2013 on Zimbabwe and Bozzini 2011 on Eritrea).

With regards to the anthropology of power[6] and politics,[7] a number of recent works have provided useful insights into the everyday negotiation and interpretation of the state, power and national belonging (e.g., Wedeen 2008 and 1999; Mbembe 2001; Navarro-Yashin 2012). The anthropology of the political can mean many things from studying politicians 'in their natural habitat' or 'face to face' (Schatz 2009: 1) or observing the operation of bureaucracies or special units 'up close' (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan 2014) or it might involve the project of exploring the 'instance' and insertion of power and the state in the space of the everyday. Anthropological methods are indeed irreplaceable for all these tasks. They are 'uniquely positioned to explore informal dimensions of power (Abeles 2004), hidden faces of power (Lukes 1974; Gaventa 1980), … ostensibly inconspicuous resistance to power (Scott 1990), [or] ambiguous effects of [the] power exercise (Wedeen 1999) (Kubik, in Schatz 2009)'. Observation and participation allow for reading of behaviour in its context and can uncover the way in which power is mapped onto relations, spatial arrangements, procedures and protocols, moods or speech.

The present book uses these methods to study the interface between the Rwandan state and society, paying attention to the ways in which power and the state materialize on the ground, and to what effect. The limits and subversion of state power will also be explored. As will be shown, power does not only work through 'physical' presence, but more broadly, through the perceived potential of such presence. The book thus calls for a 'thicker' reading of the state, one that reaches beyond the official structure and encompasses the varied infrastructures of its power, including spaces nominally outside of its reach, its 'overspilling' effects, and the perceptions of its presence and control.

Ingando Camps: Separation and Transformation

A distinctive feature of the unity and reconciliation process is the multitude of activities sanctioned in its name. But whereas the community *gacaca* courts have captured the attention of the world and engendered academic debates, few people know of and even fewer people have studied the official initiatives (over a dozen in number) created under the banner of unity and reconciliation. Nonetheless it is precisely these activities that might be uniquely positioned to help us understand the exigent project of social transformation unfolding in Rwanda with all its discrepancies and paradoxes. The present book places special accent on one among these activities: the *ingando* camps, retreats offering informal 'civic' education to different segments of the population in the name of building Rwandanness. The book offers the first in-depth study of the camps as well as the wider

project of shaping a new form of political subjectivity and membership into which they offer an irreplaceable insight.

The *ingando* camps are part and parcel of an intense 'civic education' drive, an initiative into which the government has invested heavily since the genocide. The initiative centres on building a new Rwandan citizen or *Umunyarwanda* and revolves around rupture with the past and alignment with the current needs of the development-centred state. Rwanda is perhaps unique in today's Africa in terms of the sheer scope and ambition of the political education project, the wholesale deployment of informal, often camp-based education said to build patriotism and a sense of being Rwandan, and easing integration into the rules and logic of the RPF-led Rwanda. *Ingando* reaches the diaspora where camps are organized in countries with sizeable Rwandan migrant populations such as Belgium and India. Most recently, the *ingando* model has been vastly expanded and decentralized to the smallest of administrative levels through the introduction of the *Itorero ry'Igihugu* (The National Academy) education programme (approved in 2007 and launched in 2009). Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans have already passed through *ingando* and *itorero*, only further showing that the activities are hardly negligible, whether from the viewpoint of ambition or actual reach.

The use of camps for purposes of control, separation and transformation has a long history on the African continent, and of course beyond it as well. Searching for other exemplars of political camps aimed in one way or another at 'transformation', one quickly notes just how often the camp has been used as a very modern and collective technology of power. From the Mau Mau 'rehabilitation' camps in late colonial Kenya (Elkins 2000 and 2005) and FRELIMO's re-education camps in late 1970s and 1980s Mozambique (Manning 1998; Sumich 2011; Nordstrom 1997), to more recent examples of Uganda's *Chaka Mchaka* political education camps and the *Kyankwanzi* Academy, or indeed further afield to South Korea's *Hanawon* or 'House of Unity' for the *saetomin* (new settlers) from North Korea (Southcott 2011), the examples abound. These diverse instances are yet to be tied together through a proper comparative analysis. Such analysis should certainly be pursued as the camp proves one of the most potent examples of 'social ordering', even as it places in order the imagined 'matter out of place' (Malkki 1995, referring to refugees). Camps such as *ingando* emblematize the dominant form of state-led social engineering today, its accent on immobilization, its drive for legibility, homogeneity and control, and its uses of formal and informal education to foster not only a sense of collective belonging but also a specific sense of self.

In Africa, camps have been mostly studied in the contexts of displacement. There is now a vast literature on refugee camps, IDP sites, transit camps or regroupment sites. Much less attention has been afforded to the distinct type of 'confined spatiality' studied here – the political education, re-education and reintegration camp, the use of camps not primarily for physical control

and separation, but rather transformation and social engineering. Separation and control afforded by 'confined spatialities' are certainly useful and utilized in camps such as *ingando*, but they are means rather than ends. In a reversal, where the refugee camp revolves around the production of non-citizens and represents a space of exclusion, camps such as *ingando*, far from signalling spaces of sovereign 'abandon' (Agamben 1998) are instead spaces of 'intense application' – institutions using concentrated efforts to produce a particular citizen/subject/member. Despite being about a particular form of 'incorporation' rather than exclusion, I hope to show that this type of camp is as much a 'nomos of the modern' (ibid.) as refugee camps are. Refugee camps might represent spaces of exception, exclusion and production of bare life (though ultimately, in no more than a stylized form) but camps such as *ingando* reflect as powerfully on modern sovereignty, this time on forms of 'sovereign inclusion' (an idea further explored in Chapter 9).

The study of government-organized camps should also offer unique insight into the political uses and political dimensions of space-time dislocation, liminality and simulation. Within the context of Rwanda specifically, the camps offer insights into the government's accent on 'mindset change' and fashioning of the ideal citizen, which lie at the heart of its governance. The camps also bring forth discussions on the state's strategic dissimulations and politics of characterization. In addition to this, the different strategies of unity building interlock in the space of *ingando* and the camps also allow insight into the important uses of spatiality, symbolism and enaction to achieve desired ends.

The book is thus also an attempt to revive debates on liminality. The focus on contemporary, state-directed and collective rites of passage offers an opportunity to explore certain questions afresh: What can the profoundly political use of encamped spaces tell us about the liminal? Is the liminal ever outside power and politics? In which sense, if at all, is liminality an 'interstructural' space? Fundamentally, as I hope to show, *ingando* camps lend a fascinating insight into the ways in which liminality is harnessed by governments for the purposes of change by suspending the familiar and dislodging a person from routine in an isolated setting of a total institution. But change is not what such stylized enactions are solely 'about'. *Ingando* are ultimately about the reproduction of political power.

In fact, it is a broader goal of this book to demonstrate the multifaceted consolidation and reproduction of the current political system. Increasingly, rich empirically-based studies show how Rwandans are narrating alternatives to accepted versions of history (Chakravarty 2014; Watkins and Jessee 2014) and defying policies imposed from above (Van Damme, Ansoms and Baret 2014; Thomson 2013 and 2011). The focus here is different as the book seeks to understand how political power seeks to entrench itself despite or perhaps alongside these divergences and resistances, through both expected and

less expected avenues – linguistic practices of the regime, the infrastructure and presence of the state, proliferation of platforms and activities and participation in these, as well as spatio-temporal, symbolic and performative dimensions of camps. Unity itself is a potent symbolic device for narrating and ushering such reproduction – not despite, but because of its ambiguity. In fact, ambiguity itself emerges as a key tool of manoeuvre, not only on behalf of the state but also for those who try to navigate it.

The book does not only demonstrate broad 'politicization' where yet another outwardly benign project comes to serve other than stated aims and interests of power, as Ferguson (1990) has demonstrated with regards to development or Carrier and Klantschnig (2012) with reference to drug control. It hopes to add value by its careful tracing of the multiple levels and concrete instances through which reproduction of power takes place, by focusing on the play with potent images, the 'sanctioning' power of such images, their malleability and the multiplicity of uses to which they can be put and that defy and often directly counteract the positive connotations of the label. The book shows how the developmental and post-conflict paradigms open the space for and further justify the insertions of state into the social body, with the result of increased etatization, and how notions of unity, nation and cohesion aid in that process. The analysis will also explore the fundamental limits of state power thus produced, and the repercussions of this vis-à-vis social justice and peace.

All in all, the book will ask us to reassess and nuance our approach to state and state building in post-conflict and divided societies. The view of the state as a neutral service provider and guarantor of welfare needs to be abandoned for a more balanced and political conception. In other words, a shift is necessary from a technocratic conception of the Rwandan state as (whether successfully or unsuccessfully, or to what degree) giving, producing and promising public good to a more complete conception of state that is also (whether successfully or unsuccessfully, or to what degree) extractive, oppressing and erosive of trust, producing public bads as well as 'regime goods' through its framework of coercive *eu*topia[8] – the transformative rush to the 'good place' envisioned in the government's development plans and programmes and to which today all, including unity, must be subsumed.

Notes on Method: Sources and Sites

The present book draws on seven months of fieldwork carried out in Rwanda between March 2008 and April 2009. The book tries to open to view two hitherto under-studied spaces – the *ingando* re-education and reintegration camps, and the government commission tasked with 'unity and reconciliation'. While the significance of studying *ingando* has been

explored above, the look at a key government actor is no less important. Thus far little if any political analysis draws on direct observation of the Rwandan government 'at work' and from the inside. The insider perspective unworks the conception of a state as a cohesive machinery and policy, even when the state is less than democratic and repressive, hence posing a seeming paradox between micro process and macro effect that the book will foreground and address. These two original empirical bases are carefully complemented with perspectives and views from other spaces and actors.

The research draws on a range of methods from observation to interviews, from informal discussions to questionnaires. Altogether, I gathered approximately 230 formal and informal interviews and questionnaires (160 interviews, 70 questionnaires) from a diverse set of people: participants at government-based 'unity and reconciliation' activities, government officials at different levels, NGOs, researchers, journalists, students as well as many other Rwandans I met during the main activity of fieldwork – the getting to and by – the constant and time-consuming search for places and access, and waiting. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I had some of the most insightful conversations while travelling and 'hanging around'.

Overall, the less structured was the encounter, the more open and forthcoming was the speaker. Equally, the fewer traces that remained of the encounter, the more openings it offered. As a rule, I refrained from audio recording, and quickly understood that less or no note taking eased tension and produced more insight, albeit at the cost of an imperfect 'trace'. Similarly, the fewer external elements that were introduced into the encounter, the less uncertainty and suspicion were produced. Because of this I tried (where possible) to source interpretation and translation from within the setting that I studied, and it is also for this reason that I at times forewent understanding completely in exchange for confidence.

Key data were undoubtedly drawn from participant observation, which offered rich contexts to words and actions. I had the opportunity to participate at multiple activities from *ingando* to *umuganda*, *ubusabane*, official genocide commemoration events, prison visits and more. At the Commission, I sat at planning, review, coordination meetings, or more informal happenings such as the entertainment of the Chinese donor delegation. But many more events proved key, from the 2008 state-organized protests, to participation at a 'Wedding Planning Committee'. As most researchers, I learned in unexpected places and from unconventional sources, from jokes, gestures, off-hand remarks, changes of mood, or seating arrangements. Official and unofficial learning blended into each other. Nonetheless, combining methods and different levels of 'structured' encounter was enlightening in itself. It modulated disclosure and offered insights into when, how and what people felt comfortable speaking about – these important insights are discussed in the next chapter.

The *ingando* camps form a key case study and hence much of my research has revolved around trying to understand these spaces from different perspectives and positions – from the inside and the outside, from participants, organizers and non-participants. I combined visits to camps and observation of lessons and activities with formal interviews, informal discussions, questionnaires, as well as primary and secondary materials. Almost all of the formal and informal interactions have involved a discussion of *ingando*, whether it was a central discussion point or one of many. I have spoken to past and present *ingando* organizers, participants of different backgrounds in terms of age, education, region, ethnicity, occupation and language, as well as diverse people in the government, NGOs and more. The responses of more than 110 participants from three types of *ingando* (for university entrants, ex-combatants and released prisoners) have been an especially rich source of information as have been the *ingando* visits.

In order to get a better understanding of *ingando* as a social event, I placed accent on gaining access to different types of *ingando*. The NURC only organized *ingando* for university entrants, which I visited three times, sitting through fourteen hours of class and participating in the closing graduation ceremony. A broader remit required negotiating access from three additional government institutions: The Ministry of Gender and Family Planning (MIGEPROF), The Community Work (TIG) Headquarters, and the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC). In the end, I was able to visit six different types of *ingando*, though never for more than two days at a time: five state-organized camps (for students, released prisoners, street children, youth ex-combatants and adult ex-combatants) and one non-state organized *ingando* (for Adventist youth). Importantly, the book in no sense offers a full depiction of *ingando* in all its forms. This is in part due to the nature of access and in part due to the occasional or even ad-hoc organization of the camps. Nevertheless, the study draws on a large amount of new information. There are two chapters dedicated exclusively to the camps, but moments and insights from *ingando* appear throughout the book.

Another key aspect of my fieldwork, mainly in the first three months, has been the observation of the work of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) up close, from the daily happenings at the office, internal meetings and meetings with other stakeholders and donors, to participation in activities organized by the commission. NURC was not only the gatekeeper to the field that I wanted to explore, it was also a key part of it, being the shaper and 'keeper' of the official discourse, and organizer of many activities. The insider perspective on NURC proved important but was not completely planned. I wanted to access *ingando* camps and other activities, not necessarily to be affiliated with the commission. After the first weeks in the field, marked by slow progress, the 'breakthrough' finally came.

The Director of Civic Education at NURC offered me entry – I was told that I could participate in different activities and visit *ingando* camps but in exchange I had to spend 'some days of the week' at the office 'working'. Though I agreed, no assignments were given to me. Initially, I did nothing for hours on end, feeling I was wasting my time. My first assignment was a comprehensive edit of a commissioner's master's thesis. This made me wonder whether it was really me who 'managed to enter' or whether it was them who managed to capture me.

Gradually, I sensed a transition. Even though I was not given any tasks and my official role was left undecided – at different points I was called 'cross-cutting staff', 'volunteer staff', a *stagiaire* and a researcher in residence – I seemed to have turned from an ambiguous figure to an expected and accepted 'member' and learned to understand and make the most of my NURC role by chatting with and shadowing its employees. My role felt frustrating at first, but ultimately proved to be a rich register of learning. I had the opportunity to travel across the country on 'official business', participate in activities, meetings and observe informal interactions. Equally, my careful attempts to extricate myself from the commission's oversight taught me valuable lessons about political control. Since my goal was to explore a wide range of perspectives, I had to carve my own research space at the same time as I could not afford to (as I quickly realized) break my relations with the Commission. Since the beginning of my fieldwork, I took off on independent trips and set up and conducted interviews with associations, NGOs, religious authorities, policy makers, local administrative officials, and importantly, *ingando* participants and participants at other activities outside the purview of NURC.

During my time in Rwanda, I befriended many commissioners who treated me warmly and often sought me out for a chat or told me to accompany them on travel, and yet I felt that a degree of institutional distrust surfaced intermittently and eroded the personal rapport and camaraderie that had been established. But this was, after all, a government institution and I was a researcher, and one that was gently but persistently disobedient to boot. The tension between the personal and official was undoubtedly present, and I felt I came to be embedded in something akin to, if not an outright bad-faith economy (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 111), then certainly a half-faith one where both sides were inevitably 'tricking each other'. I sensed my host had to maintain a level of (at times unwilling) helpfulness and I had to maintain a level of (at times unwilling) aloofness – placing a guard on my opinions and not being too assertive about my interests as this might raise suspicions. Ultimately, discreetness proves an asset as well as a cost; it is disclosure of opinions that officially marks you as a political friend, and it is the guardedness and unwillingness to 'pass judgements' that distances you and raises suspicions.

Even under a repressive regime, fieldwork is a complex tangle of facilitative as well as obstructive relationships (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 58). In Rwanda, institutions rarely refuse to let one in, they rather prefer to monitor research at close quarters. As a result, I had to learn how to meet controlling manoeuvres and indirect management with equally gentle and indirect ducking. Just as there was a clear gatekeeper in my case, there was an appointed 'overseer', a young NURC employee who was genuinely friendly but also genuinely interested in the details of my whereabouts and opinions: 'Purdeková, it is better if we always know where you are', he told me, 'it is for your safety. It would be better if you give me a list of organizations you see each week and when'. I also received lessons about 'protocol', including the very importance of protocol itself. 'It is better to follow protocol', I was disciplined softly but firmly on one occasion. My 'guardian' also urged me to submit the final report, first explained to me as 'an assessment on your stay, because people do not know what is in your head, if you do not write it, they might think there is something confidential'. Control might also work through 'suggestions' – the passing of comments insinuating that you know enough (e.g., 'Ah, by this time you know everything!' or 'You know enough, no?') or that your work is superfluous ('Purdeková, did you see the assessment we [NURC] did on *ingando* … you did not even have to do your research!'). In Rwanda, you are 'let in' but there is a strong attempt to control what you learn (or at least diffuse). The fitting notion here is *être amené à la compréhension* – be almost literally 'led to understanding'.

My involvement with a government institution was certainly the ethical and methodological issue I struggled with the most. On the one hand, NURC was key to my study. It offered access to official unity and reconciliation activities, to learning about the policy and its implementation, about the setting up and carrying out of activities. On the other hand, this naturally brought trade-offs, dilemmas and complications. Would people automatically associate me with the government? Aware of this possibility, I tried to carefully manage my image. Most of my interviews were set up on my own and outside of the NURC context, with the obvious exception of conversations and discussions during the NURC-organized activities, interviews with NURC employees and government officials. Even when I mentioned that I was observing the work of NURC at close quarters (quite literally), I always tried to convey the message that I was an 'independent' researcher, protective of information and open to hearing all views.

Ingando camps clearly proved to be the most complicated research spaces. To get to *ingando*, I either went with NURC employees or, more often, travelled alone but still needed special permits from different government institutions. Eventually, however, I came to sincerely doubt that the 'permission' (or my insistence on 'independence') could add or subtract much in terms of informants' carefulness in what was ultimately a bounded,

surveilled space run by government agents. I was a conspicuous presence who raised questions and suspicions, not all of which could be known to me or be defused by my brief discourse of assurances. Nonetheless, different types of participants were not equally guarded. The broader nature and meaning of such 'variability of voice' will be discussed in the next chapter.

During my time at NURC, I also struggled with the potential symbolic service I rendered the commission on various occasions. I often wondered what my presence at activities itself might accomplish – an additional leverage to support the weight of the government's words, a level of legitimization however transient and small? The notion that I was 'shadowing the Commission' was clearly misplaced when it came to public events. I was rarely in the commissioners' 'shadow', rather always visible, occasionally even seated in the first row during events. I understood that this symbolic service as well as the guard over my feelings and opinions was an inevitable trade-off. Most researchers experience it to some degree and a subset of them is directly asked to by their profession. As Rabinow (1977: 47) describes in his *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, a researcher struggles with the dictum of 'being [constantly] on one's guard', always ready to 'suspend disbelief'. In a way, this makes the researcher a 'non-person' or else a 'total persona', 'willing to enter into any situation as a smiling observer and carefully note down the specifics of the event' (ibid.). Like Scott (1985: xviii) I found such 'judicious neutrality' both useful and an 'enormous psychological burden' resulting in 'my own hidden transcript'.

Seeking informed consent was as important as it was complicated. Even the researcher's transparency and the participant's agreement do not defuse the wider political contexts that can still make this exchange problematic, and potentially costly. My own research was always preceded by an introduction – I told potential participants who I was, where I studied, what my topic was, why I found it important and why they were invited to participate. Especially in large group situations (e.g., *ingando*), this coincided with the way visitors (*abashyitsi*) are expected to behave. I stood up in front of the gathering, usually the whole camp, and made an introductory speech. In one-on-one interviews, the introduction was made when I first approached the person. All in all, some participants were talkative and eager to explain while others were reticent, some declined outright, and yet others agreed with an ambivalently pronounced *nacyibazo* ('no problem' meaning 'OK' but in this sense more like 'ah, oh well, OK').

In Rwanda, one has to seriously consider the stakes involved in a research encounter. Association with inquisitive *bazungu* (whites) can create complications vis-à-vis one's community or the government. Protection of informants and data is key, and yet it is difficult to gauge what exactly is safe. What can be safely said on the phone or in an email? What is a safe place to hold an interview? Offices might not be safe, especially if someone wants

to convey sensitive information. But is a cafe or a restaurant or one's house safe? Is a full restaurant or an empty restaurant safer? My sense after seven months in the field is that it is almost impossible to find a place where an informant feels completely at ease divulging very sensitive information.

My own home was certainly a complicated space. Its owner, as I learned after coming to Rwanda, was the former president of the Islamic Democratic Party (PDI) – a Muslim dominated organization and part of the RPF alliance – and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andre Habib Bumaya. Though Bumaya 'fell from grace to grass' (NTK, March 22, 2006), having been dismissed from his position in 2006 by the RPF-led government,[9] leaving for a temporary stay abroad, the house was managed in his absence by his brother – a *Mudepite* (member of parliament) at the time. *KwaBumaya* (*chez* Bumaya), the name by which the house was commonly referred to, was located in Nyamirambo, an area where few *bazungu* lived. The residents were researchers and development workers and the house received many Rwandans, including research assistants. Nonetheless, when it came to sensitive matters, informants were not sure whether the house was safe (Could it be bugged? Was the security guard a spy?) and I could not completely assure them.

As a rule, the more time one has spent in the field – which correlates with more insight, more relationships, more accumulated disclosure, and more experience of disciplining and surveillance – the less faith one has in creating a 'safe' encounter. This means that research relationships at times have to be cut short and that the informants' demands to 'jealously guard all that' have to be taken with utmost seriousness. Fortunately, none of my informants were threatened or punished in any way for their association with me (while I was in Rwanda, or afterwards, as far as I know).[10] To protect my informants, their identities have been anonymized; the names that do appear are pseudonyms that bear no relation to informants' real names. The only exceptions to this rule are high-ranking civil servants who have spoken to me on record. I also include names or positions of those who have spoken in public.

Finally, let me briefly but explicitly reflect on the aims of this project as a whole so that these cannot be misunderstood or misappropriated. This book is not policy-oriented and offers no actionables at the end. Neither is it politically motivated, with no presumptions that precede it. Its main research questions emerged in the field itself. The main task of the book is to offer an in-depth, field-based study of the process of unity building in post-genocide Rwanda. The key words are witness, document and comprehend. *Kumva* is the Kinyarwanda verb that combines the empirical of see, hear, touch with the metaphysical of understand. I want to see what happens and why, part of which is to understand why there might be distortions in the representation of certain processes, events and activities, and why some things are silenced, by whom and for what purposes. The aim is to unlock the complexities of

a social process that has not received the attention it deserves. At the same time, the study makes no claim to total insight or to being a closed product. This better fits the 'unfinished realities of everyday life' (Finnström 2008: 28) and the coexistence of versions of past, present, even self. This approach is likewise better placed to acknowledge our ability to transcend and alter our contexts, our potential to expand what is possible by doing something new or unexpected (viz. Arendt's notion of 'action' or praxis, 1958).

The book is divided into three sections. The introductory section closes with a chapter on the 'structure of voice' – a reflection on what is knowable and how in a context where voice itself is a complex field of action and a key sphere of power's assertion. Following this, Section II offers an in-depth analysis of political dynamics in post-genocide Rwanda, delineating the intricacies of state and social control. Chapter Three focuses on legitimizations of political power, scrutinizing the nature and impacts of three different legitimization narratives and how these themselves form and reform what unity 'means'. Chapter Four, in turn, explores the nature of the Rwandan state and the extent to which it is present in people's lives. The chapter explores the intricate administrative and information apparatus, the spectrum of state-led activities, as well as the effects that such structure produces in terms of surveillance and indirect control. Chapter Five considers the micro-dimensions of power in contemporary Rwanda, more specifically the individual and societal 'embodiments' of power as well as its subversion. The section closes by exploring the implications for the unity-building process.

Section III focuses on the performances of *ubumwe* – on the making of unity through unity and reconciliation activities, specifically (but not exclusively) *ingando* – and how political dynamics fundamentally mould the very constitution as well as effects of these activities. Chapter Six explores the 'multiplicities of unity', contrasting the government's view with alternative conceptions, and details the various government-employed 'strategies' of unity. Chapter Seven looks at activities themselves, analysing (among other things) the purpose and accurateness of the characterization of activities as 'grassroots', 'participatory' and 'traditional'. The chapter also studies the contents of selected activities and shows the different manners in which these are politicized. Chapters Eight and Nine focus specifically on *ingando* camps. As mentioned, more than any other activity, *ingando*'s spatial, symbolic and performative nature, in addition to particular texts being disseminated, make it a key example of the intended social transformation attempted by the government. It is a space where the different dynamics of this wider project converge and can best be glanced.

Finally, Section IV focuses on what the performances and broader discourses of unity tell us about the way in which the Rwandan government conceptualizes and approaches social transformation and delineates the

broader goals to which the process of *kubaka ubumwe* is subsumed. Chapter Ten tries to understand the 'new Rwandan' that is to be reconstructed in the liminality of *ingando*. The chapter focuses on the government's overall social transformation objectives – the creation of 'perfect development subjects' – and how this overall objective translates into the conceptualization and practices of unity and reconciliation. Chapter Eleven offers final reflections on unity building and the nature of the state, and considers the prospects for political stability, social justice and peace.

Notes

1. The exact number of victims is not known. Estimates by NGOs, researchers and the government span from 500,000 to a million victims.
2. Many of them showed 'proactive resistance' (Lemarchand 2009).
3. For quantification of this claim see Ansoms (2009: 294; the numbers were gathered over the years by Marysse and Reyntjens).
4. The national gymnastic event in Czechoslovakia called Spartakiáda and held every five years showcased perfect physical coordination of a mass of bodies.
5. The second report was the more general one: 'Report of the Reflection Meetings Held in the Office of the President of the Republic from May 1998 to March 1999' (Office of the President; Kigali, August 1999).
6. e.g., repression, co-optation, resistance.
7. e.g., legitimation practices, governmentality or the rationalities of rule.
8. This term is inspired by Michael Jennings's (2009) use of 'coercive utopia' in his analysis of development projects of the late colonial period in Africa. I use eu-topia (the Greek word for a 'good place') instead to indicate that the vision might be indeed attainable and yet its costs and alternatives must be discussed.
9. After being dismissed from his position, Bumaya left for the United States but he returned while I was still doing my fieldwork. I had the opportunity to talk (informally) with Bumaya about reconciliation and unity when he visited the house in early 2009.
10. I was very fortunate to escape some unpleasant realities that other researchers had to face. I heard first-hand accounts of blackmail, open dissuasion, threats and/or arrests of informants.